

SOCIAL HISTORY

SOCIAL CHARACTER

Although the medieval parish was dominated by the manor, there is no evidence for a resident lord of the manor before the early 19th century when William Burrigge (1777-1858) resided in the parish.

During the lordship of John de Montague (d. 1228) the customary tenants of the manor made a combined annual payment of 20s. at Michaelmas to guarantee the ancient customs of the manor. A later lord, Thomas de Timworth (d. c.1296), attempted to enforce a number of Taunton's customs concerning ploughing and carrying on his tenants at Bradford. Such changes met with resistance and in 1353 Simon de Meriet was forced to acknowledge the customs of the manor. The 1353 custumal affirmed the right of a widow to be admitted to her husband's tenement without the payment of an entry fine. The youngest son or daughter had the right of succession to their parents' land. Peter's pence payments were reduced to $\frac{1}{2}d.$ for widowed tenants. A licence from the lord was required for a tenant's daughter to marry outside the manor, and for any sons leaving the manor with the intention of entering the church.¹

In 1327 Ralph de Camoys, lord of the manor, was assessed at 6s. 8d., the largest assessment in the parish. A John de Fidesschather was assessed at the substantial sum of 5s. Only nine other taxpayers were assessed at 2s. or more, two of them in Hele.²

Tenants continued to seek to protect the ancient customs of the manor in the 16th century. In 1544 two tenants, Thomas Foreacre and Richard Person, won a suit against William Franceis and Richard Warre, the lords of Bradford, ensuring that every tenant of the manor 'may grant his customary tenements, called a bargain, to any person he pleases, the

¹ Hunt, *Bradford Customs*, xii, xv, 88-91.

² Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest Som.*, 145-6.

same to hold after the death of the ‘bargainer’.³ In 1557-8 John Parker, described as the lord of the manor of Bradford Prior, refused to observe the alleged custom of his manor that copyholders should be allowed to alienate their tenement to anyone for life.⁴ Tensions between tenants and the lords persisted and in 1567 tenants won another suit against Richard Warre which affirmed the ancient right of succession of the youngest son or youngest daughter.⁵ In a chancery suit of 1574 Mary, the widow of Henry Hayne, brought a complaint against her son and daughter-in-law for depriving her of a tenement called Dolberry, contrary to the custom which provided that a widow should inherit the whole of her husband’s property for life.⁶

The 1581 lay subsidy indicates some wealth in this period. Nineteen people were assessed in Bradford and 9 at Hele. The goods of three Bradford people were assessed at more than £10 and the tithing rendered a total of £4 14s. 8d., one of the largest sums in the hundred of Taunton. Hele, where two people had goods assessed at more than £6, rendered 39s. 4d.⁷ In 1641, out of 73 taxpayers, 25 paid more than 5s.⁸

Inventories also contain indications of prosperity in the parish in the 17th century. Edward Clarke had 18 books in the study of his house at Stoford in 1626, including English and Latin Bibles, ‘Calvin upon Job, Selater upon the Romans, Perkins upon Predestination’, and various military treatises.⁹ Books were recorded in five 17th century probate inventories.¹⁰ In 1637 Joan Foreacre had clothing valued at £6 6s. 8d., £27 5d. in money, and a number of expensive goods, including four feather beds, drapery, silver spoons and eight

³ I. S. Leadam (ed.), *Select Cases in the Court of Requests, AD 1497-1569* (Seldon Soc. 12), 101-72.

⁴ TNA, REQ/2/95/20.

⁵ TNA, REQ 2/43/95.

⁶ TNA, C 2/Eliz/H20/57.

⁷ Webb, *Tudor Subsidy*, 122-3.

⁸ Howard and Stoate, *Protestation Returns*, 264-5.

⁹ SHC, DD/SF/16/4/1, acct and commonplace book of Edward Clarke, ‘My Study at Stoford, list of books’, 14. Jan. 1626.

¹⁰ SHC, DD/X/PLY/6, inventory of John Woodhouse, 1668; SHC, DD/SP/1635/131; DD/SP/1680/41; DD/SP/1681/114; DD/SP/1686/48.

candlesticks.¹¹ John Knight had clothes valued at £10 and armour in 1667.¹² One man had a looking glass in 1682,¹³ while a Bradford woman's goods in 1687 included another looking glass, pewter and a warming pan.¹⁴ However, in 1665 there may have been only eight houses with four or more hearths out of 62 taxed,¹⁵ and the 35 exemptions from the hearth tax in 1674 also suggest a number of small cottages, and possibly a degree of poverty among the inhabitants.¹⁶

In 1742 the parish was assessed at 5s. 8d. as its proportion towards the county rate, one of the higher figures for the parishes in the hundred of Taunton and Taunton Deane.¹⁷ In 1748 a Bradford man's goods included three gold rings and a pair of silver shoe buckles.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

By 1831 the parish had 545 persons, living as 111 families in 102 dwellings, which suggests limited sub-dividing of properties had taken place. Two homes were uninhabited. Agriculture was the main employment and 30 women worked as domestic servants.²⁰ By 1891 444 persons lived in 104 dwellings of which 44 had less than five rooms and six were

¹¹ SHC, DD/SP/1637/4.

¹² SHC, DD/SP/1667/32.

¹³ SHC DD/SP/1681/114.

¹⁴ DD/SP/1686/48.

¹⁵ E. Dwelly (ed.), *Hearth Tax for Somerset, 1664-5* (Fleet, 1916), 37-40.

¹⁶ *Exemption Certificates*, 305.

¹⁷ Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest*, 306.

¹⁸ SHC, DD/RC/16/2/3.

¹⁹ SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

²⁰ *Abstract of Population Returns, 1831* (Parl. Papers 1833 (149)), i, pp. 548-9.

uninhabited. Agriculture continued to be the major employer in the parish, though a number of men were employed in other trades and industries, including for the railway and at the mills. Working women were largely employed in domestic service, a sector which also employed a number of men as grooms or gardeners. Three persons were in receipt of parish relief.²¹

Conditions at some dwellings in the village were squalid. In 1888 a cottage at Stoford had no closet and a block of five cottages at Hele had only one closet between them.²² In 1922 a cottage at Hele was found to be in a dangerous state and unfit for human habitation.²³ Clearance orders were served on seven properties in Bradford in 1937 under the provisions of the 1936 Housing Act.²⁴ Housing developments in the 20th century were small and did little to alter the rural character of the parish. There were c.127 houses in the parish in 1946.²⁵

In May 2009 Bradford's police community support officer described the village as one of the safest in Somerset; there had only been five telephone calls to the police in the previous month.²⁶ In 2011 63.7 per cent of houses in the parish were detached, almost twice the average for Somerset, and 83.2 per cent of houses were owner occupied. Social housing accounted for just 1.5 per cent of housing stock in the village. Couples accounted for 65.3 per cent of households and the percentage of lone parent households in the parish (4.5 per cent) was just over half the average figure for Somerset. There were no multi-person households. People with Level 4 or above qualifications stood at 39.1 per cent of the population, significantly higher than the Somerset average. Only c.5 per cent of the population worked in agriculture, which had once been the largest source of employment in the village.²⁷

²¹ TNA, RG 12/1871.

²² SHC, D/R/wel/2/1/3, 365.

²³ SHC, D/R/wel/2/2/9, 77.

²⁴ SHC, D/R/wel/2/2/11, 155; SHC, D/DC/TAU.D/M/3888/1/Box6/WellingtonRDC (Bradford).

²⁵ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

²⁶ Bradford-on-Tone Parish Council minutes, bradfordontone.co.uk/minutes/20thMay2009.doc (accessed 9 May 2019).

²⁷ somersetintelligence.org.uk/community-profiles.html (accessed 11 Apr. 2019).

Migration

William, a Frenchman, servant to John Person, was living in Bradford in 1440.²⁸ There are records of involuntary migration under the old Poor Law when paupers were returned to their place of legal settlement. Most paupers were removed to nearby parishes. One family of paupers was removed to Heathfield in 1626.²⁹ A man was removed to Hillfarrance in 1669.³⁰ Some Bradford paupers were sent further afield. In 1621 a farmer from Sampford Peverell in Devon complained that Bradford apprentices had been placed with him, even though there were wealthier men in their own parish.³¹ In 1842 a family was removed from Bradford to Hemyock in Devon.³² A number of serge weavers left the parish for Taunton in the 18th century.³³

In 1851 Sarah E. Murch, a schoolmistress born in Jamaica, was living in the village.³⁴ Gypsies may have maintained long-standing connections with the parish. A gypsy from a camp near Stoford was buried in Bradford churchyard in 1844.³⁵ Two families were occupying caravans at Stoford in 1891. Most members of these families were born in Somerset and Devon, but one was born in Cornwall and another in Norwich.³⁶ There were gypsies at Three Bridges in 1983.³⁷

A journeyman wheelwright living in Bradford in 1901 was born in Savannah, Georgia, USA. Men originally from Bradford who served in the First World War had emigrated to Australia, Canada and Argentina.³⁸ The New Zealand artist Frances Hodgkins (1869-1947) lived in the village around the time of the Second World War. Her works

²⁸ TNA, E 179/169/92, m. 1, englandsimmigrants.com/ (accessed 18 Sep. 2019).

²⁹ SHC, Q/SR/56/30.

³⁰ M. C. B. Dawes (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset: Vol. IV. Charles II. 1666-1677 (Som. Rec. Soc. 34), 71.

³¹ SHC, Q/SR/39/133.

³² SHC, Q/SR/524/133.

³³ For example, DD/SAS/C/238/2/5, James Bartlett, 1719.

³⁴ TNA, HO 107/1921.

³⁵ SHC, D/P/bra.t/2/1/8, 31.

³⁶ TNA, RG 12/1871.

³⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/1/2/2, 188, 192.

³⁸ SHC, C/EW/7/23.

include *The River Tone* (c.1939).³⁹ In 1967 one family moved to Virginia, USA, and another to Singapore.⁴⁰ In 2011 there were 21 people living in Bradford who had been born outside the UK.⁴¹

COMMUNAL LIFE

Little is known about village festivities in the medieval and early modern period, but in 1637 elderly parishioners testified that part of the churchyard had been used for bowling and recreation throughout their lives.⁴² In 1611 a woman claimed her illegitimate child had been conceived on the 'Bradford play day'.⁴³ A skimmington was held in the parish in 1790.⁴⁴ Ploughing matches were held in the village in the 19th century.⁴⁵

Village Organisations and amenities

The village hall, originally known as the village club, opened in April 1912; it was the gift of Thomas Edward Wilkinson (1837-1914) of Bradford Court, the former bishop of Zululand. The building, designed by Samson & Colthurst of Bridgwater, cost c.£300, and originally had seating capacity for 100 persons. It initially consisted of two rooms designated for men and boys, which were separated by a moveable screen. A miniature rifle range lay at the rear and club amenities included a billiard table and bagatelle board.⁴⁶ The parish vestry held its meetings at the hall (from March 1913) as did its successor body, the parochial church council.⁴⁷ The parish council also held its meetings in the building.⁴⁸ A cloakroom was added

³⁹ Sheelagh Leigh-Ewers, pers. comm.; franceshodgkins.com/river-tone-somerset-c1939 (accessed 9 Jul. 2019).

⁴⁰ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 257-8.

⁴¹ somerseintelligence.org.uk/community-profiles.html (accessed 11 Apr. 2019).

⁴² SHC, DD/SF/16/4/2, copy memorandum on Bradford churchyard. The report also noted that the matter had been raised in the court of the archdeacon of Taunton forty years previously.

⁴³ SHC, Q/SR/14/31-2.

⁴⁴ SHC, DD/HP/23.

⁴⁵ For example, *Taunton Courier*, 14 Oct. 1863, 3.

⁴⁶ *Wellington Weekly News*, 27 Nov. 1911, 5; 10 Apr. 1912, 5; *Taunton Courier*, 4 Nov. 1914, 3; *SDNQ*, XVI, p. 264.

⁴⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/2, 13 Mar. 1913; D/P/bra.t/9/2/1, *passim*.

to the hall in 1928.⁴⁹ It also had a skittle alley by 1922⁵⁰ but this was no longer in use by 1978.⁵¹ By 1975 there had been kitchen and toilet facilities for some years.⁵² The hall was the property of the diocesan board of finance and run by a management committee, consisting of the incumbent and two churchwardens, until November 1977 when it was leased to a new management committee made up of representatives of the groups and organisations that made use of the hall.⁵³ A stage was installed in c.1981⁵⁴ and a single-story extension added in 2002.⁵⁵ Regular events at the hall in 1999 included coffee mornings and line dancing.⁵⁶ A large tapestry, completed in 2003, which depicts notable Bradford buildings and a number of local clubs and societies, hangs in the hall.⁵⁷

A second, privately-run, village hall, with seating capacity for c.150 persons, opened in the former Congregationalist chapel in Regent Street in March 1928.⁵⁸ The venture, known as the New Hall, was not a success and it had closed by June 1931 when its owners were fined for non-payment of rates.⁵⁹

A Women's Institute was established in April 1941.⁶⁰ It was disbanded in 2009 when no one was willing to take on the roles of secretary or treasurer.⁶¹ There was a Mothers Union by 1961⁶² and a Ladies Guild by 1978.⁶³ A youth club was in existence by 1976.⁶⁴ There was a Taunton scout troop at St George's School in Bradford in 1950.⁶⁵ In 1997 a Bradford boy

⁴⁸ SHC, D/PC/bra.t/1/2/1, *passim*.

⁴⁹ SHC, D/P/bra.t/8/1/1.

⁵⁰ SHC, D/P/bra.t/4/1/7, 21 Feb. 1921.

⁵¹ SHC, A/DBL/22/4, Feb. 1978, 11.

⁵² SHC, A/DBL/22/2, Jul. 1975, 5.

⁵³ SHC, A/DBL/22/2, Nov. 1977, 11-12.

⁵⁴ SHC, A/DBL/22/6, Dec. 1980, 8-9.

⁵⁵ SHC, D/PC/bra.t/1/24, 143.

⁵⁶ SHC, A/DBL/22/25, Dec. 1999.

⁵⁷ bradfordontone.co.uk/tap.php (accessed 5 Dec. 2019).

⁵⁸ SHC, D/R/wel/24/3/38; *Taunton Courier*, 7 Mar. 1928, 7. For the chapel see below, religious history.

⁵⁹ *Taunton Courier*, 1 Jul. 1931, 6.

⁶⁰ SHC, DD/WI/184/1/1, 16 Apr. 1941.

⁶¹ SHC, DD/WI/184/1/8, 4 Dec. 2009.

⁶² SHC, D/D/cf/1961/8/17.

⁶³ SHC, A/DBL/22/4, Dec. 1978, 8-9.

⁶⁴ SHC, A/DBL/22/2, Dec. 1976, 6.

⁶⁵ SHC, A/CVB/7/3/1. For the school see below, education.

was among those selected to represent English scouting at the World Jamboree.⁶⁶ There was a garden club in the village by 1980.⁶⁷ The Bradford Players amateur dramatic group was established in 1984. By 2019 the group was staging several shows a year.⁶⁸ In 2010 groups in the parish included a computer club, art group, and fitness class.⁶⁹

In 1980 it was said that a children's play area was one of the most needed amenities in the parish but nothing came to fruition.⁷⁰ A mobile library visited the village by 1980.⁷¹ By 1997 it called three times a month,⁷² but the service ended in 2011.⁷³

Sport

Cricket may have been played in the village by 1842 when the Taunton and West Somerset Cricket Club held its annual ball at the Black Lion inn; Alexander Adair of Heatherton Park as one of the club's stewards.⁷⁴ Bradford had its own cricket club by 1894.⁷⁵ It was revived in 1926, using land at Heatherton Park as the club ground.⁷⁶ The club was again revived in 1948, but it again appears to have been short lived.⁷⁷ A women's cricket team was established in 1941 under the auspices of the WI.⁷⁸ There was a Bradford United Football Club in 1911.⁷⁹ A table tennis club was formed c.1970.⁸⁰ By 1977 Bradford had a swimming club which had weekly meetings at the baths in Taunton.⁸¹ There was a short mat bowls club in Bradford by 1998.⁸² In 2019 the club had an upper limit of 25 members and played regularly at the village

⁶⁶ SHC, A/DBL/22/23, Sep. 1997, 9.

⁶⁷ SHC, A/DBL/22/6, Aug. 1980, 11.

⁶⁸ Bradford Players, bradfordplayers.org/ (accessed 19 Sep. 2019).

⁶⁹ SHC, A/EPF/14/1, Feb. 2010, 9.

⁷⁰ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

⁷¹ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

⁷² SHC, A/DBL/22/23, Mar. 1997, 11.

⁷³ SHC, A/EPF/14/1, May 2011, 17.

⁷⁴ Taunton Courier, 16 Nov. 1842, 1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 12 Dec. 1894, 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 3 Mar. 1926, 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 7 Feb. 1948, 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 23 Aug. 1941, 4.

⁷⁹ Wellington Weekly News, 8 Nov. 1911, 5.

⁸⁰ SHC, A/DBL/22/2, Nov. 1976, 9.

⁸¹ SHC, A/DBL/22/3, Feb. 1977, 10-11.

⁸² SHC, D/PC/bra.t/1/2/3, 209.

hall.⁸³ There is little evidence for rural sports in Bradford, but shooting was probably a regular pastime. There was a pigeon shoot in the village in January 1901.⁸⁴

EDUCATION

In 1612 John Marchfield was teaching in Bradford without a licence.⁸⁵ William Bowring, a schoolmaster, was running a school in the village by 1779.⁸⁶ By c.1818 there were three schools in the parish teaching 57 children.⁸⁷ In 1833 the parish had two day schools educating 12 boys and 14 girls at the expense of their parents. There were two Sunday schools, one with 24 boys and 34 girls, and another founded that year with 14 boys and 22 girls; both were supported by subscriptions.⁸⁸

Public Education to 1945

By c.1846 there was a National school with one classroom. The school had 25 boys and 33 girls with a further 13 boys and 14 girls attending on Sunday. The annual running costs of the school were £20, paid for by voluntary subscriptions and fees from the parents, out of which £13 paid the salary of the schoolmistress. There were a further four voluntary teachers. There was no teacher's house.⁸⁹

A new building for the National school opened in 1863.⁹⁰ Reports in the 19th century were variable. In 1864 the school was described as very good but standards had fallen sharply by 1878 when the work of the upper classes was stated to be poor and it was noted that

⁸³ bradfordontone.co.uk/bowls.php (accessed 19 Sep. 2019).

⁸⁴ *Wellington Weekly News*, 16 Jan. 1901, 5.

⁸⁵ SHC, D/D/ca/175.

⁸⁶ SHC, DD/DP/20/7, lease by William Burrigge to William Bowring; LMA, MS 11936/387/603962; SHC, Q/REL/35/5.

⁸⁷ *Educ. of Poor Digest* (1819), 774.

⁸⁸ *Educ. Enq. Abstract* (1835), 795.

⁸⁹ *Nat. Soc. Schs. Inquiry*, 1846–7 (1849), Som. 4–5.

⁹⁰ SHC, A/CSP/2/4/3, copy plan of school, 2 Feb. 1863.

children were moving up from the infant class badly prepared.⁹¹ There were 100 children on the school roll by April 1869,⁹² but numbers fell sharply after the withdrawal of children from Heathfield, Oake and Hillfarrance on the opening of a new board school serving those parishes.⁹³ Academic standards improved after the decrease in numbers.⁹⁴ Weekly attendance rates varied considerably and were often poor, ranging from 53.7 to 98.9 in 1871, 39 to 64 in 1878, and 25 to 38 in 1880.⁹⁵ Children were liable to be kept from school to assist at home or in agricultural work like hay making and potato digging.⁹⁶

In 1884 the school building was reported to be seriously inadequate. It was too closely surrounded by trees, an adjoining garden was several feet higher, and the classroom was described as the worse lit in the district. The school's only window was broken and the walls were discoloured and dirty. There were no desks and the school also lacked a special easel or blackboard; the playground was also too small.⁹⁷ The school became a board school in 1885.⁹⁸ The school board comprised five members and was elected triennially.⁹⁹ A new school building, designed by W. R. Heyward, opened in Back Lane in June 1887.¹⁰⁰ From January 1888 until the abolition of elementary school fees in 1891 the charge for the children of farmers and tradesmen was 2*d.* per week up to the age of seven, rising to 4*d.* for older children. The weekly fee for labourers' children up to the age of seven was 1*d.*, rising to 2*d.* thereafter.¹⁰¹ Attendance continued to fluctuate, weekly averages ranging from 49.4 to 68.9 in 1894.¹⁰²

⁹¹ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 25 Mar. 1864 (unpaginated); C/E/4/378/1, 130-1.

⁹² SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 44

⁹³ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 141.

⁹⁴ For example, SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 146, 273.

⁹⁵ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 66-77, 126-35, 143-50.

⁹⁶ For example, SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 33, 37, 91, 98.

⁹⁷ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 175-9.

⁹⁸ SHC, D/P/bra.t/18/11/1, 1.

⁹⁹ Wellington Weekly News, 10 Oct. 1900, 5.

¹⁰⁰ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 194.

¹⁰¹ SHC, D/P/bra.t/18/11/1, 38.

¹⁰² SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 303-19.

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1902, school boards were abolished and local education authorities (LEAs) established in their place. Bradford school board held its last meeting in May 1903.¹⁰³ That year it was noted that there were separate classrooms for the infants' class and mixed school, with cloakrooms, water closets and separate playgrounds for the boys and girls. There were two teachers for the mixed school and one teacher taught the infants' class. The school had capacity for 84 children. There were 20 boys, 23 girls, and 30 infants on the books.¹⁰⁴ The school had both cricket and football teams.¹⁰⁵ A school library, with 52 volumes, was set up in March 1907.¹⁰⁶ A new cloakroom and porch were added c. 1909.¹⁰⁷ By 1917 older boys were being sent to Wellington for carpentry classes and girls for domestic science lessons.¹⁰⁸ There were 70 pupils on the register in January 1920.¹⁰⁹

In 1925 the school became a junior school with children of 11 upwards now attending Courtlands school in Wellington.¹¹⁰ In 1932 the school was reported to be 'very successful'.¹¹¹ There were 35 children on the books and two teachers in 1935.¹¹² In September 1939 evacuees arrived from a school in Denmark Hill, followed by others from Hornsea, West Ham and Wales. Bradford children received their lessons in the infant room while the evacuees were taught in the junior room.¹¹³

Public education after 1945

¹⁰³ SHC, D/P/bra.t/18/11/1, 210.

¹⁰⁴ SHC, C/E/4/380/42.

¹⁰⁵ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 373, 429.

¹⁰⁶ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 430.

¹⁰⁷ SHC, C/CA/7/19/2.

¹⁰⁸ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 1.

¹⁰⁹ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 12.

¹¹⁰ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 52, 57.

¹¹¹ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 85.

¹¹² SHC, C/E/4/64.

¹¹³ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 121, 133, 137.

From 1945 Bradford children sat examinations for grammar school places, under the terms of the Education Act 1944.¹¹⁴ In 1951 there were 36 children on the register, and the school was now able to use a neighbouring field, lent by a farmer, for games.¹¹⁵ In 1952 electric lighting was installed. Attendance that year averaged 98 per cent, the highest in the county.¹¹⁶ From April 1965 the school began to make regular use of the village hall as an additional classroom so that it could divide the pupils into three classes when necessary, installing a hut classroom at the school the following year.¹¹⁷ There were 48 children on the register in January 1965¹¹⁸ and 40 in September 1979.¹¹⁹ After plans were mooted in January 1982 to close the school and create a new school in Oake numbers began to fall; there were just 24 pupils at the school in September 1983.¹²⁰ When the school closed in July 1984 there were 19 pupils, most of whom moved to the new Oake and Bradford Primary School. At the time of its closure the school's staff comprised three teachers, a cook, caretaker, clerical assistant, general assistant and supervisory assistant.¹²¹

Private schools

In 1841 Harriet and Mary White were running a preparatory boarding school for boys and girls.¹²² There was a short-lived school for day pupils and boarders of both sexes at Rose Cottage. In 1898 it was reported that one of the children attending the school had a sore throat which was attributed to poor drainage, but there are no further references to the school.¹²³

St Katherine's School, formerly Mortimer House School, moved from Bristol to Heatherton Park in 1923. One of the Woodard group of Anglican schools, St Katherine's

¹¹⁴ For example, SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 190, 194.

¹¹⁵ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 163-5.

¹¹⁶ SHC, C/E/4/378/7, 2, 7.

¹¹⁷ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 204-5, 248.

¹¹⁸ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 240.

¹¹⁹ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 311.

¹²⁰ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 324, 337.

¹²¹ SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 354.

¹²² TNA, HO 107/959/3.

¹²³ SHC, D/R/wel/2/2/2, 91.

educated both boarders and day girls. On its opening at Heatherton the school had 32 pupils, rising to 65 by November 1927. Its headmistress, Miss Winifred Slater, was succeeded by Miss C. M. Hartnell in 1924. Miss Hartnell was headmistress until 1949 when she was succeeded by Miss E. Hutchinson. The school's primary department, under the headship of Miss M. A. Fryer, opened in 1925. A baroque-style chapel, designed by H. S. W. Stone, was completed in 1928 at a cost of £2,000. Around 1937 it was linked to the main building by an open loggia. The school library was presented with 600 books by a Mrs Heath in 1933.¹²⁴

In 1938 there were 87 pupils at the school, of whom 42 were boarders. Twenty-seven of the pupils, including six boys, were under 11. The staff comprised the headmistress and eight full-time and four part-time teachers. There were eight girls in the sixth form, three of whom were in the upper sixth. None of the upper sixth girls were entering for a full Higher School Certificate. An inspectors' report that year described the school's academic standards as of 'astonishingly poor quality', with the teaching of Mathematics, French and Latin being singled out for particular criticism. Of the girls who had left in the previous three years and chosen to pursue further training, one had gone to university, eight to domestic science training college, three to hospitals to train as nurses, three to secretarial college, two to train as nursery school teachers, one to the Royal College of Music, and one to a physical training college.¹²⁵ The school had three houses, and numerous clubs and societies which in 1949 included an orchestra, Girl Guides, debating society, stamp club and Red Cross detachment.¹²⁶

In 1950 the school had 144 pupils, two of whom were boys aged under 11. Sixty-six of the pupils were boarders. The headmistress was supported by a staff of 11 full-time mistresses, six part-time mistresses and one part-time master. All the children under the age

¹²⁴ Hartnell, 'S. Katherine's', 2-14.

¹²⁵ TNA, ED 109/5083.

¹²⁶ Hartnell, 'S. Katherine's', 20.

of nine were taught by a single mistress. The sixth form was still very small and none of the sixth formers were taking science. An inspectors' report that year described the general standard of work as 'not very high', with low standards in French, Latin and science. The best work was in art, history and geography. More modern works were badly needed for the library. The boarders' dormitories were overcrowded and sparsely furnished; bedsteads and other furniture were described as old-fashioned. The school had one hockey pitch, on which three grass tennis courts were laid in summer, and one hard court (used for tennis or netball).¹²⁷ The school closed in 1953.¹²⁸

St George's, a preparatory school for boys, was established at Three Bridges in 1946,¹²⁹ under the headship of W. Norman Williams, who was succeeded c.1958 by H. C. Burnell-Jones.¹³⁰ The school was situated in 3½ a. of playing fields. In November 1963 St George's had 46 pupils, aged between seven and 14; seven of these were weekly boarders. The headmaster was supported by two full-time and three part-time teachers. The boys were divided into four classes, but as there were only three teachers available on two of the schooldays it was often the practice to combine two of the forms. Latin and French were both taught to the more able pupils. General Science, Art, Elocution and Music were also taught. Inspectors reported that academic standards were not 'wholly satisfactory'. Pupils gained admission to a wide variety of other schools, including smaller public schools and local secondary schools.¹³¹ The school closed c.1966.¹³²

Mr A. V. C. Moore ran a short-lived school called Waverley at Stone House, Hele. In 1941 he erected temporary classrooms at the property.¹³³

¹²⁷ TNA, ED 109/9057/2.

¹²⁸ SHC, DD/HR/8, Heatherton Park.

¹²⁹ Anon., *The Schools of Somerset* (London, 1964), 26

¹³⁰ *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1959), 420.

¹³¹ TNA, ED 172/348/8.

¹³² SHC, D/R/wel/24/2/267.

¹³³ SHC, D/U/wel/24/2/37.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Poor relief

An inventory of Bradford church dating from 1634 lists several bastardy bonds and orders, the oldest of which dated from December 1569.¹³⁴ Deanes Ritherton, a Bradford woman, was gaoled in 1652 because she was unable to provide for her illegitimate child.¹³⁵ In 1679 a Richard Carey escaped from custody in Norton Fitzwarren, where he had been held in connection with a bastardy case concerning Margaret Milton of Bradford.¹³⁶ Persons not entitled to relief from the parish were removed. In 1617 there was a dispute between Bradford and Trull over a pauper's place of legal settlement.¹³⁷ In 1631 Alexander Brewford, a tithingman, complained to the Quarter Sessions that he had incurred considerable expense conveying paupers from the tithing and asked that the poor rate be raised to meet the cost.¹³⁸

There are surviving overseers accounts for 1719-1788.¹³⁹ In the year 1721-2 expenditure on poor relief totalled £77 11s. 10d. Most of the costs were met by the poor rate, which had been levied 40 times and generated £70 8s. 4d.¹⁴⁰ By the year 1774-5 annual disbursements had risen to £122 2s. 9½d. Seventy rates had been levied, generating £129 4s. 11 3/4d.¹⁴¹ In the year 1787-8 disbursements totalled £181 12s. 4d., while 120 rates had generated £211.¹⁴² Payments to the poor were made monthly. In December 1719 22 people in need received financial aid ranging from 3s. to 10s.¹⁴³ Renumeration for those caring for the

¹³⁴ SHC, DD/SF/2/7/17, an inventory of the goods and vestments belonging to the tenure of Bradford.

¹³⁵ E. H. Bates Harbin (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset: Vol. III. Commonwealth. 1646-1660 (Som. Rec. Soc. 28), 171.

¹³⁶ SHC, Q/SR/142/25.

¹³⁷ Bates, Quarter Sessions, 1607-25, 218.

¹³⁸ SHC, Q/SR/66/129.

¹³⁹ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/1- D/P/bra.t/13/2/2A.

¹⁴⁰ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/1, 28 Mar. 1722.

¹⁴¹ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/2, 16 Apr. 1775.

¹⁴² SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/2, 23 Mar. 1788.

¹⁴³ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/1, 6 Dec. 1719.

sick or elderly, and expenditure on shoes and clothing, was common,¹⁴⁴ as was meeting the cost of coffins and other funeral expenses; in February 1721 5s. was spent on a man's coffin and a further 1s. 6d. for digging his grave and tolling the funeral bell.¹⁴⁵

By 1821 a select vestry, with eight members, heard applications for relief and oversaw the poor house.¹⁴⁶ In January 1823 the select vestry ordered the overseers to apply for a warrant against Joseph Baker for refusing to work and abandoning his wife and children.¹⁴⁷ The vestry assigned pauper children to those liable to take parish apprentices by lottery.¹⁴⁸

William Easton represented Bradford at the first meeting of the Board of Guardians of Wellington Union in May 1836.¹⁴⁹ Despite the establishment of the Union workhouse in Wellington, the poor of Bradford continued to receive some measure of out-relief. Two people in the parish were described as paupers in 1851, and three people were in receipt of parish relief in 1891.¹⁵⁰

Little is known of the parish poor house. By the late 18th century there was a poor house close to the site where the village hall was subsequently built.¹⁵¹ By 1808 part of the parsonage barn had been converted into a new poor house.¹⁵² It seems to have been poorly maintained. In June 1822 the select vestry ordered the overseers to repair its path and also fill in the pond in front of it.¹⁵³ Months later it was said to be in disrepair and in need of proper beds and bedsteads.¹⁵⁴ In December 1831 the poor house was again found to be inadequate;

¹⁴⁴ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/1-D/P/bra.t/13/2/2A, passim.

¹⁴⁵ SHC, D/P/bra.t/13/2/1, 19 Feb. 1721.

¹⁴⁶ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 13 May 1821.

¹⁴⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 5 Jan 1823.

¹⁴⁸ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 21 Nov. 1823.

¹⁴⁹ SHC, D/G/w/8a/1, 1.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, HO 107/1921; RG 12/1871.

¹⁵¹ SHC, A/CSP/2/2/2, notes on Hope House, extract from deed, n.d.

¹⁵² SHC, A/CSP/2/2/2, notes on Hope House, transcript of indenture, 1808.

¹⁵³ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 23 Jun. 1822.

¹⁵⁴ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 18 Aug. 1822.

its lower room was regularly filled with smoke and the vestry suggested that two fireplaces would need to be installed to alleviate this; a partition was also required for the upper room.¹⁵⁵ The poor house had a courtyard and three line posts were installed there in September 1822 to dry the inmates' clothes.¹⁵⁶ In August 1836 the select vestry resolved to sell the poor house with the proceeds going towards the erection of the new Wellington Union workhouse.¹⁵⁷ It was sold the following year for £133.¹⁵⁸

There is no evidence for any charities in Bradford.¹⁵⁹ However, individuals did make financial bequests to the poor of the parish. In 1575 James Rowsewell left 20s.¹⁶⁰ Edward Clarke of Chipley left £5 in 1679.¹⁶¹ Around 1636 a new 'poor man's box' was purchased for Bradford church.¹⁶²

Little is known of friendly societies in the parish but the Druids Society had a branch, known as Blackbird Lodge, in Bradford and West Buckland in 1901.¹⁶³

Health

A Widow Moore was practicing as a midwife in the parish without a licence in 1609,¹⁶⁴ as was Joan Cuffe in 1623.¹⁶⁵ There may have been outbreak of plague in Bradford in the late 1660s. There were eight burials in 1665 and again in 1666 before rising to 24 in 1667, 16 in 1668 and again in 1669, before returning to eight in 1670.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁵ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 1 Dec. 1831.

¹⁵⁶ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 1 Sep. 1822.

¹⁵⁷ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 19 Aug. 1836.

¹⁵⁸ SHC, A/CSP/2/2/2, notes on Hope House.

¹⁵⁹ Mathews, 'Bradford', 72.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, PROB 11/57/242.

¹⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/361/151.

¹⁶² SHC, D/D/cd/82, 22 Apr. 1636.

¹⁶³ Wellington Weekly News, 17 Apr. 1901, 5.

¹⁶⁴ SHC, D/D/ca/160.

¹⁶⁵ SHC, D/D/ca/235.

¹⁶⁶ SHC, D/P/bra.t/2/1/3, 1665-70.

In 1680 Robert Leigh of Bradford was licenced to practice surgery throughout the diocese.¹⁶⁷ William Leigh was a surgeon in Bradford by 1723.¹⁶⁸ John Taylor was recorded as a surgeon in 1751.¹⁶⁹ From 1833 a doctor for the poor was appointed annually at the Easter vestry meeting.¹⁷⁰

Many children were absent from school on account of an outbreak of measles in February 1872 and again in July 1890.¹⁷¹ The school was closed for most of February 1919 because of the influenza pandemic.¹⁷² A case of smallpox was reported in the parish in 1885.¹⁷³ There was a fatal case of diphtheria at Stoford in 1888,¹⁷⁴ and a child was also reported to be suffering from the infection in December 1897.¹⁷⁵ There was a case of scarlet fever at Stoford in 1924.¹⁷⁶ In 1980 a surgery was listed as one of the amenities most needed in the village.¹⁷⁷ However, no surgery has subsequently opened.

MILITARY

Seventeen men were fined for involvement in the 1497 rebellion; most fines were of sums between 20s. and £6 but John Rowsewell was fined £20.¹⁷⁸ Royalist troops camped at Bradford in September 1642.¹⁷⁹ In 1646 two tithingmen sought recompense for the £6 10s. 7d. they had had spent transporting and caring for wounded soldiers.¹⁸⁰ In 1647 it was stated

¹⁶⁷ SHC, D/D/BS/42, 1680.

¹⁶⁸ SHC, DD/HC/17/13/3.

¹⁶⁹ SHC, DD/TAC/5/2/1, 14 Sep. 1751.

¹⁷⁰ SHC, D/P/bra.t/9/1/1, 8 Apr. 1833.

¹⁷¹ SHC, C/E/4/378/1, 79, 225.

¹⁷² SHC, C/E/4/378/2, 7.

¹⁷³ SHC, D/R/wel/2/1/3, 129.

¹⁷⁴ SHC, D/R/wel/2/1/3, 365.

¹⁷⁵ SHC, D/R/wel/2/2/2, 57.

¹⁷⁶ SHC, D/R/wel/2/2/9, 133.

¹⁷⁷ SHC, A/AGH/1/39.

¹⁷⁸ A. J. Howard (ed.), *Fines Imposed on Persons who Assisted the Rebels During the Cornish Rebellion and the Insurrection of Perkin Warbeck in 1497* (Pinner, 1986), 6.

¹⁷⁹ C. E. H. Chadwyck Healey, *Bellum Civile: Hopton's Narrative of his Campaign in the West (1642-1644)*, (Som. Rec. Soc 18), 17.

¹⁸⁰ Bates Harbin, *Quarter Sessions, 1646-60*, 9.

that Hele bridge had been demolished by the Parliamentary forces of Colonel Ralph Welden, during the siege of Taunton.¹⁸¹ In 1683 two Bradford men swore an oath to the Duke of Monmouth, attacked one villager and broke the windows of another man.¹⁸² Five men from the parish were noted as absent from their homes during Monmouth's rebellion of 1685.¹⁸³ Andrew Williams, an innkeeper, was convicted of refusing to receive soldiers who were billeted with him in 1795.¹⁸⁴

Men from the parish joined the army during the late 18th century and in the 19th.¹⁸⁵ Twenty men from Bradford joined the Royal Navy between 1856 and 1925.¹⁸⁶ Between forty and fifty men from Bradford served in the First World War; one of these, Signaller William Garland, was awarded the Military Medal.¹⁸⁷ Thirty men of voting age were absent on active service in 1918.¹⁸⁸ The village war memorial, a celtic cross adjacent to the churchyard, carries 14 names from the First World War and five from the Second World War. There are three graves listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in the churchyard.¹⁸⁹ The churchyard is the burial place of Air Vice Marshal John Beresford Cole-Hamilton CB (d. 1945), who was Air Officer Commanding of the RAF in Northern Ireland and West Africa during the Second World War.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸¹ Cockburn, *Somerset Assize*, 19-20.

¹⁸² SHC, Q/SR/156/35.

¹⁸³ W. M. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels 1685* (Som. Rec. Soc. 79), 8, 25, 85, 143, 182.

¹⁸⁴ SHC, Q/SR/363/4/10.

¹⁸⁵ TNA WO 97/562/1; WO 97/123/111; WO 97/1269/245; WO 97/1244/7; WO 97/777/30; WO 97/1219/228; 97/909/159; WO 97/718/124; WO 97/1047/5.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, ADM 139/752/35142; ADM 188/49/65555; ADM 157/1897/16; ADM 139/296/29544; ADM 188/74/81754; ADM 139/912/11138; ADM 188/1035/8729; ADM 188/129/107102; ADM 188/134/109731; ADM 188/135/110102; ADM 188/350/201767; ADM 188/232/158720; ADM 139/836/3598; ADM 157/2962/14; ADM 157/2949/28; ADM 157/2997/34; ADM 157/2221/15; ADM ; 188/600/20326; ADM 363/146/87; ADM 29/58/345.

¹⁸⁷ SHC, C/EW/7/23.

¹⁸⁸ SHC, Q/RER/15/2.

¹⁸⁹ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, cwgc.org (accessed 28 Apr. 2019).

¹⁹⁰ M. B. Barrass, 'Air Vice Marshal J. B. Cole Hamilton', *Air of Authority - A History of RAF Organisation*, rafweb.org/Biographies/Cole-Hamilton.htm (accessed 25 Sep. 2019).

VCH DRAFT