

ECONOMIC HISTORY

Bradford-on-Tone was primarily an agricultural parish until the early 20th century, although textiles were an important industry in the village in the 17th and 18th centuries and in the 19th century a significant minority of villagers were employed in a number of other trades. Today Bradford is chiefly known for its cider farm.

AGRICULTURE

Medieval

Bradford-on-Tone was assessed at five hides in 1066 when it was worth £8. By 1086 it was worth £11. It had land for eight ploughs, and in demesne had two ploughs, five slaves and two hides; and 19 villans and seven bordars with six ploughs and three hides. There were 30 a. of meadow, 10 a. of pasture, 72 a. of woodland, with a single mill rendering 10s. Livestock comprised two cobs, eight cattle, 14 pigs and 40 sheep. The manor of Hele paid geld for one hide in 1066 when it was worth 40s. In 1086 it was worth £4. It had land for three ploughs, and in demesne had one plough, four slaves and three virgates; and two villans and seven bordars with one plough and one virgate. The mill rendered 10s., and there were 10 a. of meadow and 15 a. of woodland. Livestock comprised one cob and five pigs.¹

Little is known of medieval farming in the parish, though a few medieval pottery sherds that were probably the result of the manuring of agricultural land have been found at Gardeners Close in the centre of the village.² In 1262 Peter de Chauvent held oxen, plough-teams, corn and other stock.³ Land in Bradford and Heatherton, together with property at Brompton Ralph, granted by Christina de Washford to Adam de Bawdrip in 1278, included

¹ Williams and Martin, *Domesday*, 251; C. and F. Thorn (eds.), *Domesday Book* (Chichester, 1980), 19.39-40.

² Somerset HER 32413.

³ TNA, C 60/59, 16 Henry III (28 Oct. 1261–27 Oct. 1262), finerollshenry3.org.uk (accessed 15 Jul. 2019).

28 a. of wood and 18 a. of meadow.⁴ Thomas de Timworth (d. c.1296) made increasing demands on the tenants of the manor of Bradford during his lordship, introducing labour services which took the form of ploughing, fallowing and a third ploughing, but these changes were resisted and ultimately short-lived.⁵ In the 1327 lay subsidy Bradford was taxed at rather more than £1 13s. 3d. and Hele at 7s. 6d.⁶ Bradford's assessment suggests a prosperous parish compared to others in Taunton hundred. In the 1334 lay subsidy Bradford was taxed at £1 9s. 3d. and Hele at 8s. 11s.⁷ There was a dovecote at Ford by 1350.⁸

The custumal of 1353 affirmed the services and obligations of tenants which had been performed from at least the 13th century and were probably of much earlier origin.⁹ A horse or oxen was due as a heriot, or two bushels of wheat in their absence. Between September 29th and November 11th the lord was due 2d. for the pannage of each pig aged over one year, 1d. for each hog and ½d. for each piglet no longer suckling. Tenants had rights of common throughout the manor except in Long Lane, running from 'Adynghylle Stighele' to the gardener's land. They were also free to cut down trees, though a licence was required for felling oak and ash trees unless the timber was required in the construction or repair of houses, waggons, carts or ploughs. Any tenant in financial difficulty was free to transfer land to his neighbours for the purpose of crop-sharing, but a licence was needed if the land was to be transferred to anyone from outside the manor. Beyond heriots, the lord had no entitlement to horses, oxen or pigs and had to pay in full for any he wished to buy. Tenants were paid 6d. for each acre ploughed, a further 6d. for each acre fallowed and 5d. for each acre on the third

⁴ Green, Feet of Fines 1196-1307, 244-5.

⁵ Hunt, Bradford Customs, 90.

⁶ Dickinson, Kirby's Quest Som., 145-6. The Bradford section is mutilated and one or two entries and the sum total are missing.

⁷ Glasscock, Subsidy of 1334, 265.

⁸ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 54.

⁹ Hunt, Bradford Customs, xii, xv, 90. The custumal states that the customs had been in place during the lordship of John de Montague (d. 1228).

ploughing. Those transporting the lord's hay and corn in waggons were paid 8*d.* a day, while those utilising carts received 6*d.* for a day's work.¹⁰

Early Modern

In 1511-12 assize rents for the Franceis half-share of Bradford and Hele totalled £26 12*s.* 11*d.*, while customary rents received totalled 15*s.* 4 ½*d.* Court profits included money received for the pannage.¹¹ There is no mention of a demesne farm at this date. In 1557 the assize rents raised totalled £18 4*d.*¹² In 1573-4 the assize rents in the Warre half-share of the manor totalled £23 5*s.* 10*d.*¹³

James Cole, the vicar of Bradford, had a pigeon house, from which pigeons were stolen in 1613.¹⁴ There was a wringhouse, where a cheese or cider press would have been accommodated, at Stoford by 1616.¹⁵ The glebe terrier of 1639 recorded a cow house standing on the west side of the parsonage, a garden, two orchards and 15½ a. of land.¹⁶

The evidence of 17th century probate inventories is of a mixed farming economy. Of 23 surviving inventories for the 17th century nine included cows or other cattle, and 12 listed corn, hay and other crops. Horses were mentioned in 10 inventories. Oxen may have been a more usual draught animal though they are mentioned in only four inventories. Ploughing equipment was mentioned in three inventories. Pigs were mentioned in 13 inventories, though they may have been intended for domestic consumption. Poultry were mentioned in one inventory. Five inventories included evidence of cheese making. Sheep were mentioned in

¹⁰ Ibid. 88-91.

¹¹ SHC, DD/CN/2/5.

¹² SHC, DD/CN/1/13 (2).

¹³ SHC, DD/SF/1/2/24.

¹⁴ SHC, Q/SR/17/32-3.

¹⁵ SHC, DD/SF/2/7/9; DD/SF/2/7/13.

¹⁶ SHC, D/D/Rg/373.

four inventories, which suggests that the village's agricultural economy was based more on arable and dairy farming than on meat and wool from sheep.¹⁷

Of the five surviving probate inventories for the early 18th century, one included evidence of cheese-making. Two included corn, wheat or hay, and two listed cows and other cattle. Horses were mentioned in three inventories. Two inventories included ploughing equipment. Pigs were listed in two inventories, as were sheep. Poultry were not listed, but it seems unlikely that there were none.¹⁸ Flax was being grown in the parish by 1718 when the wealthy Bradford clothier and landowner William Serle reserved the use of a sluice near Park Lane to water flax in the pit there.¹⁹

A lease of 1752 provides evidence of agricultural practices during the mid 18th century. The tenant was required to regularly spread 100 horse seams or loads of 'good black rotten dung', or 16 hogsheads of merchantable lime on arable ground of somewhat less than 40 a.²⁰

Late 18th and 19th century

In the 1780s Rack described the parish as being in a low and woody situation, with land that was mostly pasture, and all enclosed.²¹ Despite the preponderance of timber, coppicing never became a major feature of the parish's economy.²² Rack also noted that flax was still grown.²³ This was probably stimulated by government bounties for growing hemp and flax.

¹⁷ SHC, DD/X/PLY/6, inventory of John Everard, 1609; DD/X/PLY/6, inventory of John Woodhouse, 1668; TNA, PROB 4/6901; SHC, DD/SP/1635/108; DD/SP/1637/4; DD/SP/1638/56; DD/SP/1646/83; DD/SP/1664/71; DD/SP/1667/32; DD/SP/1667/72; DD/SP/1670/50; DD/SP/1670/58; DD/SP/1670/60; DD/SP/1676/24; DD/SP/1677/24; DD/SP/1680/59; DD/SP/1681/114; DD/SP/1683/9; DD/SP/1684/109; DD/SP/1685/48; DD/SP/1686/19; DD/SP/1686/48; DD/SP/1695/27.

¹⁸ TNA, PROB 3/25/146; SHC, DD/SP/1700/18; DD/SP/1732/13; SHC, D/P/b.hl/23/1; SHC, DD/RC/16/2/3.

¹⁹ SHC, DD/DP/20/2.

²⁰ SHC, DD/SHC/117/2, lease from John Farthing to William Easton, 1752.

²¹ McDermott and Berry, *Rack's Survey*, 269.

²² References to coppicing are rare. They include an 1817 deed of exchange of land in Bradford between Margaret Petten and William Warre which included 2 r. 24 p. of coppice, SHC, A/ADS/4/2.

²³ McDermott and Berry, *Rack's Survey*, 269.

Bounties were given for 463 stone of flax grown in the village in 1787, and for 165 stone in 1795.²⁴

A comparison of the land tax returns for the period 1766–1832 shows that the half-shares of the manor were the dominant landholdings in the parish, with William Burridge substantially increasing his holdings after 1803. By 1832 he was Bradford's single largest landowner. Other major landowners in this period included the Gunstons of Heatherton, and their successors, the Adairs. There were a number of substantial farmers in the late 18th century and the early 19th, including the Ritherdons, Prings, Carpenters, and, increasingly, members of the Easton family. Throughout the period there were also a number of small freeholders, often owning only a cottage and a small parcel of land.²⁵

Of 106 families in the parish in 1831, 53 were chiefly involved in agriculture. Of 142 adult males, 38 were employed as agricultural labourers, with a further 13 men who were farmers, nine of whom employed labourers.²⁶ The evidence of the 1842 tithe apportionment is of a parish with a mixed agriculture, with most agricultural land described as arable, meadow or pasture, with some orchards and woods. Of 1,740 a. land in the parish, arable land comprised 668 a., meadow 532 a., pasture 389 a., while garden grounds (together with sites of buildings) comprised 15 a. Wood comprised 15 a. and waste 14 a. The glebe land was estimated separately at 15 a. 34 p.²⁷

Ten farmers were listed in the 1851 census, seven of whom farmed over 100 a. The largest single farm was Jeanes farm (380 a.), followed by Trefusis farm (267 a.) and Hele Bridge farm (230 a.). Trefusis farm had been recorded as just over 93 a. in the tithe apportionment, while Hele Bridge farm had comprised 133 a. at that time. Their growth

²⁴ SHC, Q/RLH/63.

²⁵ SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

²⁶ Abstract of Population Returns, 1831 (Parl. Papers 1833 (149)), i, pp. 548-9.

²⁷ SHC, D/D/Rt/A/401.

suggests some amalgamation of farm holdings. Between them, the ten farmers employed 82 labourers. Eighty-five individuals were described as agricultural labourers in the census, of whom 81 were male. Of the four women, two were widows and one was unmarried. The only other agricultural employee listed in the census was a dairyman.²⁸ Agricultural specialisation was still rare among Bradford's workers in 1861 when five carters, a ploughboy, a dairymaid, and one cow boy were recorded.²⁹ That year Bradford was described as having soil of strong clay, which produced excellent crops of wheat, beans, barley, mangolds, potatoes and turnips.³⁰ In 1866 the parish had 80 milk cows and 234 other cattle, 968 sheep, and 117 pigs and produced 233 a. of wheat, 90 a. of barley, 61 a. of beans, 5 a. of peas, 12 a. of potatoes, 57 a. of turnips, 49 a. of mangolds, 2 a. of vetches and clover; it had 879 a. of grass.³¹

By 1886 there were 26 farmers. The principal crops were 227½ a. of wheat and 133½ a. of barley. There were also 18 a. of oats, 45½ a. of beans, 5 a. each of peas and potatoes, 99 a. of turnips, 31 a. of mangolds and 22 a. of vetches. Of grassland cut or to be cut for hay that year there was 148 1/3 a. of sown grass and 890¼ a. was of permanent grass. Of grassland not be cut 87 a. was sown and 616 a. permanent. Thirty horses were used for agricultural purposes. There were 390 cattle, 1420 sheep and 160 pigs.³²

20th century to present

In 1901 agriculture was still the dominant employer in Bradford. However, there were now just 17 general agricultural labourers, one of whom worked as a stockman in winter. (This was a marked decline on the 56 farm labourers who had been recorded ten years previously.³³) The number of specialist agricultural workers now almost equalled the number of general labourers. There were six carters, one shepherd, a cowman, a full-time farm

²⁸ TNA, HO 107/1921.

²⁹ TNA, RG 9/1610.

³⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1861), 285.

³¹ TNA, MAF 68/59-60.

³² TNA, MAF 8/1056.

³³ TNA, RG 12/1871.

stockman and a horse boy on a farm. Technical developments were reflected in the employment of a traction engine driver and one traction engine attendant. Two men worked as farm bailiffs.³⁴ The agricultural economy remained mixed. When Trefusis, one of Bradford's largest farms, was sold in 1901 it was described as a sheep and cattle farm with crops of corn and clover. It also had three orchards, each of just over 1 a.³⁵ In 1902 there were eight farmers, and the parish was said to produce excellent crops of wheat, beans, barley, mangolds, potatoes and turnips.³⁶ In 1910 most farms were described as having land of good, or very good, quality.³⁷ Of the 180 a. of land at Trefusis farm, 133 a. was pasture, and 38 a. was arable. Gardeners Hall farm had 40 a. of pasture and 18½ a. of arable land. Small Eddish farm had 42 a. of land, of which 41 a. was pasture.³⁸

In 1916 there were 32 horses used in agriculture, almost identical to the number forty years previously. There were 501 cattle, 271 sheep and 204 pigs. Crops and grass totalled 1,787½ a., of which 1002 a. was grazing or pasture land, and 390¼ a. was meadow land for mowing. Though wheat remained the main single crop, only 111 a. was grown, followed by 56¾ a. of oats and 56 a. of barley. There were smaller crops of beans (19 a.), potatoes, (6¼ a.), turnips and swedes (20 a.). Apple orchards covered 49½ a. Of 28 holdings in the parish, six were greater than 100 a.³⁹

By 1936 the number of horses used in agriculture had risen to 40, cattle to 536, and pigs to 213. These were negligible increases beside the growth of sheep farming; the number of sheep had risen to 677. Poultry farming was practised commercially with 2,181 poultry. Crops and grass had fallen to 1,444¼ a. The quantity of wheat grown had halved to 56 a., with 50 a. of barley and 23½ a. of beans. There were still small quantities of potatoes, swedes, and

³⁴ TNA, RG 13/2270.

³⁵ SHC, DD/SAS/C2401/62.

³⁶ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1902), 132-3.

³⁷ For example, TNA, IR 58/82133, 29, 32, 42, 47, 79, 88, 107.

³⁸ TNA, IR 58/82133, 32, 42, 47.

³⁹ TNA, IR MAF 68/2766.

mangolds. Cabbage and kale were grown for fodder. Permanent grass comprised 760 a. The number of people employed on the land was a fraction of its 19th-century figure; only 34 workers were recorded in 1936, three of them women. Most were permanent workers; there were four casuals.⁴⁰ By 1939 there were 13 farms in the parish, three of which were over 150 a., and one smallholding.⁴¹ By 1944 the number of farms had fallen to nine.⁴² There were allotments in the parish in 1947.⁴³

In 1956 the total acreage under crops and grass was 1,652¼ a., of which 32 a. was under wheat, 107¾ a. under barley and 44 a. under oats. Dairy farming had remained important, with 639¾ a. of grazing land and 409 a. for mowing. There were 826 cattle, 388 pigs and 472 sheep and lambs. Poultry farming had increased significantly, with 4,589 poultry. Thirty-eight people, including four women, still worked on the land. Four of these were part-time or seasonal workers.⁴⁴

Thirty years later, the 1986 agricultural returns showed that there were 584 ha. (c.1,443 a.) of crops and grass in the parish, of which 261.1 ha. (c.645 a.) was grassland. There were 149.4 ha. (c.369 a.) of wheat and 49.3 ha. (c.122 a.) of barley. There had been a substantial increase in the number of pigs to 1,097, while the number of cattle had dropped to 397. There were 438 sheep and lambs. Poultry farming continued to be practiced commercially, with over 21,000 poultry recorded, almost all for meat rather than egg production. Forty-eight men and women were working on the farms, including the farmers themselves.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ TNA, MAF 68/3809.

⁴¹ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1939), 106-7.

⁴² *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1944), 246-7.

⁴³ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

⁴⁴ TNA, MAF 68/4547.

⁴⁵ TNA, MAF 68/6025.

By 2011 only *c.*5 per cent of the parish's population worked in agriculture.⁴⁶ In 2013 an application to erect 39,000 solar panels on 57 a. of prime agricultural land at Ritherdens Farm was rejected on the grounds that it would have a detrimental impact on the local landscape.⁴⁷

HORTICULTURE

Orchards and hopyards

The glebe land included two orchards by 1633.⁴⁸ An inventory of 1667 refers to an orchard and garden called Long Hall.⁴⁹ In 1684 John Huddle, a Bradford labourer, was accused of stealing corn from the orchard of William Major, and subsequently seen hiding in another orchard in the village.⁵⁰ Several orchards were mentioned in a *c.*1700 survey of the Francis family's half-share of the manor.⁵¹ A hopyard was recorded at Hele in 1712.⁵² In 1775 there was an orchard adjoining Cassam Lane in the parish.⁵³ A lease of land in 1804 included an orchard.⁵⁴ Orchards occupied 76 a. in the parish in 1842.⁵⁵ This had increased to 725 a. by 1886.⁵⁶

Several farms had orchards in 1910.⁵⁷ When Gardeners Hall Farm was sold in 1924 it included 3 a. 1 r. 16 p. of orchard.⁵⁸ The cider manufacturer Stanley James Sheppy (d. 1948) planted 2½ a. of apples at Three Bridges farm.⁵⁹ His son Richard (1927-2003) significantly

⁴⁶ somerseintelligence.org.uk/community-profiles.html (accessed 11 Apr. 2019).

⁴⁷ Email from Mr and Mrs A. K. Amor to the planning inspectorate, 22 Nov. 2013, somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk/WebPages/Imaging/ViewImage/ViewImage.aspx?SRBarCode=Ty1DGzvELrY8G1CBNT&ExtID=PDF (accessed 11 Sep. 2019).

⁴⁸ SHC, D/D/rg/373.

⁴⁹ SHC, DD/SP/1667/72.

⁵⁰ SHC, Q/SR/157/43.

⁵¹ SHC, DD/CN/1/19.

⁵² SHC, DD/DP/20/3, lease by William Burridge to Elizabeth Cooke.

⁵³ SHC, DD/DP/20/6.

⁵⁴ SHC, A/ADS/4/2, lease by John Nurton to William Warre.

⁵⁵ SHC, D/D/Rt/A/401.

⁵⁶ TNA, MAF 8/1056.

⁵⁷ For example, TNA, IR 58/82133, 32, 42, 47.

⁵⁸ SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/1/B9/1.

⁵⁹ SHC, A/CMQ/2/402.

expanded the orchards at Three Bridges and there were 40 a. by 1982.⁶⁰ However, there was a significant fall in the number of orchards in the 20th century. By 1956 they comprised just 50¼ a. in the parish.⁶¹ In 2019 there were still a number of orchards in the village, including at Three Bridges farm.

Nurseries and Market Gardens

John Clifford Russell operated as a nurseryman and florist at Gardeners Hall by 1906.⁶² An Ernest Clifford Russell was a nurseryman in the village in 1939.⁶³ In 1947 four people were employed at a Bradford market garden.⁶⁴ Fruit and vegetable crops comprised 14¼ a. in the parish in 1956.⁶⁵ By 1966 there was a market garden at Lutleys farm, and a nursery operated by H. Sydenham & Sons.⁶⁶ In 1986 25.4 ha. (c.63 a.) of fruit was grown in the parish.⁶⁷ There was a nursery at Ford in 2019.⁶⁸

MILLS

Bradford had at least three mills. Bradford mill, situated to the north-east of the village centre, and Hele mill were both powered by the river Tone, while Ford mill lay on Hillfarrance brook.

Medieval

The Domesday survey noted a mill at Bradford, which had increased in value from £8 to £11 between 1066 and 1086. There was also mill at Hele, the value of which had increased from

⁶⁰ SHC, A/DQO/48/17, cutting from The Times, 15 Feb. 1982.

⁶¹ TNA, MAF 68/4547.

⁶² Kelly's Dir. Som. (1906), 133.

⁶³ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1939), 107.

⁶⁴ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

⁶⁵ TNA, MAF 68/4547.

⁶⁶ Kelly's Dir. Taunton (1966), 356.

⁶⁷ TNA, MAF 68/6025.

⁶⁸ ford-nursery.co.uk/ (accessed 3 Sep. 2019).

£2 to £4. Each mill rendered 10s.⁶⁹ In the early 13th century Maurice de Borham had an estate in the parish which included mills at Bradford and Hele. In 1228 he brought a charge against Walter de Greinville of wrongfully obtaining this property. His action was successful and he was again in possession by 1229 when he was sued for it by Warren Bassett and his wife, Katherine.⁷⁰ Nothing further is known of this holding, but these may have been the mills mentioned in Domesday.

In 1242-3 Alfred the miller of Bradford was outlawed for his suspected part in the murder of William de Whitchurch.⁷¹ John 'atte Mulle' was recorded at Hele in the lay subsidy of 1327.⁷² A water-mill was first mentioned at Ford c.1300, when it was granted by William de Ford to Roger de Vernay.⁷³ It descended with the Ford estate, eventually passing to Magdalen College, Oxford.⁷⁴ It was described as a fulling mill in 1453.⁷⁵

Early Modern

In 1485-6 John Dowring was tenant of a grist mill in Bradford, paying Robert Stawell an annual rent of £1 8s. The miller's house and lands were attacked by six men armed with swords, sticks, and knives, and he suffered bodily injuries 'so that for a long time Robert Stawell had to forego his services, whereby he endured great loss.' John Brockman was accused of the crime and brought before the King's Bench in 1495 but the sentence is not recorded.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Domesday, 251.

⁷⁰ Cal. Pat. 1225-32, 245, 280, 294.

⁷¹ Chadwyck Healey, Somersetshire Pleas, 295.

⁷² Dickinson, Kirby's Quest Som., 145-6

⁷³ Magdalen Coll., Oxford, Ford 73-Ford 74.

⁷⁴ Above, landownership, Ford.

⁷⁵ MCO, Ford 18.

⁷⁶ TNA, CP 40/934, m. 323.

In his will of 1538 Durston Stephens of Bradford left his mill to his wife Alice for her life, with it then to pass to his son John.⁷⁷ Thomas Baker, a miller of Bradford, leased land in the parish in 1662.⁷⁸ In 1661 60-year-old Dorothy Baker, possibly his mother, was tenant of the grist mill in the half-share of Bradford manor that then belonged to Sir Edward Hungerford. This was the mill subsequently known as Bradford mill. In 1661 it consisted of one grist mill, with 6 a. of land.⁷⁹ The mill passed to the Clarke family in 1669.⁸⁰ In 1672, when Dorothy Baker still tenant, the property was described as comprising one grist mill, and one treble mill; it had a yearly value of £20.⁸¹ Edward Clarke of Chipley leased the mill in 1690 to Nicholas Manning of Culmstock, Devon.⁸² Around 1724, when Bradford mill was the property of Jepp Clarke, the premises consisted of a messuage, two grist mills, one treble mill, and still had 8 a. of land, rendering a yearly rent of £1 14s, two hens and a cock.⁸³

In 1685 Hele mill lay in the Franceis family's half-share of the manor when it was leased to Christopher Cooke of Wilton, a clothier, and his mother Ruth. It comprised both water grist and fulling mills.⁸⁴ By c.1700 the Franceis' half-share of the manor included a water grist mill and two fulling mills.⁸⁵ This was probably the property at Hele.

18th century to present

Bradford mill remained in the hands of the Clarke family until the death of Edward Clarke in 1796. In 1800 Clarke's heirs, Thomas Sedgewick Whalley, and his wife Elizabeth, conveyed the property, described as grist mills in the occupation of John Gold, to John Nurton.⁸⁶ In

⁷⁷ M. C. Siraut (ed.), Somerset Wills (Som. Rec. Soc. 89), 217-18.

⁷⁸ SHC, DD/SF/2/67/40.

⁷⁹ SHC, DD/SF/1/3/61.

⁸⁰ Above, landownership, Bradford manor.

⁸¹ SHC, DD/SF/1/3/61.

⁸² SHC, DD/SF/2/7/15.

⁸³ SHC, DD/SF/1/3/112.

⁸⁴ SHC, DD/DP/20/1, lease to Cooke.

⁸⁵ SHC, DD/CN/1/19.

⁸⁶ SHC, A/ADS/4/1, abstract of title of John Nurton, c.1800.

1804 Nurton leased Bradford mill to William Burrridge.⁸⁷ In 1832 the property belonged to George Easton.⁸⁸ William Jacobs, miller and farmer, was running the mill in 1861.⁸⁹ William Easton was operating the business by 1883, and William Bird, a miller and baker, by 1889.⁹⁰ In 1910 the mill occupied a site of 57 a. The mill house had five rooms on the ground floor, upstairs there were five bedrooms; there was also a bathroom and WC. A water wheel was sited immediately behind the house.⁹¹ In 1923 Willie Herbert Bird, water miller and corn agricultural merchant was operating the mill.⁹² William James Venn was running the business by 1941⁹³ but Bradford mill had ceased to be a working concern by 1957 when Venn was operating as a farmer from the premises.⁹⁴ The mill buildings were derelict by 1977, but the mill itself was being used to generate electricity.⁹⁵ In 2019 the buildings were the home of the Mill House Equestrian Centre.

Hele mill had presumably continued to descend with the Franceis half-share of the manor and in 1712 William Burrridge of Stoke St Mary leased the property to Elizabeth Cooke of Taunton, a widow.⁹⁶ Josiah Easton was the owner of Hele mill by 1805, when he leased out part of the property.⁹⁷ Edward Easton was the owner by 1832.⁹⁸ In 1861 James Easton, described as a miller and maltster, was running the business.⁹⁹ By 1871 the property, known as Hele Bridge mills, was a flour mill operated by John Mardell, who employed five men.¹⁰⁰ By 1889 Ranger and Burrows were the millers there, though the buildings remained

⁸⁷ SHC, DD/DP/20/10, lease by Nurton to Burrridge.

⁸⁸ SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

⁸⁹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1861), 285.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* (1883), 121; *ibid.* (1889), 121.

⁹¹ TNA, IR 58/82133.

⁹² Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923), 146.

⁹³ Kelly's Dir. Taunton (1941), 238.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* (1957), 272-3.

⁹⁵ Som. HER 43381.

⁹⁶ SHC, DD/DP/20/3.

⁹⁷ SHC, DD/DP/20/10, lease by Easton to Burrridge.

⁹⁸ SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

⁹⁹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1861), 285.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, RG 10/2362.

the property of the Easton family.¹⁰¹ In 1890 mill was worked by two water wheels, each driving three pairs of stones (three for wheat and three for barley and hog-corn).¹⁰² Though the business ceased to operate in the 1890s there was still mill machinery (including the water wheels, a pump and water tank, three chain hoists, and a flour draining machine) on the premises in 1903 when the Misses Easton leased the property to William Jeane Easton.¹⁰³ In 2019 the mill buildings were a group of extensively modernised private homes, one of which is called Millstone House. A mill stone then stood at the front of the building.

In 1726 Edward Stacy was the tenant of Ford mill.¹⁰⁴ A member of the Stacy family was still the tenant there in 1766.¹⁰⁵ In 1832 Ford mill was tenanted by Samuel Bond.¹⁰⁶ Richard Newberry was the miller there by 1871.¹⁰⁷ At this time the mill was a corn mill.¹⁰⁸ Richard had been succeeded by John Newberry by 1894.¹⁰⁹ The mill was still the property of Magdalen College, and in 1897 Wellington Rural District Council complained to the college in 1897 that water from the mill was overflowing onto the adjoining road.¹¹⁰ Ford appears to have ceased operating as a working mill after 1906.¹¹¹ In 1915 the mill building, occupying a site of 12 a. 2 r. 15 p., was purchased by Edward Hall. Winifred Johnson purchased the property in 1951, when its lands amounted to c.3 a.¹¹² It was owned by Dr A. Eve in 1969.¹¹³

Ford Mill House is of late medieval origin and has a three-room and cross-passage plan. A framed partition between the hall and inner room is of large rectangular wattle-and-

¹⁰¹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1889), 121.

¹⁰² Taunton Courier, 16 Jul. 1890, 4.

¹⁰³ SHC, DD/CH/97/8.

¹⁰⁴ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/1, a monthly rate made for the relief of the poor of the parish of Bradford, 1726.

¹⁰⁵ SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

¹⁰⁶ SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, RG 10/2362.

¹⁰⁸ OS Map 1:10,560, SOM. LXX SW (1889 edn.).

¹⁰⁹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1894), 135.

¹¹⁰ D/R/wel/2/2/1, 387.

¹¹¹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1906), 133.

¹¹² W. Johnson, 'The Bishops' Move', in SHC, A/CSP/2/2/2, 'Ford'.

¹¹³ SHC, D/R/wel/24/2/286.

daub panels. Another wing was added in the 17th century.¹¹⁴ In 1951 the property had eleven rooms and the kitchen still included a large iron-fronted baker's oven.¹¹⁵ Its thatch roof was replaced with tiles in 1969.¹¹⁶ Three mill stones stood outside the property in 2019. The small mill just opposite the house was ruinous in 1977, and only a few traces of masonry could be seen in 2019 when there were still traces of the leat and head pond, and the remains of a weir still ran across Hillfarrance brook.¹¹⁷

INDUSTRY, TRADES AND CRAFTS

Quarrying

There is little information relating to quarrying in the parish. However, in 1842 Hele Bridge farm had fields called Great Quarry and Old Quarry, while there was a field at Hele Mount called Little Quarry.¹¹⁸ There was a house called Hele Quarry in 1935.¹¹⁹ The remains of an old quarry were still visible close to the border with Trull c.1886.¹²⁰

Textiles

The mill at Ford was described as a fulling mill in 1453.¹²¹ A weaver was recorded in the parish in 1621.¹²² In 1653 there was a worsted comber in the village.¹²³ By the second half of the 17th century Bradford seems to have had some importance as a regional centre of the cloth trade. In 1659 William Serle, a Bradford clothier, was issuing trade tokens.¹²⁴ In 1669 he purchased property in the parish which included shipping and other outhouses, waters and

¹¹⁴ Som. HER 36982.

¹¹⁵ Johnson, 'Bishops' Move'.

¹¹⁶ SHC, D/R/wel/24/2/286.

¹¹⁷ Som. HER 43380.

¹¹⁸ SHC, D/D/Rt/A/401.

¹¹⁹ SHC, D/U/wel/24/2/4.

¹²⁰ OS Map 1:10,560, SOM. LXXIX NW (1891 edn, surv. 1886—7).

¹²¹ MCO, Ford 18.

¹²² SHC, Q/SR/39/77.

¹²³ SHC, DD/DP/20/1, lease to William Challes.

¹²⁴ G. C. Williamson (ed.), Trade Tokens Issued in the Seventeenth-Century, II (London, 1891), 937.

watercourses.¹²⁵ By the time of his death he had invested considerably in property and was owed over £1,500 on several bonds and mortgages.¹²⁶ Several other clothiers were active in the parish in this period. The 1668 inventory of the clothier John Trott included worsted wool at his spinning house and serge cloth.¹²⁷ The clothier William Higgins purchased a house in Bradford in 1677.¹²⁸ In 1685 Christopher Cooke, a Wilton Clothier, obtained a lease on Hele mill, which then included a fulling mill.¹²⁹

Serge making may have been particularly important. Monetary bequests specified by one serge maker, John Stacy (d. 1690), alone amounted to over £550.¹³⁰ His son Edward Stacy was recorded as a clothier in Bradford in 1694.¹³¹ In 1787 the Court House was leased to John Norman, a serge maker. In 1789 Joan Norman, possibly his widow, was recorded as a serge maker; two of her properties in Bradford were occupied by woolcombers.¹³² The first mention of a woolcomber in the village was in 1694.¹³³ A number of weavers were recorded in the 17th and early 18th centuries.¹³⁴ Others used textiles as a means of supplementing their main incomes. The 1668 inventory of a yeoman included two pairs of looms, which were probably situated in his attic or a small workshop.¹³⁵ Two further looms were recorded in an inventory of 1677.¹³⁶

The textile industry had declined dramatically by 1841 when just five weavers were recorded in the parish, all of them women.¹³⁷ There seven woollen weavers in 1851, but none

¹²⁵ BL, Add. Ch. 40125.

¹²⁶ TNA, PROB 3/25/146.

¹²⁷ TNA, PROB 4/6901.

¹²⁸ SHC, DD/SF/2/67/40.

¹²⁹ SHC, DD/DP/20/1, lease to Cooke.

¹³⁰ TNA, PROB 11/400/140.

¹³¹ SHC, DD/DP/20/1, lease to Stacy.

¹³² LMA, MS 11936/361/557615.

¹³³ SHC, DD/DP/20/1, lease to Abraham Turner.

¹³⁴ For example, SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/3/8, George Thomas, 1686; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1, Thomas Perry, 1688; SHC, DD/SAS/C/238/2/5, James Bartlett, 1719.

¹³⁵ SHC, DD/X/PLY/6, inventory of John Woodhouse.

¹³⁶ SHC, DD/SP/1677/23.

¹³⁷ TNA, HO 107/959/3.

were recorded ten years later.¹³⁸ Three women worked as silk weavers in 1891, and two in 1901, both of whom were working from home.¹³⁹ None were recorded subsequently, but the census may have underrepresented the number of domestic weavers. In 1925 it was noted that silk weaving had been undertaken in a number of Bradford cottages until fairly recently.¹⁴⁰

There was a glover in Bradford in 1621.¹⁴¹ Two women glovers were recorded in 1861¹⁴² and one was listed in 1881, but this does not appear to have been an important industry in the parish.¹⁴³

Brewing and Cider Making

Brewing vats were listed in three 17th-century probate inventories.¹⁴⁴ There was a wringhouse containing one cider ring in the village in 1668,¹⁴⁵ and cider making equipment was listed in a probate inventory in 1685.¹⁴⁶ Robert Smith was a brewer in Bradford in 1811.¹⁴⁷ A cider house was recorded in 1842.¹⁴⁸

Stanley James Sheppy of Three Bridges farm was licensed to sell cider from the premises in 1936.¹⁴⁹ He had only planted 2½ a. of orchards by his death in 1948, chiefly purchasing apples rather than growing them himself. In the 1950s his son Richard began planting more orchards, and by 1982 Three Bridges had 40 acres of orchards, and was pressing over 600 tons of apples a year.¹⁵⁰ Richard Sheppy also developed the cider farm into

¹³⁸ TNA, HO 107/1921.

¹³⁹ TNA, RG 12/1871; RG 13/2270.

¹⁴⁰ Mathews, 'Bradford', 44.

¹⁴¹ SHC, Q/RLA/1, lic. of Henry Hayne.

¹⁴² TNA, RG 9/1610.

¹⁴³ TNA, RG 11/2361.

¹⁴⁴ SHC, DD/X/PLY/6, inventory of John Woodhouse; SHC, DD/SP/1677/24; DD/SP/1680/59.

¹⁴⁵ SHC, DD/X/PLY/6, inventory of John Woodhouse.

¹⁴⁶ SHC, DD/SP/1685/48.

¹⁴⁷ SHC, Q/SR/383/57.

¹⁴⁸ SHC, D/D/Rt/A/401.

¹⁴⁹ SHC, Q/LIC/1/, no. 3.

¹⁵⁰ SHC, A/CMQ/2/402; SHC, A/DQO/48/17, cutting from The Times, 15 Feb. 1982.

a popular tourist destination, opening a museum of rural life and tearoom at the site.¹⁵¹ At his death in 2003 Richard was succeeded by his son David. By 2016 the company was an internationally significant cider producer, making 3,000,000 litres a year, with exports going to 10 countries, including the USA and China.¹⁵² In 2017 the venture was expanded when a larger shop, café, bar, and restaurant were opened at Three Bridges.¹⁵³

Other Trades and Crafts

A John le Carpenter is recorded in the lay subsidy of 1327.¹⁵⁴ John Ashcombe was a merchant and ropemaker in Bradford c.1400-30.¹⁵⁵ Henry Trood was listed as a butcher in 1619.¹⁵⁶ A carpenter was recorded in the village in 1662¹⁵⁷ and a blacksmith in 1683.¹⁵⁸ William Venning, a tallow chandler, occupied a house and soap house in Bradford in 1768.¹⁵⁹ There was a butcher in the village in 1786.¹⁶⁰ In 1799 two bakers, Andrew Williams and John Gould, were tried for selling bread under weight.¹⁶¹

In 1851 there were two milliners, four tailors, six blacksmiths, two laundresses, one saddler, seven carpenters, one coach builder, one sawyer, one wheelwright (and an apprentice), six dressmakers, one baker, five shoemakers, two butchers, and one mason.¹⁶² In 1861 George Bull, a master mason, employed four men.¹⁶³ Women worked in a range of occupations. There were nine laundresses or washer women recorded in 1861.¹⁶⁴ Ten years later there were two charwomen and three seamstresses in the village and one woman was

¹⁵¹ SHC, A/CMQ/2/402.

¹⁵² imbibe.com/news/200-years-old-still-going-strong-sheppys-cider/ (accessed 10 Sep. 2019).

¹⁵³ sheppyscider.com/about-sheppys/ (accessed 10 Sep. 2019).

¹⁵⁴ Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest Som.*, 146.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, SC 8/188/9375.

¹⁵⁶ SHC, Q/RLA/33, 1619.

¹⁵⁷ SHC, DD/SF/2/7/17, lease by Sir Edward Hungerford to William Mosses.

¹⁵⁸ SHC, Q/SR/156/35.

¹⁵⁹ SHC, DD/DP/20/7, lease by William Burridge to William Venning.

¹⁶⁰ SHC, DD/HC/20/2/2.

¹⁶¹ SHC, Q/SR/367/4/27; Q/SR/367/4/38.

¹⁶² TNA, HO 107/1921.

¹⁶³ TNA, RG, 9/1610.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, RG, 9/1610.

working as a upholster.¹⁶⁵ However, the majority of working women were employed as domestic servants; there were twenty in 1891.¹⁶⁶ A thatcher was recorded in 1881.¹⁶⁷

By 1901 the number of traditional trades practised by Bradford villagers had contracted. There was one mason, a blacksmith, a builder, a harness maker and a dressmaker. Three men worked as wheelwrights and one as a carpenter. Six women worked as laundresses and one was a quilter. Technological change was reflected in the presence of both an electrical engineer and an electrical fitter in the parish.¹⁶⁸ In 1902 three men in the village were employed as full-time gardeners.¹⁶⁹

The railway employed Bradford men in various capacities throughout the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th. There were three railway labourers in 1851.¹⁷⁰ Two railway policemen were recorded in 1861,¹⁷¹ and there was an engine driver living in the village in 1880.¹⁷² A railway platelayer and railway porter lived in the parish in 1891.¹⁷³ A signalman was recorded in 1901.¹⁷⁴

Traditional crafts had declined noticeably by the publication of a 1939 directory, when only a wheelwright concern was recorded. A motor engineering company and garage was operating at Three Bridges and there was also wireless engineer living in the village.¹⁷⁵ There was a small factory producing shepherds' huts at Hele in 2019.

RETAIL AND SERVICES

¹⁶⁵ TNA RG 10/2362.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, RG 12/1871.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, RG 11/2361.

¹⁶⁸ TNA, RG 13/2270.

¹⁶⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1902), 132-3.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, HO 107/1921.

¹⁷¹ TNA, RG 9/1610.

¹⁷² SHC, Q/SR/722/61-72.

¹⁷³ TNA, RG 12/1871.

¹⁷⁴ RG 13/2270.

¹⁷⁵ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1939), 107.

Bradford had a coffee house in 1786, run by Joseph Voisey,¹⁷⁶ and a coffee tavern was also recorded in 1883.¹⁷⁷ There was a shop in the village in 1866¹⁷⁸ and two were recorded in 1883.¹⁷⁹ There was a marine store dealer in 1866.¹⁸⁰ By 1897 there was only one shop in the village, located at the post office.¹⁸¹ There was a grocer in 1919.¹⁸² Clifford G. Berry was operating as a haulier in Bradford by 1927.¹⁸³ By 1944 Berry was also operating motor coaches.¹⁸⁴ In 1947 he was employing c.10 people.¹⁸⁵ Around 1965 Berry's Transport, by now exclusively a coach company, moved from Bradford to larger premises in Taunton.¹⁸⁶ A garage and filling station opened at Three Bridges c.1929.¹⁸⁷ A further petrol pump was erected beside the White Horse inn in 1935.¹⁸⁸

In 1966 the village had a retailer of dairy machinery, a builder, a grocer, and a garage at Three Bridges.¹⁸⁹ There was a beauty parlour in the village in 1995.¹⁹⁰ In 2019 there was an antiques retailer at Tone Green, a cycle shop at Ford Farm, and a business servicing and repairing agricultural machinery operated from premises in Hele. The village shop and post office had a precarious existence in the second half of the 20th century but there was still a shop and post office, run by volunteers, in 2019.¹⁹¹

Public Houses and Hotels

¹⁷⁶ SHC, Q/RLA/19/9, 1786.

¹⁷⁷ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1883), 120.

¹⁷⁸ Post Office Dir. Som. (1866), 290.

¹⁷⁹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1883), 120.

¹⁸⁰ Post Office Dir. Som. (1866), 290.

¹⁸¹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1897), 132.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* (1919), 138.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* (1927), 144.

¹⁸⁴ Kelly's Dir. Taunton (1944), 246-7.

¹⁸⁵ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

¹⁸⁶ Kelly's Dir. Taunton (1966), 307; berryscoaches.co.uk/About-Us (accessed 10 Sep. 2019).

¹⁸⁷ SHC, D/R/wel/24/3/4; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1935), 105-6.

¹⁸⁸ SHC, D/U/wel/24/2/5.

¹⁸⁹ Kelly's Dir. Taunton (1966), 356.

¹⁹⁰ SHC, A/DBL/22/21, Feb. 1995, 8.

¹⁹¹ Above, introduction, communications.

Henry Hayne was recorded as a licenced tippler c.1608.¹⁹² In 1621 he was licenced to keep a common alehouse for a year.¹⁹³ Edward Clarke, a vintner, was keeping a tavern in Bradford in 1609.¹⁹⁴ James Shorland was a tippler in 1676.¹⁹⁵ There were three licensees in 1676,¹⁹⁶ which was still the number recorded in 1748.¹⁹⁷ The first known named public house is the Black Lion, recorded in 1687.¹⁹⁸ The White Horse, Bradford's oldest surviving public house, was first recorded in 1692.¹⁹⁹ In 1747 a Bradford innholder was convicted of swearing an oath.²⁰⁰ Two Bradford men were convicted of selling beer and cider without licenses in the 1750s.²⁰¹ A public house called the Anchor was recorded in 1767²⁰² and the Black Boy was first listed in 1786.²⁰³ The Black Boy, White Horse and Black Lion were the three public houses recorded in 1820.²⁰⁴

In 1841 five publicans were listed in Bradford, three of whom were women.²⁰⁵ In September 1843 the White Horse and a public house run by Betty Dight were open all night and the vicar, William Burrridge, and his son were forced to stay out past midnight 'to keep the churchyard free from whores & drunken fellows.'²⁰⁶ Three public houses were listed in 1861: the White Horse, the Black Lion and the Victory Inn.²⁰⁷ In 1978 the Victory Inn was moved to Norton Fitzwarren parish.²⁰⁸ It was subsequently re-named the Allerford Inn.

¹⁹² SHC, Q/SR/3/116.

¹⁹³ SHC, Q/RLA/1, 1621.

¹⁹⁴ SHC, DD/SF/8/2/11.

¹⁹⁵ SHC, Q/RLA/7, 1657.

¹⁹⁶ SHC, Q/RLA/19/1, 1676.

¹⁹⁷ SHC, Q/RLA/19/2, 1748.

¹⁹⁸ SHC, Q/SR/169/13-14.

¹⁹⁹ SHC, DD/X/UNL/1.

²⁰⁰ SHC, Q/SR/315/192.

²⁰¹ SHC, Q/SR/322/4/39; Q/SR/324/3/33.

²⁰² SHC, Q/SR/RLA/19/7, 1767.

²⁰³ Q/RLA/19/9, 1786.

²⁰⁴ SHC, Q/SR/RLa/19/13, 1820.

²⁰⁵ TNA, HO 107/959/3.

²⁰⁶ SHC, DD/X/SKG/8, 18 Sep. 1843.

²⁰⁷ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1861), 285.

²⁰⁸ SHC, D/PC/bra.t/1/2/2, 89.

By 1872 Alexander Adair of Heatherton Park had converted the Black Lion into a private house called Heatherton Grange.²⁰⁹ The property was a hotel by 1931²¹⁰ and was extended in 1934.²¹¹ In 1938 the hotel had 12 bedrooms, and facilities included a lounge, smoking den and writing room, and dining and morning rooms. It provided garaging for seven cars. The hotel was situated in 1½ a. of grounds, which included enclosed kitchen gardens; there were also three tennis courts in preparation at this time.²¹² The property was a public house again by 1993 when it was called the Heatherton Grange Inn.²¹³ By 2019 it was known as the World's End. There was a guest house called Springfield by 1939.²¹⁴ The former St George's School at Three Bridges was converted into a guest house in 1967.²¹⁵ In 1980 there was an unsuccessful application to convert Bradford Court into a hotel; the parish council objected on the grounds that it would not be in keeping with the residential character of the village.²¹⁶

Professional Services

The land surveyor Josiah Easton (1761-1848) lived at Hele. He worked on numerous projects, including William Jessop's abortive Grand Western Canal scheme between Taunton and Exeter in 1794-6, and acted as engineer to the Ilchester and Langport Navigation in 1795-7, another unsuccessful scheme. His industrial-style table tomb lies in Bradford churchyard, and a large wall monument inside the church commemorates him, his wife Hannah, and their 12 sons and daughters. Josiah's son John Easton (1788-1861), who lived at Stone House at Hele, was also a surveyor. As agent to the Grand Western canal in Devon c.1814-18, John was responsible for fifteen road bridges. His brothers Edward (1790-1848) and Abel (1807-

²⁰⁹ SHC, DD/DP/72/3, letter from John Brice to Alexander William Adair.

²¹⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1931), 135.

²¹¹ SHC, D/R/wel/24/2/10.

²¹² SHC, A/DKR/10.

²¹³ SHC, DD/X/WBB/33.

²¹⁴ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1939), 106-7.

²¹⁵ SHC, D/R/wel/24/2/267. For the school see below, social history, education.

²¹⁶ SHC, D/PC/bra.t/1/2/2, 116.

1848) also both remained in Bradford and were involved in road surveying and county bridge maintenance, and Abel also assisted John with surveys of King's Sedgemoor.²¹⁷

VCH DRAFT

²¹⁷ TNA, HO 107/959/3; HO 107/1921; RG 9/1610; PROB 11/2077/427; PROB 11/2092/357; A. W. Skempton (ed.), A Biographical Dictionary of Civil Engineers in Great Britain and Ireland I: 1500-1830 (London, 2002), 206-6.