

## ECONOMIC HISTORY

### INTRODUCTION

Agricultural produce was directly or indirectly the source of Taunton's early prosperity. Markets, fairs, trade and the woollen industry brought wealth and demand for goods and services. The borough was farmed out for up to £51 15s. 6  $\frac{3}{4}$  d. in 1266.<sup>1</sup> In 1327 and 1334 most tax was paid by burgesses but in 1339 one man, owed over £65 for wool, was taxed at only 3s. in 1327. Many wealthy townsmen do not appear in the tax lists.<sup>2</sup> In 1340 the ninth of movables was £20, second in Somerset only to Wells at £21.<sup>3</sup> In 1524 East Street paid nearly £20 including £5 from one man, but rich agricultural Holway tithing paid £2 6s. 4d. In the suburbs four men were assessed at £25 to £50.<sup>4</sup> Later assessments bore less relation to true wealth. Of 98 taxpayers in 1628 only Robert Hill was assessed at over £7 in goods and wealthy merchant Andrew Henley at only £8 in land.<sup>5</sup> However, in 1635 Taunton had the highest ship money assessment in the county at £100 whereas Bath and Bridgwater were assessed at only £70.<sup>6</sup>

The economy suffered badly during the Civil War, attested by the hearth tax returns, but recovered as an increasing population benefitted producers of food, goods and services. Farmers and craftsmen lent money on bond or pawn, sometimes enabling business.<sup>7</sup> In 1701 a visitor described Taunton as 'a large town and of great trade'.<sup>8</sup> The borough land tax assessment fell from £726 6s. 6d. in 1692 to £544 12s. 3d. in 1728, although still more than Bath, as the decline in the serge industry resulted in empty property and traders refusing to

<sup>1</sup> T.J. Hunt, *The Medieval Customs of Taunton Manor*, xi.

<sup>2</sup> F. Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest etc*, 147, 149, 151—2, 154, 274; R. E. Glasscock, *Subsidy of 1334*, 263; *Cal. Pat.* 1336—40, p. 294; SHC, T/PH/win 1334—5.

<sup>3</sup> TNA, E 179/169/14; *SDNQ*, XXIX, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> TNA, E 179/169/180. The rest of the borough and most of St James' parish is missing or illegible.

<sup>5</sup> SHC, DD/SF/1/5/11.

<sup>6</sup> A. Nott and J. Hasler, *Wells Convocation Act Bks*, II, 679.

<sup>7</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1645/51, 1664/75, 1669/92, 1672/54.

<sup>8</sup> *HMC, MSS of the Earl of Egmont II*, p. 196.

pay their rates. In 1745 additional tax was levied on stock, previously under assessed.<sup>9</sup> In 1767 agricultural land was assessed for £338 in land tax compared with £656 for town houses, markets and stock in trade.<sup>10</sup> In 1791 larger and wealthier Bath paid £443 but Taunton borough alone paid £726.<sup>11</sup> In 1821 of 1,706 families, 1,287 were engaged in trade, manufacture or craft.<sup>12</sup> Silk and other industries and high-class traders serving a wide area ensured prosperity revived and in 1824 Taunton's urban economy was assessed at c. £750,000 a year.<sup>13</sup>

In St Mary's parish in 1831 there were 174 merchants and professional men and 152 non-agricultural labourers.<sup>14</sup> Women worked in trades and crafts, managed smithies, goldsmith's workshops, dressmaking and millinery businesses, public houses and shops but were pushed out of several areas of work in the later 19th century including dairying, upholstery, shoemaking and basketmaking. In 1841 Taunton recorded its last female hairdresser until the 20th century. Except in drapery and neighbourhood shops most assistants were male, often young boys, until the First World War.<sup>15</sup> In 1911 35 per cent of male occupations were in industry and construction, 17 per cent in transport and communications, 14 percent in professional and clerical work and 11 per cent in food and drink and hospitality compared with only three per cent in agriculture.<sup>16</sup>

Female employment remained high in clothing factories but increasingly women were occupied in domestic service, paid before the First World War and unpaid in the mid 20th century. Although skilled women might earn up to 16s. a week in 1909 most were paid much

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<sup>9</sup> SHC, DD/TB/19/1; DD/PM/7/11/62; DD/SAS/C2402/27.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Q/REI/35/24—6 (1767).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. A/CTP/15/5, pp. 390—1.

<sup>12</sup> Census cited in C. and J. Greenwood, *Som. Delineated* (1822), 185.

<sup>13</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/23/16.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; RG13/2276—8; RG14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249; SHC, DD/X/SML/8, p. 52.

<sup>16</sup> *Census* 1911.

less.<sup>17</sup> In 1919 the borough health visitor was paid little more than the labourers.<sup>18</sup> In 1921 nearly 40 per cent of the borough's working population was female and in 1933 only 175 women were registered unemployed.<sup>19</sup> From 1938 women lost public sector jobs if they married and had to retire at 60, except during the war years but by 1972 more than half of married women under 40 were in paid work.<sup>20</sup>

The First World War inflated wages temporarily and large war bonuses were paid to council staff. Labourers earned 1s. 2d. a day in 1919 up from 6d. in 1917.<sup>21</sup> An emergency relief committee was appointed in 1921 when 200 men marched to the relieving officer's house. Unemployment relief work such as replacing cobblestones with tarmac was given to ex-servicemen and by 1923 large numbers were destitute and without benefits.<sup>22</sup> By 1932 up to a 1,000 more men registered as unemployed annually although Taunton's nine per cent unemployed was below the national average of over 20 per cent.<sup>23</sup> In 1934 only 19 manufacturing companies in Taunton employed more than 50 people, mostly shirt and collar making, brewing, engineering and printing.<sup>24</sup> By 1939 there were few unemployed except school leavers, nearly 2,000 residents were employed in manufacturing, over 660 in clerical work, a third women and half working for local or national government, and there were 335 labourers, many working for the council.<sup>25</sup> Employment in government services rose from under 500 in 1929 to almost 5,000 by 1943. Although the borough was more receptive to industry than in the 1930s the county was opposed and in 1948 only three firms employed over 300 workers.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Taunton Courier* 20 Aug. 1909; BNA accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>18</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/5/1 (Jan. 1919).

<sup>19</sup> *Census*, 1921; SHC, A/DVY/1.

<sup>20</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/5/1 (Dec. 1939, Feb. 1946), 3/37/3, p. 269.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* D/B/ta/4/5/1 (Jan. 1917, Jan. 1919).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* D/B/ta/4/3/4 (1921); D/G/ta/8a/47 (1921, 1923).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* A/DVY/1; D/DC/tau.d T. Sharp, *A Plan for Taunton*, 16—17.

<sup>24</sup> W.H. Thompson, *Somerset Regional Report* (SCC, 1934), 35, 47.

<sup>25</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>26</sup> SHC, PAM, 2563; D/DC/tau.d: Sharp, *Plan for Taunton*, 16, 23—4; D/B/ta/4/3/6.

Despite a large industrial fair in 1951 promoted by the borough, only 50 a. was in industrial use and in 1961 manufacturing accounted for less than a quarter of employment. By 1976 printing and publishing and electrical engineering each employed over 1,000 people followed by textiles and clothing with 947, two thirds women, and food and drink with 876 employees but over 24,000 worked in the service sector, nearly half women.<sup>27</sup> By the 1980s industries were closing and several employment sites were redeveloped for apartments in the early 21st century.<sup>28</sup>

By the late 19th century workers came from the surrounding parishes and by 1951 over 4,600 people commuted into Taunton and c. 1,600 commuted out.<sup>29</sup> In the 1960s the council encouraged commuting for work, entertainment and shopping, demolishing buildings to create large car parks.<sup>30</sup> By 1998 84 per cent of jobs in Taunton Deane district were in Taunton mainly in the public sector, retail and financial services and a third of overnight visits were for business. Despite the loss of the markets, Taunton remained the major shopping, service and administrative centre for the county.<sup>31</sup>

## AGRICULTURE

Taunton Deane has been described as the ‘paradise of England’, the ‘granary of the west’ or the ‘fruitful Deane’, loam over gravel, easily managed and well-cultivated.<sup>32</sup> Riverland and Bowermarsh in Pyrland tithing were apparently arable by the late 15th century and although Fullands may mean foul lands it was arable.<sup>33</sup> Agriculture provided produce for Taunton’s markets and raw materials for the woollen and leather industries. Although only 60 people

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. C/PL/2/25, pp. 4, 28—9; D/PC/stapg/7/3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/3/27/3, p. 88; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/9—12.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. A/BWX/5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/4/3/7 (July 1964).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. DD/X/MAY/26.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in M. Page, *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester 1301—2* (Winchester, 1996), p. xxi; W. G. Maton, *Observations on the Western Counties of England* (1797), 37; TNA, IR 18/8802.

<sup>33</sup> SHC, DD/MT/1/19; 3/21, 25; DD/SP/71, 331.

were agricultural workers by 1939 there were market gardeners, tomato growers and egg producers in the borough.<sup>34</sup> Until the livestock market closed in 2008 agriculture employed auctioneers, corn, hay, feed and manure merchants, implement and vehicle manufacturers and dealers.<sup>35</sup>

### Early farming

Evidence of possible Iron-Age or Romano-British cultivation has been found in the Fore Street area, north of the river and at Holway where a corn drier indicated extensive cereal production.<sup>36</sup> Royal and ecclesiastical interest in the area from the 8th century was probably partly due to agricultural wealth. It is not known how much 11th-century demesne or how many of Taunton manor's 80 villeins, 82 bordars or 60 ploughteams were in Taunton itself but the whole manor increased in value from £50 in 1066 to £154 in 1086 and some of that income derived from Taunton farms.<sup>37</sup>

### The Middle Ages

The vale of Taunton was the most productive and heavily populated of the bishop of Winchester's estates.<sup>38</sup> In 1241—2 sales of grain from the bishop's granges amounted to up to £160 a year.<sup>39</sup> Grain production dominated but there was meadow south-east of the town and some pasture with additional grazing on fallow fields, meadows like Haydmead after mowing and in Haydwood. There was a vineyard in Extra Portam tithing in the mid 13th century.<sup>40</sup>

The name Winnard occurred near the Hurléditch and Holway from the 14th to 17th

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<sup>34</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>35</sup> Below, this section, markets.

<sup>36</sup> PSAS CXXIV (1980), 30—1; CXXXII (1988), 97; CXLII (1999), 202.

<sup>37</sup> *Domesday*, 234.

<sup>38</sup> Page, *Pipe Roll 1301—2*, p. xxi.

<sup>39</sup> *Receipt and Issue Rolls* (PRS NS 49), 18—19, 32, 76.

<sup>40</sup> *Receipt and Issue Rolls* (PRS NS 49), 7, 18—19, 29, 32, 76; Hunt, *Med. Customs Taunton*, 31, 39, 45—6; SHC, T/PH/win 1328—9.

centuries.<sup>41</sup> Avice de la Barre had a grange outside the east gate c. 1250 and a priory tenant had to build a grange at Obridge in 1322.<sup>42</sup> Wheat dominated in the 13th century followed by rye and oats. Barley malted and ground at the town's mills came from the whole manor. By the 1290s rye for human consumption was grown in a mixed crop and few oats were ground.<sup>43</sup>

In the mid 13th century Holway tithing, which included holdings in other parishes, had 11 tenants holding four and a quarter virgates, meadows and plots. The largest holding was one and a half virgate. At Holway and Haydon 29 estate labourers, including one woman and a smith, held up to 5 a. each, worked three days a week, were released from cash payments and had rights to food and the lord's plough. The smith maintained four ploughs. Holway moors (51 ½ a.) were divided between 24 tenants. It is possible meadow and pasture were in short supply, perhaps due to converting pasture to grain production in the later 13th century. In suburban Extra Portam 37 tenants held only 42 a. between them and owed cash and occasionally autumn work.<sup>44</sup> A demesne sheepcote at Holway by 1302 provided dung for the 190 a. demesne across the hundred sown with grain annually. Holway barton was a demesne dairy, its grange was in the castle by 1324, and the cattleshed was rebuilt in 1362—  
3.<sup>45</sup> There was a pound there in 1408 but it was farmed for pasture and by 1419 the cattleshed was a house. By 1407—8 at least 68 a. of demesne arable remained in Holway hundred growing mainly oats.<sup>46</sup> Holway and Haydon greens presumably originated in the medieval Leazes.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2, 1361—2; DD/SP/73, f. 67; 100 (1660); 325/35, 231; 331, p. 38; TNA, PROB 11/179/424.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. T/PH/hbs/1/7; A/AHT/3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1208—1354.

<sup>44</sup> Hunt, *Med. Customs Taunton*, 31—3, 39—40, 43—6. A virgate in Taunton Deane was said to be 60 a.: SHC, ACPX/1.

<sup>45</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1254—5, 1301—2, 1361—3.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. DD/X/MAY/8; DD/SP/325/1; DD/DP/183/1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1409—10; DD/SP/325/1—61; tithe award, St Mary.

In the mid 13th century in Taunton Deane's Pyrland and Obridge tithings 28 tenants held more than 10 virgates at *c.* 3*d.* an acre but demesne overland cost 6*d.* or more. Pasture was limited but the inhabitants had grazing beside Pyrland chapel.<sup>48</sup> No town lands for horses or butchers' stock were recorded, although in the 14th century Cole Green near Shuttern was pasture belonging to the commonalty and Grasscroft was possibly used.<sup>49</sup>

Labour services could be onerous as grain was the most important source of demesne income until the mid 14th century. Holway tenants owed ploughing in winter and Lent, threshing, sowing, harrowing, mowing, reaping and carrying produce as far as Topsham, Devon, taking firewood to the castle or the bishop's belongings to Rimpton. Those with a full plough team did double work but were paid 1*d.* a day. Tenants were entitled to hay and rye and sometimes free grain but usually had to pay above the market price. If straw was taken for the lord's beasts it was paid for as the tenants' right. Cottagers owed two days work and received food. Tenants paid cash rent, hundred penny, pannage for pigs and to attend the lord's scotale, bought licences for their daughters to marry or to sell livestock.<sup>50</sup> Tenants in St James' parish owed similar services but some by custom owed only 1 a. or less of ploughing, smallholders owed 'small works' and a tenant with pasture provided an ox for carrying.

Mowing duties were carried out in Bishops Hull. While serving as reeve tenants had wheat and hay, 'Reveland' and were quit of works and payments.<sup>51</sup> Fines for copyholds were up to 40 s. for a ferling holding at Pyrland. In Millane tithing 12 workers paid 32*s.* 8*d.* a year to be released in the early 15th century but in 1427 seven worked a day at Lammas and in the autumn for release of rent indicating the continuing importance of the harvest. Demesne was

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<sup>48</sup> Hunt, *Med. Customs Taunton*, xxii, 69—71. Grasscroft and Millane are missing and there is no custumal for the priory estate.

<sup>49</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1348—9.

<sup>50</sup> Hunt, *Med. Customs Taunton*, xxx—xxxii, 31—2.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 69—71; SHC, T/PH/win 1328—9, 1334—5, 1346—7.

increasingly let as overland.<sup>52</sup> Cottagers no longer owed work but their land was still measured in daynes, sometimes interpreted as for day work, but from the 15th century an alternative name for perches or small plots.<sup>53</sup>

By the early 14th century, when traditional pastures were often under wheat, grazing of ditches and highways was let. At Holway there was meadow in Haydmead, which produced 14 ricks, and Rodmore.<sup>54</sup> Waterleats at Pyrland were recorded until the 18th century and streams were diverted in the Obridge and Priorswood area for watering meadows until the 19th century.<sup>55</sup> Although some rents were lost to 14th-century plagues there was high demand for tenements, then a mixture of bondland and overland, which fined for over £6 for a half virgate.<sup>56</sup> There are few references to field names but Tauntonesfeld let out in 1282—3 may be the West Taunton field of 1410 and the Tauntfield of 1457 and later, close to the town on the south-east. Small plots were named after occupiers. Wheat was sown at Okehill and oats in Cleyhill and East Langforth in St James parish in 1410 and later.<sup>57</sup> Culverhay in Pyrland recorded in the 16th and 17th centuries may refer to a medieval demesne dovecot.<sup>58</sup> In Holway Tauntfield, Redhill, Medeland, Waterslade, le Flores, later the Flowers, and les Mores were overland, mainly former demesne.<sup>59</sup> In the south Dowsland and Fulland were overland arable across three parishes. The former had a possible late-medieval farmstead but the latter was parcels of overland until at least the late 17th century.<sup>60</sup> There was sufficient produce for the local market and for export although in 1536 rioters attacked traders taking grain out of Taunton.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>52</sup> SHC, DD/MT/1/1—2, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/325/12, 29; DD/CH/76/4; DD/SP/257.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1301—2, 1328—9, 1334—5, 1346—7.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. DD/MT/1/6, 5/15; DD/SP/245 (1720); TNA, IR 18/8802.

<sup>56</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1346—50, 1361—2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1282—3, 1409—10, 1500—1; DD/SP/325/2, 26; DD/MT/11/2; TNA, E 210/1119.

<sup>58</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1500—1; DD/SP/73, f. 364; DD/MT/5/15

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. DD/X/MAY/8; T/PH/win 1500—1, 1521—2; DD/SP/331, pp. 2—32.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/77, 325/208; Hants RO, 11M/C1/19/10.

<sup>61</sup> P. Clark and P. Slack, *English Towns in Transition: 1500—1700* (Oxford, 1976), 90.



On the priory manor a tenant in 1298 sublet his land for cropping, possibly he could not cultivate it, others fed cattle on the prior's pasture and plough beasts and sheep strayed into the meadow in the 1330s. In the early 14th century tenants could rent small acreages of arable and meadow for short terms at 1s. an acre or more but were presented for subletting or subdividing.<sup>62</sup> By c. 1420 mowing, reaping, manual and grain carrying works were sold. Obridge produced barley, rye and cider and there was a demesne dairy but Grasscroft pasture was let to several tenants. The urban estate produced over £30 a year compared with £20 or less from the rest of the priory's Taunton estates combined. By the 1530s the priory obtained £44 from farming the tithes.<sup>63</sup>

### 16th – 18th centuries

Any common fields had been inclosed in the Middle Ages. In the south of St Mary's parish small, detached fields of Stoke St Mary possibly mark the location of a shared Stoke field. Pyrland Common Field and Stony Furlong on the eastern boundary with Cheddon may be fragments of former common fields. Windicks north of Holway was demesne meadow.<sup>64</sup>

Assarts recorded in the 16th and 17th centuries were older, probably woodland clearance.<sup>65</sup>

Favourable manorial customs allowed farmers to enlarge and improve farms having security of tenure, unless guilty of waste, and the right to raise money by mortgage surrenders.

Widows and daughters could inherit and maintain family farms.<sup>66</sup>

By 1566 holdings had been amalgamated, especially in St James, perhaps reflecting differing soil fertility north and south of the town. Some farmsteads were lost. Robert Hill at Yard added four holdings to the four he inherited. Small freeholds were created from former

<sup>62</sup> SHC, A/BFA/1, 4—6; A/AHT/3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/408; A/BFA/7—9; TNA, E 315/400, f. 21; BL, Add. MS. 30291.

<sup>64</sup> SHC, DD/WY/9/28; DD/SP/; tithe awards, St James, St Mary.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/86, f. 333; 162 (1676).

<sup>66</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 373; D. Defoe, *Tour through Great Britain* (London, 1927), I, 50—9; SHC, DD/SP/86, loose paper.

chantry lands. In St Mary's holdings were smaller, at least 15 5-a. holdings survived, but most were augmented by a share in c. 600 a. of overland arable and meadow, rented for up to 3s.

4d. an acre for good meadow. Eight holdings had barns only, implying they were held by town residents. Richard Morse of Moor farm paid 11s. 4d. for his three-ferling holding but £2 8s. 11d. for 46 a. of overland and his five-bedroom mansion included a chapel chamber. He spent £40 buying the reversion of two town houses for a son.<sup>67</sup> Two granges were recorded in Extra Portam tithing where all the tenants, c. 84 by 1579, were cottagers. Most tenants owed service as reeve, bedel and tithingman, many owed mead silver to the bailiff of Hull hundred, presumably in lieu of mowing the demesne meadow, and some at Obridge and Pyrland owed a day's work into the early 17th century. Two tenants in Millane had to carry timber to the mills when needed, one limited to ten oaks, in lieu of other service, the rest of the tithing escaped the obligation possibly following a dispute in 1276—7.<sup>68</sup> A few tenants were still obliged to drive stock to Winchester if required.<sup>69</sup>

Late 16th-century farmers produced grain, beans, fruit, cheese, cattle, sheep, pigs and fruit.<sup>70</sup> Townspeople kept fowls and pigs and a shared pigsty was recorded in Fore Street in 1404.<sup>71</sup> Pigs were a nuisance but attempts to restrict them failed and in 1851 a yard in Batts Court contained 11 pigs.<sup>72</sup> Pears were grown in Obridge by the early 14th century.<sup>73</sup> A saffron garden was recorded in 1505, a farm at Pyrland produced apples and pears in the 1520s, apples were grown at Holway and on several farms by the 17th century and a woman at Obridge had an apple chamber and cider house. Apple, cherry and plum trees marked an

<sup>67</sup> SHC, DD/SP 71 (Holway, Staplegrove); 86, f. 135; 331; DD/SAS/C795/TN/16; DD/DP/183/1; TNA, PROB 11/67/13.

<sup>68</sup> SHC, DD/SP/71 (Holway, Staplegrove); 334, f. 15; T/PH/win 1276—7; DD/X/HUN/6/5.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/331, 334.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, PROB 11/57/391, 11/58/109, 11/63/360.

<sup>71</sup> SHC, DD/PM/7/2/9.

<sup>72</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/27, p. 12; DD/SP/49 (1593—5, 1600); 50 (1611); Board of Health report in *Som. Co. Herald* 25 Jan. 1851.

<sup>73</sup> SHC, A/AHT/3; A/BFA/5.

urban boundary in the 1620s. An apple monger was recorded in 1640.<sup>74</sup> In 1633 Gerard referred to the cherry gardens and early crops of peas.<sup>75</sup> Cherry orchards were lost later to housing including at Priory Gate and Kingston Road.<sup>76</sup> Hopyards were recorded by 1612 east of St Mary's churchyard and on the site of the later Quaker meeting. Hops were tithed in the 1690s but two hop dealers recorded in 1774 were presumably importers.<sup>77</sup>

There were periods of dearth in the early 1630s with grain and pulses selling in the market for high prices.<sup>78</sup> Wheat was always a farm's most valuable produce. Bere corn was still grown in the late 17th century when clover was an important crop.<sup>79</sup> Several farms had dairies and made cheese in the 1630s when a Haydon man was a licensed trader in butter and cheese, travelling with two horses around Somerset and Dorset.<sup>80</sup> Cows were common heriots often worth more than horses and in 1682 one farmer had 11 cows and cheese worth £25.<sup>81</sup> Some farms with fewer than 5 a. of arable raised small herds of cattle and sheep.<sup>82</sup> In 1692—3 the wool of 320 sheep in St Mary's was tithed.<sup>83</sup> In 1683 a Christmas turkey rent was demanded so presumably they were reared locally although poultry appears rarely in inventories.<sup>84</sup>

Few oxen were recorded until the 1680s and horses appear to have been used for ploughing. Presumably demand for horses for trading and travelling meant that it was more profitable for local farmers to keep them and hire them out. A farmer with corn valued at over £100 in 1668 had neither oxen nor horses but others had oxen, plough steers and horses but

<sup>74</sup> TNA, PROB 11/14/794; CP 40/2496, image 904d: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; SHC, T/PH/win 1524—5; DD/SP/2 (Holway 100 1569); 325/210, 376, 1642/14, 1645/51.

<sup>75</sup> Bates, *Gerard's Survey*, 55.

<sup>76</sup> SHC, DD/MT/15/1 (1684); DD/BR/cg/5; tithe award, St James.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. DD/X/LI/1; DD/BR/py/120; DD/SFR.w/28; DD/SAS/C795/TN/10, 37; DD/PM/8/2/18; DD/HC/6/1/1.

<sup>78</sup> *Cal. SP Dom.* 1631—2, pp. 159, 282; 1633—4, pp. 85, 127, 171, 391, 539.

<sup>79</sup> SHC, DD/SP/43/8, 44; 53 (Oct. 1631); 1634/20, 1682/60, 1684/28, 94, 1685/18, 1690/18, 1700/28.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1635/128; 1642/14; E. H. Bates-Harbin, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1625—39* (Som. Rec. Soc. 24), 134, 214, 235, 256, 262, 278, 300.

<sup>81</sup> SHC, DD/SP/325/203, 206, 231; 1682/15; 1721/31; 1731/35.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1684/94, 1700/28.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. DD/PM/8/2/18—19.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/3.

little or no arable so presumably hired them out to farmers who had no mowing meadow or grass.<sup>85</sup> In 1699 ploughing and sowing 14 a. with hired labour, and presumably beasts, cost £18 13s.<sup>86</sup> In the early 18th century Taunton Deane reputedly grew the heaviest wheat in the country and even smallholdings were largely given over to it.<sup>87</sup> A lessee was allowed to take eight crops in ten years provided one was of pulses and he applied lime, dung or soap ashes.<sup>88</sup> Many farms had a dairy herd and waggons became more common.<sup>89</sup>

Many farmers diversified. In 1635 a wealthy arable farmer had malt and implements in his brewhouse worth £100 and brick, stone, alabaster and timber worth £106, either for building or trading. A woman farming in 1679 had a woad mill, wool and cloth.<sup>90</sup> In 1658 a merchant took four barns, over 51 a. overland and the pasture of the town ditch possibly to sublet or to create a farm.<sup>91</sup> A comfortable small farm was an investment and retirement home for tradespeople and professional men.<sup>92</sup> A doctor died in 1682 worth over £1,000 in books, money, produce and livestock. He had made cider and cheese and lived in a well-furnished six-bedroom house.<sup>93</sup>

Several farms had cider presses and in 1691—2 151 ½ hogsheads of cider were tithed in St Mary's parish besides culinary fruit.<sup>94</sup> In 1760 a Holway farm had an apple mill, two cider presses, bottle rack and vessels.<sup>95</sup> After 1768 the Tone Conservators planted an apple orchard and built an apple mill.<sup>96</sup> Gardens supplied the town, in 1715 a gardener left his son

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1668/34, 1682/60, 1684/38, 94, 121, 1685/18, 1690/18.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. DD/MT/15/1 (1699).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. A/CPX/1.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/358.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1721/31, 1731/35.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1635/132; 1679/2.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/325/201, 203.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1664/64, 1679/20.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, PROB 4/8674.

<sup>94</sup> SHC, DD/SF/2/52/9, 11/1/51; DD/PM/8/2/17.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/97/1.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. DD/MK/34, 53 (1784—5).

gardens, stock, tools and hives and a perennial kale is known as Taunton Deane.<sup>97</sup> Flax, a valuable cash crop although labour intensive, was grown from the late 17th to late 18th centuries.<sup>98</sup> In the 1750s a Lyngford farmer sold flax for £5 the pack and flaxseed for 5s. 6d. Production cost over £8 for nearly seven packs and threshing and winnowing seed cost 6d. to 1s. a day depending on whether women or men were employed. In 1761 flax was grown at Rowbarton but tenants were allowed only one crop in five years.<sup>99</sup> In 1787 three Taunton farms produced 449 stone of flax.<sup>100</sup>

Before 1763 a tobacconist invested in farms at Holway and Shoreditch but restricted arable requiring his tenant to add 160 horseloads of manure an acre before breaking fallow.<sup>101</sup> In 1799 a Holway tenant had to dress and manure his grass and remake his hedges and ditches at least every seven years.<sup>102</sup> The Aclands' Haydon Green farm in 1767 (c. 73 a.) was almost entirely arable and a large orchard was used for pasture.<sup>103</sup> Benjamin Hammet bought Holway farm in 1767, amalgamated from several holdings and overland, for £2,500. He let it for £130, reduced to £100 in 1774 as the farmer had invested in draining, guttering and liming.<sup>104</sup> His son John sold it c. 1810 for £9,900, values not seen again until the 20th century.<sup>105</sup> In 1794 Pyrland farm (133 a.) was let as a ring-fenced mixed farm with orchard for £260 a year.<sup>106</sup>

Generous common rights were confirmed in 1688 but there were few places where tenants could exercise them. A man was allowed to have part of Holway Green under elms

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<sup>97</sup> Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 172; H. Dove, *The Kew Gardener's Guide to Growing Vegetables* (2020), 52.

<sup>98</sup> SHC, DD/PM/7/10/12, 48.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. DD/MY/7—8.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Q/RLh/63.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. DD/SF/2/52/3—4, 8—9; 11/1/151.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. DD/BR/rh/3.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. DD/AH/66/11.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/97/1.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. DD/AY/28; DD/DP/183/1; DD/SP/198.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/76/10; 121/41.

from 1672, farmers tried to prevent access in 1739 and one ploughed in the green in 1750.<sup>107</sup> Part of Haydon Green was inclosed by 1767.<sup>108</sup> In 1878 when Taunton was formally inclosed the remnants of Holway and Haydon Greens were the only unenclosed lands.<sup>109</sup>

### 19th century

In 1810 a Haydon farmer produced 30 a. of crops mainly wheat and 12a. of hay, barely enough to support his four horses and 12 oxen, which he raised himself having a dairy herd. He rented pasture in other parishes, kept a sow, poultry and enough sheep to provide 480 lb. of wool. His orchards produced c. 240 bags of apples.<sup>110</sup> The neighbouring Haydon House farm (170 a.) had 99 a. arable in 1811, meadow, some former marsh, and 17 a. was orchard including Golden Pippin.<sup>111</sup> By 1816 Priory farm was worked entirely with horses and had a dairy herd.<sup>112</sup> However, in 1839 100 oxen were kept in St James' parish although only 40 for ploughing.<sup>113</sup> Between the 1820s and 1840s rents were reduced as farming was less profitable and owners failed to pay mortgage interest. Enfranchisement enabled further amalgamation at Holway, Shoreditch, Moor farm and Dowsland, which landlords hoped would increase rents.<sup>114</sup> A few farms were divided up for development like Lucky Tree used to build Mount Terrace in the 1820s, extend the Barracks and the Convent grounds and later build King's College.<sup>115</sup> Cockpit farm on the Kingston Road, shrank from 66 a. in 1817 to 18 a. by 1849 and could only have been viable by being rented with another holding.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. DD/MT/15/1 (1688, 1739); DD/SP/18/127.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. DD/AH/66/11; Devon HC, 74B/MT/1918.

<sup>109</sup> SHC, DD/SP/331, p. 8; DD/MT/15/1 (1739); DD/SP/18/127; D/P/tau.m/5/4/3.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. DD/MK/10.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/85/6, 90/11. Golden Pippin is an old dessert apple.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/121/10/109.

<sup>113</sup> TNA, IR 18/8802.

<sup>114</sup> SHC, DD/PYR/8; DD/CH/138/1, pp. 37—43, 47—52, 86—8; DD/DP/23/8, 45/12, 183/1.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/51/7, 54/4, 69/4.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/49/4, 69/8.

In 1821 of 1,706 families, 183 were still engaged in agriculture and 75 in St Mary's parish in 1831.<sup>117</sup> Wages were low in 1837 and labourers were given liquor, probably poor cider, in lieu of about a quarter of men's pay and half for women and boys. Males could earn 1s. 6d. on piece rate, but women only earned 7d. to 8d. a day and boys 3d. to 8d. Women and girls could earn more in the silk mills but female agricultural labourers were recorded until 1871.<sup>118</sup> In 1841 of 34 farmers 12 lived in town as did many of the 131 agricultural labourers but of the 177 resident in 1851 only 121 were regularly employed on farms.<sup>119</sup>

By 1839 grassland (over 1,098 a.) had increased at the expense of arable (over 957 a.) and in St James's parish 1,200 sheep were kept. The arable produced 27 bushels of wheat and 38 bushels of barley or turnips per acre and the meadows supplied Taunton with hay. The largest farms were at Holway (128 a.), Priorswood (126 a.), Greenway (122 a.) and Haydon House (110 a.). Of the remaining 54 holdings, 24 were under 20 a., mostly in St James' parish, possibly due to the proliferation of orchards and market gardens, c. 158 a. In 1831 a 4-a. holding of potato ground was recorded.<sup>120</sup> Large nurseries were laid out in North Town, the largest by Quaker seedsman John Young who eventually occupied land both sides of Staplegrove Road extending to over 17 a. by 1831 and a large seed shop north of the Tone Bridge foundry.<sup>121</sup> He supplied nearly 23,000 ash, oak, spruce, scotch fir, holly, Turkey oak and elm trees to the Nynhead Court estate in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>122</sup> The nursery continued until 1872 when it was sold for residential development.<sup>123</sup> North Town gardens were a nursery from 1905.<sup>124</sup> A small nursery near Chip Lane and three market gardens between

<sup>117</sup> Census cited in C. and J. Greenwood, *Som. Delineated* (1822), 185; SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/16.

<sup>118</sup> TNA, HO 73/53/9, 107/1922—31; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. HO 107/972, 1922—3.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. IR 18/8802; SHC, DD/DP/49/4; tithe award, St James, St Mary.

<sup>121</sup> SHC, DD/CH/79/1, 4; DD/HC/15/4/11, 20; DD/SAS/C/212/Map148.

<sup>122</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); inf. from the late David Rabson, Nynhead.

<sup>123</sup> SHC, DD/CH/21, 79/4.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/241/35/295

Station Road and the river survived into the early 20th century.<sup>125</sup> Another on Kingston Road was sold for housing development in 1947.<sup>126</sup>

In 1841 at least two farms were dairies.<sup>127</sup> Priory farm had lost land and was worked with Lambrook by 1849 when it had winnowing and threshing machines, an apple mill, a dairy with cheese press, 12 wheeled vehicles, seven horses, 210 Devon sheep, 40 cattle and 21 pigs, and produced wheat, barley and 75 tons of hay.<sup>128</sup> By 1851 farms many more farms had been amalgamated especially at Holway and Pyrland and nine had over 100 a., the largest being Old Pyrland (380 a.) employing 26 labourers. One farmer was a seed merchant and one had resident farm apprentices.<sup>129</sup> Greenway farm buildings were described as modern in 1852.<sup>130</sup>

Scavengers in the 18th and early 19th century sold the manure they collected and farmers mixed sewage from open sewers and animal dung.<sup>131</sup> The Trood family established a steam-driven bone crushing mill before 1838 making glue and bonemeal north-east of the Tone Bridge. Following complaints they moved in the mid 1850s to the canalside at Obridge as superphosphate and bone manure manufacturers but by 1868 were distributors only.<sup>132</sup> In 1854 four men had established the Taunton and West of England Patent Manure Company with a manufactory at Rowbarton but after 1866 the site became a brewery.<sup>133</sup> It was cheaper to import by rail and in 1872 agents could supply many fertilizers including guano.<sup>134</sup> Reaping and mowing machines were made in Taunton by the 1860s, agricultural steam

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. DD/IR/T/26/1, pp. 64, 68; 26/2, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. DD/KW/1947/21.

<sup>127</sup> TNA, HO 107/972.

<sup>128</sup> SHC, A/CGF/1.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, HO 107/1922—3.

<sup>130</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/2.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C2273/3/13, pp. 12, 22; D/B/ta/31/1/1, p. 11; 2/1/1, p. 679.

<sup>132</sup> *Taunton Courier* 28 Nov 1838: BNA accessed 12 May 2022; SHC, Q/Rup/192; D/B/ta/2/1/2, p. 232, 236, 2/1/4, p. 437; Som. HER 14501.

<sup>133</sup> SHC, A/BLQ/26/5—6; D/P/tau.a/2/9/7.

<sup>134</sup> Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).



engines were built from the 1880s and in 1902 steam ploughs and enginemmen could be hired.<sup>135</sup>

Between 1861 and 1871 the number of farms over 100 a. fell and Haydon farm (400a.), which had been three in the 1820s, was the largest. Farmland by roads was sold for building.<sup>136</sup> In 1866 wheat was still the main crop in St Mary's parish and barley and fodder in St James.<sup>137</sup> Wheat was grown on 414 a. in 1876, turnips, clover and artificial grasses on nearly 300 a. and c. 150 a. was under orchard, nurseries and market gardens. Of 592 cattle 250 were dairy cows and there were 2,604 sheep, fewer than earlier, and 215 pigs.<sup>138</sup> During the later 19th century some hedgerows were removed enlarging fields at Moor farm and around Lyngford but in 1890 there were over 50 holdings under 5a, half owner-occupied.<sup>139</sup> By 1891 only 72 agricultural labours were recorded as arable shrank and orchard declined to two thirds of its 1839 extent.<sup>140</sup> Farm prices were low and a farm at Holway, not yet seen as a development area, sold in 1893 for c. £4,700, half its cost c. 1810.<sup>141</sup>

A man incubated hens' eggs in the steam engine of the silk mill where he worked in the 1840s and later John Morse invented and built poultry incubators behind his house in Alma Street.<sup>142</sup> A poultry show was held on the Parade between the 1850s and 1880s.<sup>143</sup>

There were c. 250 cows from the 1870s to the 1910s, but some were in urban dairies, twelve by 1864, even in industrial Tancred Street and public house yards. Milkmen delivered to

<sup>135</sup> *P.O. Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890); TNA, RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2277—8; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 175.

<sup>136</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; SHC, DD/AS/6, 58; DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/8.

<sup>137</sup> TNA, MAF 68/59.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* MAF 68/486.

<sup>139</sup> SHC, tithe awards, St James, St Mary; DD/SAS/C2273/3/14, p. 372; OS Map 1:2500, LXX.8, 12 (1887 edn).

<sup>140</sup> TNA, RG 12/1875—7; MAF 68/1626.

<sup>141</sup> SHC, DD/DP/183/1.

<sup>142</sup> *Barbados Agricultural Reporter*, 15 Jan. 1855: BNA accessed 12 May 2022; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 44.

<sup>143</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/5, p. 377, 31/1/8, p. 66.

customers twice a day.<sup>144</sup> In 1873 enteric fever was traced to a Bridge Street dairy using water described as liquid sewage and in 1898 the medical officer of health recommended boiling milk before use.<sup>145</sup>

The Royal Agricultural Show was held in Taunton in 1842, the Bath and West of England show was held in the Taunton area several times and a Taunton Agricultural Show, mainly for cattle, was held from c. 1825—85. The last was revived in 1987 at Orchard Portman until the 2000 foot and mouth epidemic.<sup>146</sup>

### 20th century to present

Only 12 farms were recorded in 1901 but in 1905 Taunton had 1,594 a. and 880 a. of arable producing wheat, barley, beans, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, onions and peas. Only 13 holdings, mainly in St Mary's, were over 50 a.<sup>147</sup> In 1910 Holway farm, the largest, had been reduced to 149 a. with excellent land, a modern house and good buildings. It was further reduced to 91 a. by the 1920s when land was sold for building. Lower Holway (30 a.), still copyhold, was a dairy farm with orchards. Haydon farm had been reduced to 116 a. and Haydon House farm to 59 a. but the latter, a dairy farm, had taken land from the former by the 1920s. Moor farm, attractive for its building frontages, was a dairy with stalls for 40 cows.<sup>148</sup> Further south Dowsland (78 a.), mainly arable had been doubled in acreage since the 1820s by the Bryant family.<sup>149</sup> The principal farm at Shoreditch (111 a.) had a dairy house,

<sup>144</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 83; Morris and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1872); TNA, MAF 68/59, 486, 1626, 2196, 2766; RG 11/2366—8; SHC, A/DIF/101/14/281; D/B/ta/24/1/21/874.

<sup>145</sup> SHC, A/EPF/250/4/1 (1873), 4/2 (1898).

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* PAM 2957; A/DIF/79/2; A/BCJ/1; A/DQG; *Som. Co. Gaz.* 30 Nov. 1878; *Taunton Courier*, 21 Oct. 1885; BNA accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

<sup>147</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8; Bd. of Agric. Returns 1905 [figures are higher than for the 1906 returns]; TNA, MAF 68/2196.

<sup>148</sup> TNA, IR 58/82654 (2317, 2332, 2357, 2369, 2374); SHC, D/R/ta/14/16/5; D/DC/tau.d/25/17; DD/VL/1/2, 2/6.

<sup>149</sup> SHC, DD/AS/6, 58; DD/CH/138/1, pp. 47—50; DD/VL/1/2; TNA, IR 58/82654 (2305).

two cottages and a good farmhouse and had taken the land of the three other farms in the hamlet since the 1820s.<sup>150</sup>

Pyrland Hall's 119 a. were farmed with Pyrland Hall farm in 1910.<sup>151</sup> Slape's farm (84 a.), ring fenced in 1911, had its land divided between neighbouring farms by the 1920s.

Bought by the council for housing c. 1960—2 its house was destroyed by arson.<sup>152</sup>

Priorswood farm (120 a.), which suffered from being cut by the railway and trespassing on riverside fields, had a dairy herd of 40 cows.<sup>153</sup> Wellsprings farm's 50 a. of highly productive arable was sold for development in 1918 and after the 1920s Lyngford farm's 140 a. was built over but both houses survived.<sup>154</sup> In 1911 there were still 80 agricultural labourers and 54

specialist farm workers resident, mostly cow and horse men including one American cowboy.

The only non-domestic staff living with employers were dairy workers. There were 26 specialist dealers in corn, seeds, potatoes, hay, cattle, feathers and implements.<sup>155</sup>

By 1890 there were 27 small allotments.<sup>156</sup> The Rowbarton Allotment Association ran five areas of allotments and bought bulk seed potatoes for members in 1921.<sup>157</sup> In 1926 allotment wardens were appointed in St Mary Without.<sup>158</sup> By 1943 the council had 61 a. to produce wheat, oats and potatoes and cultivated 15 a. at Lyngford and Wilton producing c.

850 cwt of vegetables mostly for the British restaurants.<sup>159</sup> The acreage under allotments, many on playing fields during the war, fell to 99 a. in 1964, Kilkenny allotments were lost to car parking after 1965 but several survive.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>150</sup> SHC, DD/AS/6, 58; DD/CH/103/5, 138/1, pp. 47—50; DD/VL/1/2; TNA, IR 58/82654 (2305, 2316).

<sup>151</sup> TNA, IR 58/82658 (3512—13).

<sup>152</sup> SHC, DD/SCL/40; D/R/ta/14/16/4; D/B/ta/3/22/9, p. 400, 564; 3/22/10 pp. 20, 54, 70, 239.

<sup>153</sup> TNA, IR 58/82658 (3567).

<sup>154</sup> SHC, DD/MKG/28; D/R/ta/14/16/4.

<sup>155</sup> TNA, RG 14/14234—40.

<sup>156</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/3/14, p. 372.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. DD/X/HOWE/1/2 (loose notice); DD/X/RWN/1—9.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid. D/PC/sto.s.ma/1/1/2, pp. 68.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. D/DC/tau.d box 17, 1942—3, 52.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. A/BWX/5, p. 17; D/B/ta/3/24/1.

There were six licensed cowsheds in the borough *c.* 1915 and 39 dairies, increasing to 57 milk suppliers and retailers in 1931. Milk, neither cooled nor pasteurised, was sold from open containers and was responsible for a typhoid outbreak in 1919—20. In 1924, when nearly 1,500 gallons a day were consumed in Taunton, over a third of samples was contaminated. One dairy made twice daily deliveries of bottled but unpasteurised milk by 1929. The Co-operative store opened the first pasteurising and bottling plant in 1930. By 1946 three producers pasteurised their milk and in 1949 the county council became responsible for milk safety.<sup>161</sup> By 1952 there were 15 dairies, 17 milk distributors and four pasteurising plants, including Moor farm.<sup>162</sup> The Howe family farmed Priory farm as a dairy and hired out horses, for haulage. By 1921 its cows in the Priory barn, Lambrook and Cheddon supplied Howe's dairy, St James Street. During the 1937 Coronation celebrations the dairy bought Watcombe pottery cream bowls for customers. By the 1950s it had branches in Station Road and Ilminster but closed in the 1960s.<sup>163</sup> In 1922 a horse dealing partnership was established at Lambrook and 134 were still on farms in 1936. Pig and cattle numbers remained stable but sheep numbers fell. Orchards, market gardens and more than 3,850 poultry supplied the town. A poultry farm was established on St George's Avenue, replaced by housing in the 1960s.<sup>164</sup>

By 1941—2 farms used tractors or converted cars, and electric and petrol engines to drive farmyard machinery but most still had horses. Among part-time farmers were a solicitor, a garage proprietor and a timber merchant, and King's College (33 a) grazed its 17-a playing fields during school holidays, grew vegetables and kept poultry and goats. Twenty holdings employed 54 farm workers, including five women. Butchers owned or rented

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. A/DIF/95/32; A/EPF/250/4/4—6, 9.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/4/22/1 (1952); D/DC/tau.d/25/17; DD/BTL/75 (1952—3), p. 20.

<sup>163</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), ii; SHC, DD/TBL/73; DD/X/HOWE/1/2, 2/3; info. from the late Revd Ruth Howe.

<sup>164</sup> SHC, DD/AY/239; D/DC/tau.d/25/17; D/B/ta/24/1/162/9790; TNA, MAF 68/3312, 3809.

scattered fields, farmers who lost land to development renting grazing in neighbouring parishes and one took on overgrown land. The only class C farm was the army's 14-a. derelict potato holding. Holdings rated B usually had scattered lands or poor farmers. Recorded livestock comprised 587 cattle, 848 sheep, 650 pigs and 4 goats and 2,460 poultry supported by 537 a. of grass, 358 a. of meadow and 67 a. of forage crops. At least 45 a. of grazing had been broken up for cereals, which covered 277 a. There were 53 a. of potatoes, 48 a. of vegetables, mainly roots, brassicas and peas and 78 a. of orchard.<sup>165</sup> By 1943 wheat and oat production tripled, there were 92 a. of potatoes and vegetables, 6 a. of sugar beet and 50 a. of flax and farming employed 164 people. By 1946 arable production increased to 770 a. of grain, fruit and vegetables. Only two members of the land army were recorded.<sup>166</sup>

After the war New Barn farm at Haydon was created from 58 a. of accommodation land, a stone and thatch double cattle yard and a new house.<sup>167</sup> Lower Holway farm (c. 95 a) was a dairy farm in 1946 with stalls for 32 cows and four piggeries, probably selling liquid milk, but like the other Holway and Moor farms was lost to building development by the 1960s.<sup>168</sup> Pyrland Hall farm was sold in 1951 with traditional farm buildings, a white tiled milk house, Dutch barn, Danish piggeries and a new orchard with 102 trees but roadside fields were already built over.<sup>169</sup> By 1956 pig and poultry production had increased to 1,275 and 6,701 respectively,. Employment had fallen to 76 and only one farm had over 150 a.<sup>170</sup> Barley (359 a.) replaced wheat as the dominant crop in the 1960s and orchards were destroyed leaving only c. 10 a. (4 ha.) of top fruit and 19 a. (8 ha.) of soft fruit by 1986. Of 16 holdings totalling 1,136 a. (541 ha.) seven were part-time, three were dairy farms, two were horticultural and a poultry farm had over 17,000 birds. There were only 109 pigs but 700

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<sup>165</sup> TNA, MAF 32/155/281.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. MAF 68/4066, 4177.

<sup>167</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/23

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. DD/KW/1946/46; D/DC/tau.d/25/17.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. DD/MKG/28.

<sup>170</sup> TNA, MAF 68/4547; SHC, A/BVA/1 (1954—9).

cattle.<sup>171</sup> Taunton's grade 1 agricultural land disappeared under urban development before 2000. The only surviving farms were Haydon's poultry farm and Pyrland dairy farm with holiday accommodation and a farm shop but its land was in Cheddon.<sup>172</sup>

## WOOD

The square league of woodland recorded in 1086 possibly included Haydwood at Haydon, ditched in the mid 13th century, having its own woodward and probably the source of the castle's firewood.<sup>173</sup> By the early 14th century hedge trimmings were valuable indicating a shortage of firewood.<sup>174</sup> Okehills and Okeplace in St James' parish had been cleared by the 15th century.<sup>175</sup> Sales of mast indicate beech and in 1328—9 the lops of 38 oaks in Haydwood were sold.<sup>176</sup> Haydwood supplied timber to rebuild Obridge mill in 1421—2 but was largely cleared between 1531 and 1566.<sup>177</sup> Tenants could fell and sell timber on their holdings without licence by the 1600s.<sup>178</sup> They had rights in Knoll and Smocombe woods, mainly in Stoke St Mary but they had been cleared and enclosed by 1577.<sup>179</sup> In 1647 Haydwood and East Wood, Holway were agricultural land but the names persisted and a subdivided circular crossed by Oldbroach Lane can still be traced.<sup>180</sup>

Priory tenants were fined for cutting alder, ash, oak, pear, poplar, thorn and withies during the early 14th century.<sup>181</sup> There was 14 a. of wood on the priory demesne but it was let for pasture in 1540.<sup>182</sup> Priorswood was cleared early although the field name Great Wood

<sup>171</sup> TNA, MAF 68/4988, 6025.

<sup>172</sup> SHC, D/PC/stapg/7/3; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/18 (20 June).

<sup>173</sup> *Domesday*, 234; Hunt, *Med. Customs Taunton*, 32—3, 43; SHC, T/PH/win 1224—5, 1328—9, 1334—5.

<sup>174</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1328—9.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* 1409—10; DD/SP/325/31.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* T/PH/win 1301—2, 1328—9.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* 1421—2; DD/DP, box 193; DD/SP/71 (Holway 100).

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* DD/BR/hl/1; DD/SP/90 (1608).

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SP/86, f. 333; 3 (15 Sep. 1572); 8 (8 May 1577), 4 (2 Oct. 1589).

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SAS/C795/TN/16 (Holway tithing); DD/SP/319/302; DD/AH/66/11; tithe award, St Mary.

<sup>181</sup> BL, Add. Ch. 16332; SHC, A/BFA/4—6; A/AHT/3.

<sup>182</sup> TNA, E 315/400, f. 21; T. Hugo, 'Taunton Priory' *PSAS IX* (1859), 55; SHC, DD/PM/8/2/1.

survived in 1839.<sup>183</sup> The priory manor had a withybed in 1322 and willows grew in the south vivary by 1460.<sup>184</sup> Withybere and Withymead were recorded in 1684 and 1701 at Lyngford.<sup>185</sup> In 1839 St James's parish had some oak and elm timber but although there had been 258 timber trees at Haydon c.1802 only a few plantations were recorded in 1839.<sup>186</sup> In 1905 there were 17 a. of woodland, mostly at Pyrland Hall.<sup>187</sup>

## FISHING

The bishop's large fishpond or vivary, recorded from the 13th century was probably stocked from the Tone.<sup>188</sup> It was possibly the origin of Pool Wall and Pole or Paul Street.<sup>189</sup> In 1238 the bailiffs were to have two fishing nets made in Bridport, the larger 40 fathoms long, and in 1239 the king sent fishermen to catch 100 bream and 40 pike and pack the former in cloth and the latter in salt or as a galantine. In 1241 the king demanded 200 pike and 200 bream, implying the ponds were large and heavily stocked, 40 bream in 1244, 'as many pike and bream as they can' in 1261 and unspecified fish in 1263.<sup>190</sup> A boat was bought for the vivary in 1282—3.<sup>191</sup> In the 14th century the small fishpond in the castle garden and the moat were used to keep fish as the vivary was silting up and may have been disused by the 15th century. By 1362 it produced 5 a. of reed to thatch the Holway cattleshed.<sup>192</sup> Swans on the pond were marked in 1284 and bred and sold in 1302 but the remaining 1a. called Swanpool was drained before 1579.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>183</sup> SHC, tithe award, St James.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/325/29; A/AHT/3.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/358.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/90/4; tithe awards, St James, St Mary; TNA, IR 18/8802.

<sup>187</sup> Bd. of Agric. Returns 1905.

<sup>188</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1248—9.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/71—4.

<sup>190</sup> *Cal. Lib. R.* 1226—40, 352, 435; 1240—5, 31, 87, 270; 1260—7, 126; *Cal. Doc. Scotland*, 1108—1272, 441—2.

<sup>191</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1253—4, 1282—3.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1346—8, 1354—5, 1361—2, 1409—10, 1533—4; DD/SP/325/4.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1283—4, 1301—2; DD/SP/73, f. 52; 86, f. 118.

The Tone fishery within Taunton belonged to the bishops of Winchester. A fisherman was paid for nine days netting fish for the bishop's visit with the legate in 1218 and others were similarly employed in the 1220s. Local fishermen paid 16s. 7d. to fish in 1289—90, presumably in the river. The fishery including eels and salmon was later let but the rent fell from 26s. 8d. in 1370—1 to 5s. in 1376.<sup>194</sup> Millane tithing fishtraps were no longer rented by the 1430s.<sup>195</sup> Fishermen recorded in 1425 and 1442 were possibly fishmongers but merchant Simon Fisher left a 'motte with the fysshes' to his son in 1505.<sup>196</sup> Salmon was imported by 1532—3 and Taunton's fish market would have relied on imports. The fishery rent fell to 1s. 8d. in 1566 and 4d. in 1666 probably reflecting a decline in fish because of industrial and sewage pollution.<sup>197</sup> Obridge fishing rights were sold to the Tone Conservators in 1768.<sup>198</sup> The owners of Yard claimed the right to licence fishing and netted fish, hunted and kept swans in the 1680s despite the manor court's claim that every tenant had fishing rights.<sup>199</sup> Before 1854 John Halliday bought the fishery from the manor but by 1868 few salmon were found, nets, weirs and sewage having destroyed the fishery.<sup>200</sup> In 1878 it was ordered that eel catching fenders at Obridge be removed to prevent flooding.<sup>201</sup> Recreational fishing for trout and later roach, chub or carp employed several rod and tackle makers in the 19th century.<sup>202</sup>

## MILLS

The most important mill until the 1950s was the castle or town mill in Bishops Hull, presumably one of the three on Taunton manor in 1086, which served the urban area and

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1217—18, 1224—7, 1289—90, 1362—3, 1370—1, 1376—7.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/325/11.

<sup>196</sup> TNA, CP 40/641, image 1351; 656, image 1080; 724, image 1023: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; PROB 11/14/794.

<sup>197</sup> SHC, D/D/bw/1437; DD/SP/71; 325/209.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C/795/TN/16, 138; DD/SP/301.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/22/60.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. DD/MY/40; DD/DP/58/8; DD/TC/1 (loose paper).

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/3/8/1 (Nov. 1877, Oct. 1878).

<sup>202</sup> Pigot and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1830); Robson, *Dir. Som.* (1839); TNA, HO 107/1922—3; RG 9/1617; RG 10/2372—5.



market and was a customary mill, although burgesses could use any mill.<sup>203</sup> In 1205 King John ordered 100 qtr wheat to be ground at Taunton, carefully packed under his baker's supervision and sent to Dartmouth.<sup>204</sup> Obridge mills were on the Tone and Pool Wall mill was powered by the Sherford stream. In 1208 the two produced in toll 17 quarters of wheat, 14 quarters of oat gruel or meal and 23 ½ quarters of malt in two grades. The millers were each allowed seven baskets of wheat and six of meal.<sup>205</sup> In the late 13th century millstones were kept at Wareham, Hants., apparently to supply the bishop's mills. That coincided with a short-lived farming out of the mills but they were back in hand by 1297 presumably because they were so profitable.<sup>206</sup>

Only Obridge mill suffered much damage from the Black Death. Pilcorn and maslin replaced rye and meal, presumably reducing profits and the mills were farmed; five for £46 in 1360—1 and eight for £70 in 1367—8, the manor paying for repairs.<sup>207</sup> Millwrights were recorded from 1434 until the 19th century.<sup>208</sup> From the early 16th century mills were permanently let but by 1630, despite a court ruling to the contrary in 1580, the tenants paid for repairs as rents did not cover the cost.<sup>209</sup> Tenants ground at an appointed mill, whose pond they scoured in Whit week, but those obligations were not enforced by the late 16th century. Townspeople used town, Obridge, Pool Wall or Bathpool mills in West Monkton by 1607.<sup>210</sup> Millers' loaders were forbidden to carry grain out of town on Sundays in 1592.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>203</sup> *Domesday*, 234; Bishops Hull, forthcoming; SHC, DD/X/HUN/6/2, photos of BL, Harl MS 408, ff. 212—13

<sup>204</sup> BL, Add. MS 30289 (24).

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1208—9.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. 1286—7, 1289—90, 1292—3, 1297—8.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 1348—9, 1349—50, 1353—4, 1360—1, 1363—4, 1367—8.

<sup>208</sup> TNA, CP 40/692, image 1098: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; IR 1/42, pp. 80, 86; HO 107/1923.

<sup>209</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1521—2, 1538—9, 1544—5; DD/SP/18/1, 15.

<sup>210</sup> TNA, E 134/4JasI/Mich26—7.

<sup>211</sup> SHC, DD/SP/49 (Apr. 1592).

The priory apparently had a small watermill in the 13th century.<sup>212</sup> It owned the tithes of 12 Taunton Deane manor mills but from 1301 the whole, in kind, was levied on the town mills in Bishops Hull.<sup>213</sup> Although the tithes had been commuted for £2 by the 16th century the tithe farmer in 1675 claimed £16 from the 12 mills but the tithe charges continued to be borne solely by the town mills.<sup>214</sup> The Lambright family had unspecified mills at Obridge in 1304.<sup>215</sup>

### Vivary or Pool Wall mill

Recorded from 1209, this was the customary mill for Holway tenants.<sup>216</sup> At an early date the wall was built to increase the fall and power of the diverted Sherford stream.<sup>217</sup> No income was recorded between 1210 and 1248 when it was known as the mill below the vivary and produced 63 quarters of tollcorn. It was rebuilt before 1250 and in 1298 and was supplied with two Welsh stones in 1301—2.<sup>218</sup> In 1348—9 less grain was ground than usual but tollcorn had recovered by 1349—50.<sup>219</sup> Customary labour was used for repairs. Tollcorn income doubled in the later 14th century and there may have been two wheels.<sup>220</sup> In 1410 it took 92 men to scour the pond and in 1413 the mill was thatched with c. 400 sheaves of reed.<sup>221</sup> In 1430—1 it was rebuilt again with a malt mill and again in 1482—3. It was farmed out as a copyhold from 1505 although the manor provided millstones and maintained the banks.<sup>222</sup> In 1566 there were two grain mills, presumably under one roof, one of which had

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/107; *Cal. Chart* 1327—41, p. 318.

<sup>213</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 11301—2, 1348—9.

<sup>214</sup> BL, Add. MS. 30291; TNA, E 134/27ChasI/East15; E 126/12; SHC, DD/MK/50.

<sup>215</sup> E. Green, *Feet of Fines 1196—1307*, 330.

<sup>216</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1208—9; DD/MT/1/39.

<sup>217</sup> BL, Add. Ch. 25902.

<sup>218</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1248—9, 1251—2, 1297—9, 1315—16.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. 1348—9, 1349—50.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. 1373—4, 1377—8, 1385—6, 1388—9, 1399—1400.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 1409—10, 1412—13.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. 1430—1, 1434—5, 1482—3, 1505—6, 1535—6, 1544—5; DD/SP/71.

been a fulling mill but in 1573 they were grain and malt mills.<sup>223</sup> From the late 16th century there were disputes over water and filth from privies and pigsties blocking the mill wheel.<sup>224</sup>

By the 18th century the mill had a bakery and later a shop on the street. In 1780 the miller allowed the new silk mill a wheel on his premises for a £9 annuity but his widow gave up the mill in 1791 and the silk mill's millwright occupied the house. In 1804 their son surrendered the annuity and the mill and the silk mill owners demolished it.<sup>225</sup> Late 20th-century clearance of the factory revealed the height of the wall and the drop from the road.

### Obridge Mill

The mill at Obridge produced *c.* £7 from toll on wheat, oatmeal, rye, and two grades of malt in the early 13th century when it supplied wheat flour to the castle.<sup>226</sup> It ground at least half as much grain as the town mill but suffered from flooding in 1267—8 and needed a new sluice, malt mill and stones.<sup>227</sup> In 1309—10 two French millstones were supplied at the enormous cost of £7 17s. 8d. and 12s. for five days carriage and in 1324—5 a pair imported through Lyme cost £8 16s. including carriage. Previously only the castle mill had received French stones, the others used Welsh stones at 18s. a pair. By the 15th century stones came through Bridgwater.<sup>228</sup>

The mill ground much less than usual in the late 1340s although other mills were less affected. The malt mill, with its own wheel, was not repaired until 1353—4.<sup>229</sup> Firepool weir, first recorded as le Fourpool as it was above the mill, was rebuilt using 248 works from Holway in 1358—9 and 75 men a day worked on the weir and a stone wall under the mill in

<sup>223</sup> Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 229; SHC, DD/SP/71; 72, f. 488; TNA, E 134/4JasI/Mich27.

<sup>224</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/107; DD/SP/23/45.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. DD/MK/9; DD/DP/37/2, 45/12, 66/2; tithe award, St Mary; A/DAS/2 (13080).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1208—9, 1211—12, 1215—16.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 1251—2, 1264—5, 1267—8.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. 1301—2; 1309—10, 1324—5; 1409—10, 1476—7.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid. 1340—1, 1348—9, 1349—50, 1353—4.

1367—8.<sup>230</sup> Tenants from Henlade and Ruishton were obliged to scour the pond on Whit Monday, presumably because it was their customary mill.<sup>231</sup> In 1399—1400 one mill, possibly the malt mill, was rebuilt in limestone and timber necessitating a fore weir to keep the site dry.<sup>232</sup> The mill was rebuilt in 1421—2, its weir was replaced in 1445 and the shuts in 1469.<sup>233</sup> Severe flooding destroyed Firepool weir and the banks twice in the 1480s and in the 1490s despite raising the banks and mill house. The weir was rebuilt in 1504 using 89 waggon loads of stone, lime and timber.<sup>234</sup> The weir shuts were the responsibility of the manor water bailiff but in the early 17th century the Staplegrove reeve paid a man 13s. 4d. a year to draw them.<sup>235</sup>

Despite concern that the Firepool fulling mills would impede the water flow Obridge mills were profitable enough to be sublet in layers of tenancies with the occupier paying £11 rent in the 1560s. By the 1600s the miller paid £20 a year and two bushels of barley malt a week to his landlord who only paid the manor £6.<sup>236</sup> In 1744 the sluice gates reportedly impeded milling at the town mills, which claimed priority for water. Customary maintenance had been abandoned.<sup>237</sup> In 1768 the Tone Conservators bought the Obridge mill its 1730s house, Obridge Island and the fishery. The lord of the manor sued for unpaid rent and fines although Obridge mill with Firepool, converted to a short-lived grist mill, had been demolished c. 1779—81, the bridges removed and the land dug away to improve navigation. The Conservators bought the freehold c. 1827.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. 1358—9, 1361—2, 1363—4, 1367—8.

<sup>231</sup> TNA, E 134/4JasI/Mich27.

<sup>232</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1399—1400.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. 1421—2, DD/SP/325/18; DD/SF/1/2/19.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1482—3, 1486—7, 1496—7, 1505—6; DD/SP/325/66.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/4 (March 1591), 325/167—76.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid. DD/MT/15/4/21; TNA, C 3/139/98.

<sup>237</sup> SHC, DD/MK/50.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. DD/MK/34, 50—3; DD/SP/301—2; PAM 226, T. Hugo, 'A ramble by the Tone', 5.

### Other mills

Brewers built two horsemills in c. 1550 and 1604 because during floods and draught the watermills ceased to grind malt, They claimed their malt was not produce of the manor and that many tenants used hand mills.<sup>239</sup> A man left his son a horsemill with stones in 1638 but a new horsemill was declared illegal in 1654.<sup>240</sup> A malt mill in Paul Street was destroyed before 1747.<sup>241</sup> George Small and Son, merchants and millers, established electric feed mills c. 1900 off Station Road. Rebuilt several times, they remained in use until the 1970s.<sup>242</sup>

### STONE, GRAVEL and LIME

In 1267—8 Ralph le Quareur of Taunton provided stone, source unknown, for a chapel near Woodstock, Oxf.<sup>243</sup> Gravel forms part of Taunton's sub soil and was dug at Millane and Grassgrove in the Middle Ages.<sup>244</sup> Gravel pits were in use at the end of Richmond Road between 1872 and 1910 and near Kingston Road, Rowbarton in 1885.<sup>245</sup> Lime had to be imported and kilns, now under a water tank, were built at the canal wharves but never used.<sup>246</sup>

### INDUSTRY AND TRADES

Of the wide range of trades and industries practiced in Taunton food processing and cloth making are among the oldest. Baking, brewing, spinning, weaving, tanning, sawing, shoemaking, dressmaking, tailoring, and smithing were practised from the Middle Ages.

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<sup>239</sup> TNA, E 134/4JasI/Mich27.

<sup>240</sup> SHC, DD/MT/26/5/3; DD/SP/18/25.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/97/5.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. D/PC/b.hl/5/3/15 (1906); *Taunton Courier*, 18 May 1946, 9 Feb. 1957: BNA, accessed 7 July 2021; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3). The site is now Smalls Yard.

<sup>243</sup> *Cal. Lib.* 1267—72, p. 39.

<sup>244</sup> TNA, IR 18/8802; SHC, DD/SP/18/129; 71, f. 54; 72, f. 362; 86, f. 217.

<sup>245</sup> SHC, DD/DP/204/1; D/B/ta/24/1/19/784, 24/1/50/817.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; Q/Rup/192.

Even before the railway arrived Taunton had good transport links and access to markets and raw materials. Most industry even clothmaking was home-based, journeyman and apprentices lived with their employers and many rural workers depended on outwork from Taunton employers. Craftsmen had workshops and even forges in their backyards.<sup>247</sup> By 1849 five silk mills, a tannery and other factories used nine steam engines.<sup>248</sup> Most trades and industries reached a peak of employment in 1861 before the full impact of mass production had been felt but in 1910 the most valuable properties were industrial premises.<sup>249</sup>

Industries were established by gifted designers and inventors like cabinet maker John Steevens, engineer Walter Easton, electrician Francis Murray Newton and car maker James Beach. Early factories have not survived but silk mills were clean and heated and provided cooking facilities. Shirt and collar factories provided sanitary and refreshment facilities for their mainly female workforce. Before 1914 many factories were rebuilt with attention to light and ventilation but of 323 factories and workshops registered *c.* 1915 only 136 were inspected.<sup>250</sup> The food industry was increasingly mechanised amid greater concern for hygiene. In the 1960s and 1970s more than 800 people worked in food processing plants in Taunton.<sup>251</sup> The number of registered factories and workshops fell to 181 in 1952 but rose to 249 in 1970.<sup>252</sup> Small workshops and factories were scattered through the town or around the railway but by the late 20th century industrial estates were located south of Priorswood and Bindon roads and at Cornishway, Bishops Hull.<sup>253</sup> The number of registered borough outworkers fell from 234 in 1959 to 111 by 1970.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid. A/ADR, box 4.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C2273/3/13, p. 15.

<sup>249</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 12/1875—7; SHC, DD/IR/T/26/1—4.

<sup>250</sup> SHC, A/DIF/95/32.

<sup>251</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 356; SHC, A/AWT/1; A/APN/2/6; D/PC/stapg/7/3.

<sup>252</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/22/1 (1952); A/EPF/250/4/6 (1959, p. 26), 7 (1970, p. 51).

<sup>253</sup> OS Map 1:2500, SOM. ST 225 SE (1969 edn).

<sup>254</sup> SHC, A/EPF/250/4/6 (1959, p. 234), 7 (1970, p. 52).

## Baking

Two bakers were employed for the bishop's visit in 1218.<sup>255</sup> Bakers, who paid customary dues to the manor, had market stalls and bread shops nearby by 1305.<sup>256</sup> The breadweighers presented 12 bakers for underweight bread in 1296—7.<sup>257</sup> A bakery in the Three Cups was licensed in 1565 to make horsebread but in 1570 bakers complained that four innkeepers baked.<sup>258</sup> Rural bakers brought bread to market as presumably town bakers could not meet demand. A female 'great baker' was ordered to build a stone chimney in 1613 and in 1652 a baker had no safe fuel store.<sup>259</sup> A husbandman accused in 1630 of baking without being apprenticed continued baking in 1654.<sup>260</sup>

In 1798 bakers claimed the assize of bread was outdated but their attempt to establish a bakers' company failed.<sup>261</sup> By 1824 the flour and bread trade was worth £35,000 a year.<sup>262</sup> A bakehouse at East Gate, with three large ovens, was one of the most highly rated premises in 1839 and one of eight bakeries in St James' parish in 1842.<sup>263</sup> Some specialised in biscuits or muffins. In 1841 there were 57 bakers and 24 confectioners but by 1891 there were 86 and 37 respectively.<sup>264</sup> Journeymen bakers in the 1890s had an annual holiday when no bread was baked.<sup>265</sup> Grain was stored in Station Road behind the George inn c. 1880 but a three-storey grain store was built in Wood Street in the 1880s and a two-storey store in Yarde Place in

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1217—18.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. 1305, 1320—1.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. 1296—7.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid. DD/MT/1/33; DD/SP/48 (1570).

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/50 (Dec. 1613); E. H. Bates-Harbin, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1646—1660*, 185.

<sup>260</sup> Bates-Harbin, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1625—39*, 134; SHC, Q/SR/89/3; D/P/tau.m/13/6/1.

<sup>261</sup> SHC, T/PH/hmy/3; Q/SR/367/4/21—3, 25—6, 28—30.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/23/29; DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.ja/13/1/8; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp. 48—101; DD/SP/416 (1859).

<sup>264</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 240.

<sup>265</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/42/9/1 (*Taunton Mail* 4 Jul. 1894, p. 4).

1907.<sup>266</sup> By 1890 mechanised bakeries produced standard, French and other breads. A Welsh bakery in Albemarle Road supplied flour to grocers.<sup>267</sup>

The Paul family's bakehouse in North Town operated from c. 1850 until the late 20th century.<sup>268</sup> A Station Road bakery had a large outdoor oven in 1870 and in 1886 a three-storey bakehouse was built in Bridge Street for a bakery in business until 2022.<sup>269</sup> George Palmer, of Huntley and Palmer, learnt his trade with a North Street confectioner. In 1897 Robert Adams converted the former woollen factory on Railway Street into a cake bakery, using their warehouse opposite to store flour. Powered machines washed and dried the ingredients and prepared cake mixes baked in eight large ovens but decorating was done by hand. The bakery used 18,000—23,000 eggs weekly and dispatched cakes throughout the west country including its shops in North Street and Kingston Road.<sup>270</sup>

Of the more than 120 bakers, cake makers and confectioners in 1901 some were only retailers but there were 28 bakehouses c. 1915.<sup>271</sup> The Co-operative Society's 1891 three-storey bakery in Magdalene Street was enlarged several times. A South West Co-operative bakery opened in Priorswood Road n c. 1960 as one of the most automated in the country producing 200,000 loaves a week and confectionary with over 100 employees.<sup>272</sup> Maynards, bakers and caterers from at least the 1750s, built a large bakery in Upper Wood Street in 1932, demolished in 1984 when they moved to a factory in Staplegrove parish. They employed c. 100 people making frozen desserts in 2024.<sup>273</sup> The Cassanna Cake Company built a bakery in East Reach in 1946, possibly replacing the 1920s Tone Valley Cake

<sup>266</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; D/B/ta/24/1/21/875; 24/1/38/432.

<sup>267</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 27, 29, 32, 45; SHC, Grand World's Fair Bazaar programme (1895), 10.

<sup>268</sup> TNA, HO 107/1923; SHC, DD/X/RGL/1.

<sup>269</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/ D/B/ta/24/1/12/418, 24/1/21/864.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. DD/TBL/42/9/4 (*Taunton Mail* 1 Sep. 1897, p. 4); 42/9/5 (*Taunton Mail* 1 June 1898, p. 5); D/B/ta/24/1/21/864; 24/1/25/1687; 24/1/26/1744; TNA, RG 13/2276—8; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 193.

<sup>271</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8; SHC, A/DIF/95/32.

<sup>272</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/25/1692, 24/1/28/1821, 24/1/62/1161, 24/1/71/1419; D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 781; A/AWT/1.

<sup>273</sup> TNA, IR 1/52, p. 109, 1/58, p. 164, 1/64, p. 178; SHC, D/B/ta/77/1618; D/PC/b.hl/5/3/15 (1937); DD/X/SML/7, p. 44; *Som. Business Dir.* (1985), 60.



Company's bakehouse.<sup>274</sup> Mitchell's bakery in Priory Bridge Road in the 1950s supplied their four shops.<sup>275</sup> The last traditional bakery closed in 2023.

Starch was made in Taunton by the 16th century.<sup>276</sup> The White family were starch manufacturers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries before turning to malting and brewing and William French had a starch factory in the mid 19th century, later absorbed in his tannery.<sup>277</sup> In 1957 there were three sweet manufacturers, one next to the butter factory off Wood Street and one in Station Road, but they had closed by the 1970s.<sup>278</sup>

### Meat Processing

Bulls had to be baited before sale and may have been slaughtered at the shambles as there were complaints about blood and filth in the streets in the later 16th century.<sup>279</sup> In 1619 19 butchers were recorded and in 1625 12 men and women killed animals in Lent.<sup>280</sup> A slaughterhouse by the old police station, licenced in 1858, was blamed for enteric fever in 1873 but not closed, another was built at Rowbarton in 1878 and one in Old Angel Yard, condemned in the 1840s, was only demolished c. 1894 to build Corporation Street.<sup>281</sup> Ten slaughterhouses were registered c. 1915, welfare was poor and several tons of meat were condemned annually. Sausage-making in slaughterhouses caused food poisoning in 1920 but some sausages were made by bakers.<sup>282</sup> By 1946 over 67 tons of meat was condemned annually.<sup>283</sup> Slaughterhouses remained behind butcher's shops, in the former tram depot and

<sup>274</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1927); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 27; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/107/3240.

<sup>275</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 337.

<sup>276</sup> *Acts PC*, 1595—6, p. 197; *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1598—1601, 521.

<sup>277</sup> SHC, DD/SP/416; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, p. 79; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); TNA, HO 107/1923; RG 9/1617.

<sup>278</sup> SHC, A/AWT/1; A/APN/2/6; A/EPF/204/1; D/PC/stapg/7/3.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SP/48 (Apr. 1570, Oct 1572), 49 (May 1595, Oct. 1600, Oct. 1606).

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.* Q/SR/62/103—5; D/D/Ca/243, ff. 190—1; Q/RLa/33.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* D/B/ta 2/1/4, p. 51; 2/1/6, p. 254; 3/8/1 (1878); DD/DP/178/5; A/EPF/250/4/1 (1873, p. 18); DD/SAS/C2273/3/12, p. 25; A/CNC/1.

<sup>282</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 103; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 45; SHC, D/B/ta/4/2/2 (1913); A/DIF/95/32; A/EPF/250/4/4 (1920, pp. 14—15).

<sup>283</sup> SHC, A/EPF/250/4/5—6.

in residential areas into the mid 20th century.<sup>284</sup> During the Second World War a government abattoir, long desired, temporarily replaced private ones except the bacon factory, but closed in 1954. In 1950 of 60,000 animals slaughtered, 6,000 carcasses were condemned with 1,400lb of butchers' meat but only 32 whole carcasses were condemned in 1959. By the late 1960s, excluding the bacon factory, fewer than 1,000 animals were slaughtered locally.<sup>285</sup>

Despite orders against tripe boiling in 1877 there were eight tripe boilers in 1920 but none by 1931.<sup>286</sup> In 1897 the Wright family built a large factory at Rowbarton off Greenway Avenue to produce milk products and bacon and pack eggs and poultry. After slaughtering at Obridge they obtained a licence in 1908 to slaughter at the factory.<sup>287</sup> They tinned hams, brawn and sausages and until 1914 sold poultry wholesale. Renamed the West Somerset Dairy and Bacon Company in 1919, in 1943 it became a subsidiary of Horlicks Ltd and in the 1970s part of the Brooke Bond Oxo group but kept the Somerwest brand name.<sup>288</sup> It was a major employer processing c. 50,000 pigs annually but closed in 1988.<sup>289</sup> Dorset's bacon curers operated in the 1930s and 1940s at Higher Holway.<sup>290</sup> In 1983 two meat processors produced frozen beefburgers and boned beef, the latter employing over 50 people.<sup>291</sup>

### Cold Storage and Dairy Produce

Confectioners made ice cream during the 19th century and there was an ice house off Mount Street in 1853.<sup>292</sup> Greater concern for hygiene in the sale of fish increased demand and by

<sup>284</sup> TNA, IR 58/82608 (1546); SHC, D/B/ta/4/3/4 (1924), 4/2/3 (1938), 13/3/1, pp.168—9, 31/1/1, p. 499; D/R/ta/34/9/3 pp 269, 418, 444; C/PL/2/25.

<sup>285</sup> SHC, A/EPF/250/4/1—7; D/B/ta/4/22/1; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/5 (10 Mar. 1977).

<sup>286</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/3/8/1 (1877), 4/2/1 (1889); A/EPF/250/4—5.

<sup>287</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/3/2 (1898, 1907—8); D/B/ta/24/1/24/1613, 24/1/39/46, 475; TNA, T 1/12620, no. 25116.

<sup>288</sup> SHC, PAM 719 *The Horlicks Gossiper* (Feb. 1950), 3—4, 6—10; PAM 1535 *Taunton official guide* [1973].

<sup>289</sup> Ibid. C/PHH/169 (1967); PAM 1535 *Taunton official guide* [1973]; D/PC/stapg/7/3, 21; DD/X/WBB/27, p. 8; D/DC/tau.d/2/216 (6 Sep.).

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. D/R/ta/24/1/611.

<sup>291</sup> *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 66; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/2/2/17 (26 July, 20 Nov.).

<sup>292</sup> SHC, DD/AY/27.

1887 a fishmonger had an ice warehouse at East Street where ice was made in 1931.<sup>293</sup>

Taunton Cold Storage and Ice Ltd, later Western Ice, had premises in Leycroft Road between 1928 and the 1980s before moving to new cold storage at Silk Mills in Staplegrove.<sup>294</sup> Two Italians made ice cream in 1901 and ice cream was made in Wood Street in 1930.<sup>295</sup> In 1920 it was mainly flavoured powder and milk left to cool in dirty yards.<sup>296</sup> Contamination issues, especially for soft ice cream, probably reduced manufacturers from 10 in 1950 to three by the 1960s.<sup>297</sup>

The largest butter manufacturer was Wrights who employed 14 local men making butter in 1901.<sup>298</sup> In 1919 the company handled up to 6,000 gallons of milk daily but stopped butter making in 1945.<sup>299</sup> Cullen and Company, based in Portman Street in the 1920s, moved butter blending to a factory behind 46 Wood Street c. 1937 until the 1970s.<sup>300</sup> An egg packing company was established by 1939 and South Western Egg Products of Roman Road were incorporated in 1952 but dissolved in 2011.<sup>301</sup>

### Malting and Brewing

Ten brewers broke the assize in 1254—5 and from 1286—7 they paid £6 7s. to the manor for the assize.<sup>302</sup> Elena la Brewster was recorded in 1314, a brewer was hanged for counterfeiting in 1473 and a brewer's servant died in a vat in 1512.<sup>303</sup> Five common brewers in St James'

<sup>293</sup> Goodman's *Taunton Dir.* (1887); *Taunton Official Handbook and Guide* (1931), 58.

<sup>294</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/67/1289; T/PH/pld/2; D/B/ta/13/3/1, p. 386.

<sup>295</sup> TNA, RG 13/2278; SHC, DD/AY/160.

<sup>296</sup> SHC, A/EPF/250/4/4, (1920, p. 15).

<sup>297</sup> Ibid. C/PHH/169 (1952, 1967); A/EPF/250/4/6—7.

<sup>298</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>299</sup> SHC, PAM 719 *The Horlicks Gossiper* (Feb. 1950), 3—4, 6—10.

<sup>300</sup> Kelly's *Dir. Taunton* (1929), 266; (1972—3), 376; SHC, DD/ASC/9/5/2.

<sup>301</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/3/2 (1898); DD/X/ROW/1; Companies Reg. no. 03751732; Kelly's *Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 384.

<sup>302</sup> SHC, DD/X/HUN/6/2 (photos of BL, Harl MS 408, ff. 212—13); T/PH/win 1254—5, 1286—7, 1304—5.

<sup>303</sup> SDNQ, XXXI, 469; H. Kleineke, 'The Prosecution of Counterfeiting in Lancastrian England', *Medieval Markets and Money* (2016), 215—6; TNA, KB 9/458/50.

parish broke the assize of ale in 1517—18 and two used unsealed measures in 1520.<sup>304</sup> The priory owned a brewery in Canon Street tithing by the 1530s and later men paid the priory manor for brewing licences.<sup>305</sup> Three brewers in 1613 brewed in unfit rooms.<sup>306</sup> In 1615 alehouse keepers were forbidden to brew beer for sale and four common brewers were to supply beer for 3*d.* a Winchester gallon in marked barrels.<sup>307</sup> The retail price was fixed at 3*d.* a quart, raised to 4*d.* in 1660s but by the 1630s there were illegal sales and overcharging although brewers had their measures checked.<sup>308</sup> In 1644 a beer shop had a brewhouse with two mashing vats. In the later 17th century inns and farmers brewed beer, there was a new brewhouse by Tone Bridge c. 1677 and a brewery in Paul Street by 1696.<sup>309</sup> Public and private houses brewed ale and beer until the mid 19th century, some on a large scale.<sup>310</sup>

Tollcorn malt at the town and Obridge mills measured 138 qtrs by 1300.<sup>311</sup> A new malthouse was unsafe in 1598 and in 1607 two common brewers ground imported malt.<sup>312</sup> In 1692—4 William Bidgood built a two storey thatched brick malthouse 52 ft by 30 ft and could wet 400 bu. of barley for a single customer.<sup>313</sup> Of several 18th-century malthouses two were demolished to build Hammet Street.<sup>314</sup> Malthouses increased to 12 by 1822.<sup>315</sup> Many were short-lived including those in Magdalene Lane, Westgate Street, St James Street, Coal

<sup>304</sup> Hants. RO, M11/59/C1/19/3; SHC, DD/MT/11/1.

<sup>305</sup> C. Brett, *Crown Revenues from Som. and Dorset*, supp., 87; SHC, DD/SP/407 (1586, 1592).

<sup>306</sup> SHC, DD/SP/50 (Oct. 1613).

<sup>307</sup> 6 quarts. E. H. Bates Harbin, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1607—1625*, p 144; SHC, DD/SP/52 (Apr. 1637).

<sup>308</sup> TNA, PROB 11/123/50; SHC, DD/SP/43/8, 44; 339 (1634); 52 (Apr. 1637); Bates-Harbin, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1625—39*, 85, 124

<sup>309</sup> SHC, DD/SP/18/48, 1635/152, 1644/65, 1664/64, 1665/7, 1666/19, 23, 43; 1667/4, 1680/76, 1682/15; TNA, CP 25/2/869/2WILLIAM&MARY TRINITY.

<sup>310</sup> TNA, PROB 11/555/325; DD/SP/411 (1798), 1729/64.

<sup>311</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1208—1301.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/49 (May 1598); TNA, E 134/4JasI/Mich27; E124/6. ff. 190—2.

<sup>313</sup> SHC, DD/DP/23/8, 423 (1691), 1695/38, 1714/10.

<sup>314</sup> TNA, C 11/2202/7; Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 32, 143, 157, 213; SHC, DD/CH/91/5; DD/HS/4/2; DD/DP/93/4, 97/1.

<sup>315</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3).

Orchard and Kingston Road and only five were recorded in 1872.<sup>316</sup> They were replaced by large steam-powered maltings like three-storey Albemarle Maltings designed by Llewellyns and James of Bristol. It had a double 15 quarter kiln in 1887 when it was enlarged to process 60 quarters of barley with two kilns and was run by Ross, Sleeman and Company. It closed c. 1945 and was demolished in the later 20th century.<sup>317</sup> A four-storey maltings with two kilns was built in 1901 on the east corner of Canon Street to serve Starkey's brewery but in 1965 the kilns were removed.<sup>318</sup>

In 1824 the brewery trade, including retailing, was worth £30,000 a year.<sup>319</sup> Five breweries were recorded c. 1840, and later some produced bottled beer.<sup>320</sup> In 1877 21 publicans still brewed but public houses were increasingly supplied by commercial brewers.<sup>321</sup> At least one brewhouse was converted to a clubroom.<sup>322</sup> Short-lived breweries included two in East Reach, the Taunton Ale Brewery in Jarman's Court, demolished to enlarge the pig market, and the Fore Street brewery.<sup>323</sup> Thomas Jacobs started the Mary Street brewery c. 1809 behind the Bird in Hand and by 1872 it was steam-powered with an aerated water factory.<sup>324</sup> After 1882 it was bought by the owners of Canon Street brewery and closed but some buildings survive.<sup>325</sup>

Middle Street brewery, established by the Durston family before 1852 was sold before 1872 to William Trotman and Company who produced bottled ale and porter.<sup>326</sup> After George

<sup>316</sup> SHC, DD/AY/6; DD/CH/58; DD/CWC.ta/unlisted box 4; D/P/tau.m/4/3/10; D/B/ta/24/1/9/266, 24/1/10/316; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp. 51, 66, 95—6; Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>317</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/21/861, 24/1/22/912, 24/1/30/85, 24/1/225/14295.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* A/BUG/5/3/2; D/B/ta/24/1/169/10229, 10234.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>320</sup> *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *Pigot Dir.* (1842); Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/16/648.

<sup>321</sup> SHC, DD/X/MIS/1; DD/X/MK/1; M. Miles, *Perfectly Pure* (2007), 79—99.

<sup>322</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/12/412, 24/1/19/763.

<sup>323</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/360/554292; SHC, A/CHM/2; A/DJT/2; D/P/tau.m/4/3/9—10; D/B/ta/31/5/7; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp 71—2; A/BU/5/3/6; *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861); Miles, *Perfectly Pure*, 86.

<sup>324</sup> SHC, Q/RLa/19/10; DD/SAS/C795/TN/174; Miles, *Perfectly Pure*, 81, 90.

<sup>325</sup> SHC, DD/CH/110/11; A/BUG/5/3/6; Miles, *Perfectly Pure*, 81.

<sup>326</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1842); *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/1/8; Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

Hanbury acquired it in 1877 it became the Canon Street brewery.<sup>327</sup> Before 1890 it built an aerated water factory on the site of St James' almshouses and owned public houses from Torquay to Cardiff.<sup>328</sup> Brewing ceased in 1921 and the site closed in 1923. Starkey, Knight and Company bought it with stocks of hops, malt, beer, c. 40 kinds of bottled fruit wines and spirits, aerated waters, syrups, ginger, labels and a cooperage.<sup>329</sup> Starkey's only wanted the tied houses and sold the site in 1925 with a covenant against the manufacture of liquors or waters. Most buildings were demolished.<sup>330</sup>

The St James's brewery, with two malthouses, warehouse, counting houses, stabling and wharf, was held by the Stone family from 1767.<sup>331</sup> Mary Tegg, the last of the family, sold it c. 1885 to her tenant John Sloman of the Stogumber brewery who built a steam-powered brewery but ceased malting. In 1889 he sold the business and premises to Sydney and Frank Hatch who named it the West Somerset brewery. By 1895 it produced over 2,000 barrels a year and had stabling for 65 horses.<sup>332</sup> In 1897 Arnolds of Rowbarton acquired and closed it to decrease competition and acquire the tied houses.<sup>333</sup> In the 20th century it was a hide store and was largely demolished except for the house, part of the Brewhouse Theatre.<sup>334</sup>

In 1876 Stephen Arnold opened a steam brewery in the 1853 manure works east of Kingston Road, Rowbarton. In 1884 a new artesian well provided 2,000 gallons of water per hour for brewing with two Lancashire boilers.<sup>335</sup> In 1898—9 the firm was incorporated as SW Arnold and Sons Ltd.<sup>336</sup> In 1926—7 they merged with William Hancock and Sons of Wiveliscombe to form Arnold and Hancock, taken over by Usher's Wiltshire Brewery Ltd in

<sup>327</sup> SHC, A/BUG/5/3/6.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid. DD/KIT/1/13; D/B/ta/24/1/16/635, 24/1/17/657; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 234.

<sup>329</sup> SHC, A/BUG/5/2/2, 5/3/2, 5; D/R/ta/34/9/3 p 85; DD/HCK/6/2/20.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid. DD/AY/173.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid. Q/REI/35/25b; Q/Rup/192; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852).

<sup>332</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/1/8; DD/HS/1/4; DD/CH/32; Wilts and Swindon HC, 1075/001/396.

<sup>333</sup> SHC, A/BUG/5/3/5; DD/CH/32.

<sup>334</sup> TNA, IR 58/82602 (980—1).

<sup>335</sup> SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 440; DD/US/529/10; Miles, *Perfectly Pure*, 93.

<sup>336</sup> SHC, DD/CH/32, 129/3.

1955 as a distribution centre only. Watney Mann who took over Usher's in 1964 closed the site c. 1980 and it was cleared for housing.<sup>337</sup>

In 1824 the cider trade was put at 8,000 hogsheads a year, probably sales rather than production.<sup>338</sup> Two men made British wine in 1852 and cider was made at the former Rowbarton cake factory in c. 1914.<sup>339</sup> Ginger beer was produced commercially by 1841 and large breweries made soda water, lemonade and aerated waters.<sup>340</sup> There was an aerated water factory in Guildford Place between 1883 and 1922 and another in Saracen's Head Yard in 1899.<sup>341</sup>

### Candles and Soap

The name Waxmaker implies medieval candle making. Most candles were made of tallow, an industrial lubricant and soap ingredient.<sup>342</sup> Chandlers were recorded throughout the 17th century, ten in 1634, and some made soap.<sup>343</sup> Candle Street, location unknown, was recorded c. 1700 in St James' parish.<sup>344</sup> Tallow came from slaughterhouses and chandlers had stalls in the shambles in 1753.<sup>345</sup> They regularly took paying apprentices during the 18th and early 19th centuries.<sup>346</sup> Matthew Toulmin built a tallow melting shop in Canon Street in the 1800s. There were chandleries in East Street, near Hunts Court c. 1830 and near the river in 1845. Another proposed in East Reach in 1864 was turned down by the local board of health.<sup>347</sup>

<sup>337</sup> Ibid. A/BUG/5/3/5; DD/US/529/10.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>339</sup> Ibid. A/DIF/79/2; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>340</sup> TNA, HO 107/972 (St Mary); LAB 2/1633/TBI/A/54701; SHC, A/BUG/5/2/2.

<sup>341</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883, 1899, 1914); SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 51.

<sup>342</sup> SHC, T/PH/hps/1.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/51 (Sep. 1629); 339 (1634); Q/SR/86/35, 344; DD/SAS/C112/17; A. Webb, *Som. Wills II*, pp. 280—1; Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 115.

<sup>344</sup> SHC, D/P/ta.ja/2/1/8.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/3 (1753).

<sup>346</sup> TNA, IR 1/45 (1718); 1/48, p. 125; 1/50, pp. 84, 271; 1/54, p. 88; 1/64, p. 178; 1/72, pp. 14, 94.

<sup>347</sup> Goldsworthy, *Recollections*, 10, 16; SHC, DD/TAC/2/3/2 (1829); Q/Rup/192; D/B/ta/24/1/5/116.

Wax candles were made in 1842 but with the rise of oil and gas lighting only three chandlers were recorded in 1871.<sup>348</sup>

Some soap was imported and a pannier load was in dispute in 1615 but high demand from the woollen industry meant most was produced locally.<sup>349</sup> A soap boiler in 1675 had chests of soap and a soap shop with a furnace. His ash was worth £10 as fertiliser.<sup>350</sup> Soap-making was dangerous. Two men were prosecuted in 1677 for erecting a soap house and making ‘great fires’ next to dwellings.<sup>351</sup> Soap was used in large quantities to clean out oil used on fleeces and 97 Taunton clothmakers signed a 1693 petition against a proposed soap tax.<sup>352</sup> Four soap manufacturers were recorded in 1830 when Taunton produced 57,028 lb rising to 66,052 lb in 1832.<sup>353</sup> The soap and candle industry declined thereafter but blacking was made locally in 1891.<sup>354</sup>

### Leather

The manorial borough officers included three, later two, searchers and sealers of leather and two searchers of green skins, a by-product of butchery although horse and other skins were used.<sup>355</sup> Tanners paid 10s. martinsgavel to Taunton Deane manor named from the guild of St Martin whose members, presumably country leather workers, had with burgesses the sole right to buy green skins or leather in Taunton market.<sup>356</sup> Under an Act of 1563 the portreeves held courts to deal with poor quality leather and damaged hides. Tryers comprised curriers, tanners and shoemakers but offenders were often rural tanners.<sup>357</sup> Tanners and curriers were recorded from the late 13th century, skimmers rented adjoining shops near the corn market in

<sup>348</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1842); TNA, RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5.

<sup>349</sup> SHC, D/B/bw 1467, 1490, 1497, 1509; DD/SP (Sep. 1615).

<sup>350</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1675/30.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/18/49.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid. DD/SF/13/2/19.

<sup>353</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Account of all Soap made in each town of Gt Britain 1830—2*, Parl. Papers, 3.

<sup>354</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; RG 9/1618; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1877.

<sup>355</sup> SHC, DD/SP/18/16; 48—52; A/CTP/6/6; A/DWX/8/11; A/EDJ/5/1.

<sup>356</sup> SHC, DD/X/HUN/6/2; T/PH/win 1334—5, 1338—9, 1347—8, 1353—4, 1409—10.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/50 (Feb. 1611), 51(1628/9), 52 (1631, 1637), 61/3.



1354 when one had a shop in Bridgwater market.<sup>358</sup> At least 13 skimmers sued in the Common Pleas in the 15th century.<sup>359</sup> A parchment maker was recorded in the 1290s and two in 1634.<sup>360</sup> In the early 18th century leather trades were second only to cloth among new fathers.<sup>361</sup> In 1740 skins were worked and dressed west of Carpenter Lane, now Mount Street.<sup>362</sup> A 1774 poll contained 50 leatherworkers mainly shoemakers and curriers and by 1810 there were 89 shoemakers and 28 others.<sup>363</sup> Up to 10 curriers including women were active during the 19th century.<sup>364</sup> The Taunton Hide and Skin Market was in the former West Somerset brewery by 1914 before moving to Tangier.<sup>365</sup>

Tanning required water and preferably an eastern location.<sup>366</sup> John Ackland established a tannery beside the Stockwell stream at the north-west end of Tancred Street. He leased it in 1774 to John Poole of Over Stowey, who invested £600 in the business. Poole released it to his brother Charles (d. 1815), a Taunton currier, whose son Charles (d. 1830) left it to his sister Mary, wife of John Liddon.<sup>367</sup> In 1827 Henry Cox established a small tannery north of Poole's and in 1834 bought 50 ton of oak bark before giving up the business.<sup>368</sup> Robert Parsons, an East Street currier, acquired both tanyards, which he linked to his premises and by 1861 employed 22 men and four boys.<sup>369</sup> He built a large bark shed in 1864, added two more by 1872 and installed steam power. In 1888 Edward Lyne Parsons sold

<sup>358</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1288—9, 1290—1; DD/PM/7/2/3; D/B/bw/674, 1375; TNA, C 1/27/164; T.B. Dilks, *Bridgwater Borough Records 1200-1377*, 118—19.

<sup>359</sup> TNA, CP 40/561, 618, 621, 64, 685, 732, 768, 776, 853, 890; indexes at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40); accessed May 2021.

<sup>360</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1298—9; DD/SP/339 (1634).

<sup>361</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/2/1/2; DD/SP/1723/36; Q/SR/330/2/6; DD/BD/27.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/44/9.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/22; D/P/tau.m/23/29.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid. Q/SR/308/167; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>365</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914); Bishops Hull forthcoming.

<sup>366</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/391/608443; *Pigot, London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3).

<sup>367</sup> SHC, DD/SF/2/52/10; DD/CH/22; DD/X/MDT/393, p.6; DD/CH/74/8, 10.

<sup>368</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, DD/CH/74/8, 10; *Taunton Courier*, 13 Nov. 1834 (deaths column); BNA accessed 20 Sep. 2021.

<sup>369</sup> *Pigot, London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); SHC, DD/CH/22; TNA, RG 9/1617.

the tannery and East Street premises separately. The tannery included three bark houses, twelve lime pits, eight liquor pits for green skins, an engine house with 90 ft chimney, and two large steam-heated drying rooms.<sup>370</sup> It was acquired by and amalgamated with French's tannery, although the yards were still known as the Taunton and French's in 1901.<sup>371</sup>

James French and Son were East Reach fellmongers until c. 1829 when William French moved to a court off Tancred Street later called Frenchay Place.<sup>372</sup> In the 1840s he installed a beam engine, still on the premises when they were demolished. His sons Edmund and William Charles continued as partners making gloves and gaiters. Some of the women making leather clothing may have worked for them although Martin and Carnes were gloves and legging makers until 1957 or later in Fore Street.<sup>373</sup> After the partnership was liquidated in 1870, William's son Alfred took on the tannery with William Stenlake, expanding into Parsons' yard to the north. As E. and W.C. French they leased both premises, cottages and steam machinery from successive owners and employed c. 30 male and 50 female workers, the latter as outworkers sewing industrial gloves.<sup>374</sup> In 1897 a bad fire and a gale destroyed part of the premises, rebuilt with an engine house and 75-ft chimney in 1903.<sup>375</sup> In 1910 the tanyard included cottages, cutting and sewing rooms, curing and drying sheds, bark house, engine house and pits.<sup>376</sup> The 20th-century tannery processed sheep and other skins and made gloves and leather aprons using rural outworkers. During both world wars they made naval and military gloves, women's railway gloves and anti-flash gauntlets. Only c. 50 men worked

<sup>370</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/5/147; DD/CH/22; DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/21.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C2401/77.

<sup>372</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, DD/HS/4/2; DD/SAS/C212/MAP/148.

<sup>373</sup> *PSAS CXXIX* (1985), 29; *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); TNA, RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—1923); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957).

<sup>374</sup> SHC, DD/CH/22; DD/HS/2/25—6; DD/KIT/13/9; DD/SAS/C2401/77; TNA, RG 9/1617; RG 11/2366—7; *Report of Several Cases Conducted by James Cook* (Taunton, 1895), 57.

<sup>375</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/28/1802, DD/SAS/C2401/77; DD/TBL/42/9/4 (*Taunton Mail* 10 Mar. 1897, p. 6); *Taunton Courier*, 24 Feb. 1897; BNA, accessed 12 May 2022; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1897, 1914).

<sup>376</sup> TNA, IR 58/82593 (24).

on site, mainly long-serving and over 50 as the work was unpopular with young men.<sup>377</sup> The business closed in 1985 and the industrial buildings were demolished.<sup>378</sup>

### Gloving

Glovers were recorded from 1308 and Gloverstreet, location unknown, in 1360—1.<sup>379</sup> In 1668 one glover's skins and gloves were valued at over £120. In 1683 one was using buckskin and another had 884 pairs of calf, lamb, sheep, kid, horse and dog skin gloves, some with cordovan, oil or chamois finishes, more than 130 natural and coloured skins, purses, pouches, belts, book bindings and leather drawers and stockings. He had two market stalls and possibly two resident journeymen.<sup>380</sup> The Gilbert family had a gloving workshop in 1699.<sup>381</sup> Many glovers took apprentices in the late 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>382</sup> By the 19th century men cut or put out gloves as sewing became an exclusively female occupation. Women earned 8*d.* to 11*d.* a day in 1837 and girls 2*d.* or more.<sup>383</sup> Silk and cotton gloves were hand sewn and at least 34 women were making them in 1861.<sup>384</sup>

By 1855 Thomas Taylor, a commission agent for cloth and leather gloves, had a factory in Back Bridge Street, later Yarde Place, extended in 1859 and 1875, and employed 60 workers in 1871.<sup>385</sup> Like French's he drew outworkers increasingly from the countryside and Taunton residents gloving fell from 178 women and 18 men in 1871 to 51 women and 10 men in 1896 when most women used machines.<sup>386</sup> Taylor bought land off Staplegrove Road selling part to a builder in 1883 presumably to finance his new factory. He and his son

<sup>377</sup> SHC, A/DIF/79/1; DD/SIAS/68—70; D/P/wilt/23/41; A/APN/2/6; PAM 1535; *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 93.

<sup>378</sup> SHC, A/AWI/220; DD/X/BUSH/16b.

<sup>379</sup> TNA, E 179/169/6; SHC, T/PH/win 1307—8, 1360—1; Q/SR/18/54—5, 33/30; 150/11.

<sup>380</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1668/56; 1683/25, 27.

<sup>381</sup> Webb, *Som. Wills II*, 126.

<sup>382</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/6/1; TNA, IR 1/48, p. 88; 1/50, p. 84; 1/58, p. 4; 1/64, p. 143.

<sup>383</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, DD/HC/6/1/1; D/P/tau.m/23/29; TNA, HO 73/53/9.

<sup>384</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18.

<sup>385</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/1/25, 48; 24/110/322; DD/X/WBB/433; TNA, RG 10/2374—5.

<sup>386</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

Theophilus moved their business into their Richmond Road building, extended in the 1920s.<sup>387</sup> Gloving ceased c. 1970, the 1920s warehouse became a china store, since demolished, and the factory became flats.<sup>388</sup> Ewens and Company started gloving c. 1916 in a former woollen warehouse in St Thomas Street. They leased Tone Bridge House in 1918 and later moved into nearby warehouses where they remained until 1974 employing c. 30 people producing hand-made leather gloves.<sup>389</sup>

### Shoemaking

In 1634 at least 11 shoemakers worked in the borough, cordwainers had market stalls and 17th-century shoes and offcuts were dumped behind houses in Mill Lane.<sup>390</sup> In 1814 c. 130 shoemakers marched in the victory procession and in 1820 last and heel makers were recorded.<sup>391</sup> In 1841 there were 283 male and female shoemakers and 382 in 1851 of whom over a quarter were women.<sup>392</sup> The number of female shoemakers declined rapidly from the 1860s partly because boots replaced soft shoes and pattens for outdoor wear. Three patten and clog makers were in business in 1822 but only one by 1890 and his main work was brush-making.<sup>393</sup> In 1864 43 shoemaking businesses employed c. 360 people. The increase in factory-produced shoes reduced that to 94 by 1891, only two of them women and most were repairers.<sup>394</sup> Specialist firms like John Bale's, which had been making sports shoes and anatomical boots since 1809, and Norman's of Hammet Street, who sold hand-made footwear

<sup>387</sup> SHC, DD/CH/77/6; D/B/ta/24/1/54/925; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894—1914).

<sup>388</sup> SHC, A/DIF/116/219; D/B/ta/24/1/71/1443; DD/X/ROW/1; D/DC/tau.d (16 Nov. 1975).

<sup>389</sup> Ibid. SHC, DD/FIV/1/40; DD/CWC.ta/unlisted acc. no. G/2468; A/APN/2/6; R.P. Elliott, 'Taunton: an urban study', TS Durham BA geog. dissertation c. 1966, 19—20; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3); inf. from Ted Ewens 2023.

<sup>390</sup> SHC, DD/SP/339 (1634), 1691/57; Q/SR/6/95—6; D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; DD/X/HYD/2—3; D/B/ta/31/1/2, 7; C/ENAH/7/3.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (printed insert, 1814); D/P/tau.m/23/29.

<sup>392</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3.

<sup>393</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 53.

<sup>394</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 77; *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); TNA, RG 12/1875—7.

by their own shoemakers, survived into the 1890s but others like Massingham's at 22—3 Fore Street and The Bridge bought in shoes, some from abroad.<sup>395</sup> During the 20th century craft shoemaking disappeared and even repairers declined from 15 businesses in 1957 to two by 2020.<sup>396</sup>

### Saddlery

Saddlers were recorded in the early 15th century.<sup>397</sup> A saddler in 1725 sold mourning saddles, pillions, whips, saddle bags, dog collars and portmanteaus. Another made factory belts in the 1790s.<sup>398</sup> Harness and collar-makers were recorded from the mid 18th century, notably the Reeves family who turned to carriage building.<sup>399</sup> In the 19th century there were usually c. 20 saddlers and harness-makers at work.<sup>400</sup> At least two early 19th-century saddleries survived to 1890.<sup>401</sup>

### Woollen Cloth

The woollen cloth industry was well-established by 1219 when a fulling mill was built near the castle replacing the traditional treading in urine.<sup>402</sup> Grey cloth bought in Taunton in 1210—11 may have been made there, a local merchant traded grey cloth in the 1280s. Men sold cloth illegally in 1242—3 and were later presented for 'false' cloth.<sup>403</sup> Taunton lay outside the main white cloth production area producing finished broadcloth using every

<sup>395</sup> SHC, A/DIF/44; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 30; *Taunton of Today* (1896), iii.

<sup>396</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 340.

<sup>397</sup> TNA, CP 40/618, 705, 895, indexes at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40): accessed May 2021; *Cal. Close*, 1441—7, 388.

<sup>398</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1725/22; D/P/tau.m/23/3.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/59/12; DD/HC/6/1/1; TNA, IR 1/20, p. 10; 1/21, p. 148; 1/67, p. 114, 162; 1/68, p. 158.

<sup>400</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>401</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 51, 54.

<sup>402</sup> Bishops Hull, forthcoming; M. Havinden, *The Somerset Landscape* (1981), 112.

<sup>403</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1210—11, 1289—90, 1300—1; Chadwyck-Healey, *Som. Pleas c. 1200—1256*, p. 296; T. J. Hunt, 'Some notes on the cloth trade in Taunton in the 13th century', *PSAS CI—II*, 103.

process from combing and dyeing raw wool to nap shearing. Coloured cloth had a ready market in south-west Europe but was less brightly coloured than white cloth dyed in Germany and the Netherlands because fulling and washing faded the vegetable dyes. Dyers were recorded from the early 13th century and weavers, tuckers, shearmen, slay makers,<sup>404</sup> a girdler, a challoner or blanker maker and calenderers from the early 14th.<sup>405</sup> In the later 13th century Henry Teynturer or Tinctore was a wealthy trader whose son took the name Dyer.<sup>406</sup> William le Waz (fl. 1270) used a seal with a pair of shears.<sup>407</sup>

Medieval dyers and weavers, apparently better off than later sergeweavers, were borough and manor reeves and among the highest taxpayers.<sup>408</sup> Flemish weavers were said to have settled in the 1330s and a century later an alien tucker was granted denization.<sup>409</sup> During the 14th century Taunton produced tauntons and narrow cloth or 'straits', 2,313 c. 1396 from 49 producers presumably employing several weavers.<sup>410</sup> Two late 14th-century MPs were clothiers one of whom was taxed on the sale of 283 dozens, short cloths, in 1395—7, when Taunton produced nine per cent of Somerset cloth.<sup>411</sup> In the early 15th century tuckers and dyers traded cloth and dealt with merchants from Bridport and London. Nine Taunton dyers came before the Common Pleas between 1415 and 1425 mainly for debt.<sup>412</sup> Taunton red strait cloth was offered for sale in Salisbury, Wilts. in 1434.<sup>413</sup> In the late 15th century tauntons in many colours and Taunton kerseys, smooth surfaced fabric, were exported to several

<sup>404</sup> The comb that holds warp threads apart, guides shuttles and firms up weft.

<sup>405</sup> Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest*, 127; Green, *Feet of Fines 1196—1307*, 201—2, 306—7, 317; SHC, T/PH/win 1286—7, 1299—1300, 1301—2, 1358—9; A/BFA/3; DD/PM/7/2/1; Green, *Feet of Fines 1307—46*, 183—4; BL, Add. MS. 16322; Harl. Ch. 57 A 3.

<sup>406</sup> Green, *Fines 1196—1307*, 201—2; Hunt, 'Some notes on the cloth trade', *PSAS* CI—II, 101—2.

<sup>407</sup> TNA, E 326/4955, 5095.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid. E 179/169/6; CP 40/776, images 61, 999, 1166d: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; SHC, T/PH/win 1328—9, 1332—3; A/BFA/6; Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest*, 274.

<sup>409</sup> *VCH Som.* II, 407, 420.

<sup>410</sup> Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade*, 79; TNA, E 101/343/28.

<sup>411</sup> Mayberry, *Vale of Taunton Past*, 27; J. Hare, 'Pensford and the Growth of the Cloth Industry in Late Medieval Somerset', *PSAS* CXLVII (2004), 173—8.

<sup>412</sup> *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, IV, C5933; I, C. 19; TNA, CP 40/618, 621, 636, 641, 656, 685 indexes at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; *Cal. Close*, 1447—50, 127; *Cal. Pat.* 1494—1509, 151, 330.

<sup>413</sup> TNA, E 101/345/6.

countries.<sup>414</sup> Taunton men accused of stealing large quantities of cloth at Bridgwater at that date may have been involved in trade disputes.<sup>415</sup> Wealthy clothiers traded their own cloth and left as legacies tauntons, violet bridgwaters, and ‘warecloths’.<sup>416</sup> They invested in plate, houses, shops, land and a Devon tin works.<sup>417</sup> Links with clothworkers in east Devon may account for Taunton clothiers holding Devon property or even working temporarily in Cullompton and Tiverton until the early 18th century when workers migrated to Taunton as the Devon industry contracted.<sup>418</sup>

The high value of cloth led to theft and fraudulent manufacture despite the 1550s statutes.<sup>419</sup> An investigation in the 1570s unearthed poor quality production that would have damaged trade. Quality Taunton broadcloths were heavy, 27—8 yards long and 1 ½ yards wide made of 100 lb. of wool, the dozen or half-cloth of 40 lb., the narrow or sea ware cloth of 36 lb. and the 18-yard redding kersey of 28 lb. Somerset white broadcloths were wider but only weighed 63—4 lb.<sup>420</sup> Fraudulent cloth had up to 20 per cent flock or thrums in the yarn, was overstretched by 2—3 yards and resulting holes were filled with flock in matching colours. Each tucker worked for two or three clothiers at a rate of two cloths a week. Witnesses named 16 fraudulent Taunton clothiers who each produced between five and 30 cloths a week, which they sold locally, at fairs or in Lyme, Bristol, Exeter and London. That implies that Taunton might have been producing over 7,000 sub-standard cloths a year. The major producer, Simon Saunders, sealed his cloths but the others used the town seal applied

<sup>414</sup> Ibid. C 1/5671/83; *VCH Som.* VI, 218; P. Ashford, ‘The West Somerset Woollen Trade, 1500—1714’, *PSAS CLI*, 169.

<sup>415</sup> SHC, D/B/bw/156, 191.

<sup>416</sup> TNA, PROB 11/12/13, 11/13/285; CP 40/1295, 1298, 1352—4, 1373—4: indexes at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; F.W. Weaver, *Som. Wills 1501—30*, 30—2, 137—8.

<sup>417</sup> Weaver, *Som. Wills 1531—58*, 110, 202—4; *VCH Som.* VI, 203; *Cal. Charters...in Bodleian Library*, p. 403; SHC, D/D/Cd/65 (1628).

<sup>418</sup> Devon HC, 1186M/E/1; 2404A/PO/194/1, 195/1; Plymouth and West Devon RO 372/15/2/3; TNA, PROB 11/362/141; SHC, Q/SR/15/4; D/P/tau.ja/13/3/8; DD/SAS/C/238/1—4.

<sup>419</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1575—8, 24, 140; SHC, Q/SR/42/37, 71/37, 87/2—3, 201/12, 210/7; TNA, E 133/3/559; *VCH Som.* II, 408.

<sup>420</sup> TNA, E 133/3/559; *Woollen Cloth Act* (27 Eliz. c. xvii). At 2.4 lb. the sq. yd a taunton was twice the weight of modern suiting.

by the deputy aulnager who was accused of threatening prosecution unless he was paid up to £6 6s. 8d.<sup>421</sup> The Privy Council investigated and issued orders for clothmaking. Faulty cloth could be sold if marked with an **F** and was used from London to Cornwall.<sup>422</sup> In 1591 Simon Saunders had a dyehouse, a tucking mill in Combe Florey, lands, houses, a gravel pit and plate and left his wife £1,000 and c. £50 a year, other legacies totalling over £500 and c. £120 to the poor.<sup>423</sup> Fraud, counterfeit marks and aulnage malpractice continued in the early 17th century.<sup>424</sup>

In 1586 exported red tauntons were apparently new lightweight cloths, 13 yards long weighing up to 30 lb. dry, similar to straits, but Devonshire kerseys or dozens weighed only 13 lb.<sup>425</sup> Other cloths made on a large scale in Taunton by the 17th century included bridgwaters, coarse and black cottons, possibly including the funeral cloth supplied to Minehead in 1643, russets, fustian, perpetuanas, bays, says, blue ‘plunkets’ or ‘azures’ and linsey woolsey. Serge-making replaced tauntons and the broadcloth trade had declined to almost nothing by the 1680s.<sup>426</sup>

Medieval wool traders probably traded local wool but in the 16th century wool was imported from Wales and Ireland.<sup>427</sup> Spanish merino was reputedly introduced to England by Benedict Webb who made medley cloth in Taunton using yarn spun from a blend of different

<sup>421</sup> TNA, E 133/3/559; *Acts P.C.* 1578—80, pp. 126, 160, 168; 1581—2, p. 309; BL, Lansdowne MS. 65/24.

<sup>422</sup> *Acts P.C.* 1578—80, pp. 126, 160, 168; 1581—2, p. 309; Finds.org.uk. CORN-3A971, DOR-OB7032, LON-12B4E: accessed 9 June 2022.

<sup>423</sup> TNA, PROB 11/77/388.

<sup>424</sup> *VCH Som.* II, 411; articles addressed to the king cited in A. Humphries, *Som Parishes*, 672; SHC, DD/PH/216/57; *HMC 3rd Report, Duke of Northumberland's MSS*, VIII, p. 286.

<sup>425</sup> *An Act for the True Making of Woollen Cloth* (4 Jas. I c.11); *VCH Som.* II, 411. ‘Tauntons’ were also made in Chard: *ibid.* 415.

<sup>426</sup> *Cal. SP Dom.* 1580—1625, p. 347; D. Taylor, ‘Somerset’s Sixteenth-Century Maritime History’, *Maritime Hist. Som.* I, 6; SHC, Q/SR/6/97—8, 34/87, 55/39—40; DD/SP/50 (July–Aug. 1615); D/P/m.st.m/4/1/1 (1643). Cotton was a thin wool cloth and linsey woolsey combined wool and linen.

<sup>427</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1336—40, 294; TNA, C 1/1300/92; CP 40/561, image 791: at waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40 accessed May 2021; Ashford, ‘Woollen Trade’, 166; *VCH Som.* VI, 218—19.



coloured wools imitating Spanish cloth in the 1580s. Cotswold wool was also used.<sup>428</sup>

Taunton was the staple town for Somerset wool from 1617 and had a yarn market. In 1673

Taunton sergemakers paid well for good Irish combing wool imported annually through

Minehead in the 1690s and may also have bought Scottish wool.<sup>429</sup> In 1682 a sergemaker had

a stock of Spanish and north country wool.<sup>430</sup> By the late 17th century English longwool was

considered too coarse but fine closewool was available in the west country. Taunton wool

men supplied sergemakers in east Devon in 1684.<sup>431</sup> Wool dealers were still buying local

wool in the early 19th century.<sup>432</sup> In 1964 South West Farmers Ltd built a wool-grading

facility and store in Priorswood Road.<sup>433</sup>

In 1624 Taunton was ‘one of the greatest clothing towns in the county’.<sup>434</sup> Despite the trade depression in 1622, bankruptcies, the Civil War and the Spanish war of 1655, many individuals became wealthy.<sup>435</sup> Clothier Jasper Chaplin (d. 1655), mayor in 1634—5, invested in borough rents and ‘Irish adventures’ and left money to apprentice poor children and to an extended kindred.<sup>436</sup> Many clothiers retired before they died but 44 testators between 1557 and 1698 described themselves as clothiers and 26 as sergemakers between 1696 and 1793.<sup>437</sup>

Cloth remained on the loom for several weeks as even the best weavers could only make two yards a day but the introduction of lighter, narrower cloth meant households could

<sup>428</sup> *VCH Som.* II, 411; Mayberry, *Vale of Taunton Past*, 58; Ashford, ‘Woollen Trade’, *PSAS CLI*, 168.; *Cal. Pat.* 1592—3, p. 145.

<sup>429</sup> *HMC Ormonde MSS*, III, 336; TNA, E 190/1092/3; SHC, DD/L 1/54/42/1—2, 1/58/17/12; DD/SP/51 (Sep. 1629); J. Richards, *Unending Frontier*, 223—4; D. Hussey, ‘The Coastal Trade of Somerset Ports in the late 17th and early 18th centuries’, *Maritime Hist. Som.* I, 84.

<sup>430</sup> TNA, PROB 4/25861. The 1st part and name are missing.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.* C 6/385/94.

<sup>432</sup> M. Siraut, ‘A farming account book’, *PSAS CXXIX* (1985), 167.

<sup>433</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/158/9692.

<sup>434</sup> *HMC 12th Report App.* I, p. 171.

<sup>435</sup> *Cal. SP. Dom.* 1619—23, 387—9, 391; 1655—6, p. 260; J. Broadway, R. Cust & S. Roberts, *The Docquets of Lord Keeper Coventry 1625—40* (List & Index Soc. special ser. 34 [2004]), 489, 496.

<sup>436</sup> Webb, *Som. Wills*, 174; TNA, PROB 11/253/491.

<sup>437</sup> TNA, PROB 11, *passim*.

accommodate several smaller looms so family members and apprentices could work together.<sup>438</sup> In 1660 a weaver gave his house to his son provided he could have a chamber and room in the shop to set up his looms rent-free.<sup>439</sup> A miller and an innkeeper owned looms in 1666, possibly used by household members or let to poor weavers.<sup>440</sup> The cost of looms rose in the later 17th century to £2 and a woman left a loom and a year's free loan of another two in 1672.<sup>441</sup> The industry provided work for cloth tool makers throughout the 17th century.<sup>442</sup> Felt was produced from the mid 16th to mid 18th centuries, possibly for hatmaking.<sup>443</sup> In 1703 a clothier allowed a feltmaker the use of furnaces and presses provided any sales proceeds were handed over, presumably until a debt was paid.<sup>444</sup>

Tauntons required the whole range of cloth skills so the town was well-placed to switch to serge, another finished cloth but smaller and lighter, made with worsted and wool. In the early 17th century Taunton serges were used in Gloucestershire and Norfolk and sent in large quantities to London for sale despite the cost of carriage.<sup>445</sup> In 1653 Taunton serges sold for 48 guilders in Holland and by the 1670s were reaching Jamestown, Virginia and Stockholm, Sweden.<sup>446</sup> In 1674 Dorchester sought help from a Taunton man with their serge trade.<sup>447</sup> Serge production from the mid 17th century was described as 'a prodigy of trade'. It

<sup>438</sup> SHC, DD/SP1637/31, 1664/30.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/100 (1660), 135 (1660).

<sup>440</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1666/43, 67.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1668/28; 1669/76; 1670/22; Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 14.

<sup>442</sup> SHC, Q/RLa 33; DD/DP/10/4, 23/8; D/D/Ca/184; D/P/tau.ja/2/1/8; DD/SAS/C/238/1/1.

<sup>443</sup> TNA, PROB 11/136/47; CP 40/1354/226: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; Bates-Harbin, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1625—39*, 153; SHC, Q/SR/116/88; D/P/tau.m/13/6/1.

<sup>444</sup> SHC, DD/SP/357 (bdle 1).

<sup>445</sup> G. Egan, *Lead Cloth Seal...in the British Museum*, 51; TNA, PROB 11/185/438; CP40/2496/9680: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021.

<sup>446</sup> *Cal. SP. Dom.* 1653—4, p. 97; Egan, *Lead Cloth Seals*, 51; Finds.org.uk. BH-892962, BH-95C6A1, NMS-C5A355: accessed 9 June 2022.

<sup>447</sup> C.H. Mayo and A.W. Gould, *The Municipal Records of the Borough of Dorchester* (Exeter, 1908), 521—3.

was claimed large numbers of poor weavers accounted for the town's support for parliament in the Civil War, the Monmouth rebellion and nonconformity.<sup>448</sup>

Wool carding was done by women and children but hot combing worsted for serge was a largely male occupation like breaking or scribbling fleeces, cleaning and adding oil or fat, which speeded up processing but produced a terrible smell and had to be removed later with strong soap.<sup>449</sup> A late 17th-century ballad praised Taunton worsted combers.<sup>450</sup> Wool spinning had been done by both sexes but worsted spinners were often countrywomen, many based in spinning houses controlled by sergemakers.<sup>451</sup> In 1677 spinning rates were fixed at 10*d.* the pound for Spanish wool and worsted, 4*d.* for native wool and 3*d.* for pinions. Even a good spinner could make only ½ lb. of yarn a day.<sup>452</sup> Thrum gatherers reputedly bought yarn stolen by weavers for 1*s.* a pound and sold it for up to 1*s.* 8*d.* to independent weavers.<sup>453</sup> A small producer in the 1630s had a large stock of wool, combs, four sets of scales and lead weights, shears and a rack with room for four cloths so probably employed spinners and weavers like the man with three looms and finishing tools in his hall.<sup>454</sup> In the later 17th century men and women had combing and warping shops without tools and wool or weaving shops with four to eight looms but no yarn or cloth, their materials all belonging to the clothiers for whom they worked.<sup>455</sup> Fluctuations in trade brought poverty as in 1677 when parishioners of St James' parish were forbidden to bring in apprentices or servants.<sup>456</sup> In 1681 it was claimed that 500 poor serge workers lacked work and were mutinous and another 500

<sup>448</sup> VCH Som. II, 415—6; Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 173.

<sup>449</sup> S. Simpson, *The Agreeable Historian* (1746), 880; TNA, PROB 4/25861; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; DD/SAS/C/2/238/2/5. Taunton imported train oil, a by-product of pilchard curing, by the 1580s: *ibid.* D/D/bw/1474, 1498, 1504.

<sup>450</sup> *The Taunton Maids Delight, or, Hey for the Honest Worsted-Comber*, cited M. Haywood 'Broadside Ballads', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 79 (2016), 196.

<sup>451</sup> SHC, Q/SR/42/137, 64/182; DD/SP/356 (bdle 2), 1668/45; Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 175; TNA, PROB 4/8778.

<sup>452</sup> SHC, Q/SR/115/85; M.C.B. Dawes, *Quarter Sessions Records: 1666-1677*, 218, 224.

<sup>453</sup> SHC, Q/SR/113/3; 115/77, 85; 127/25; 148/5—6.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.* SHC, DD/SP/1632/5, 1637/31.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SP/438/118; 1668/28; 1669/76; 1670/22; 1677/46; 1681/72, 104.

<sup>456</sup> Dawes, *Quarter Sessions 1666—77*, 222—4. Pinions were poor parts of fleeces.

would soon want work. By 1683 it was claimed most of 3,000 men in the town were combers and weavers. After the 1685 rebellion *c.* 30 clothworkers were transported, several fled abroad and others were later pardoned.<sup>457</sup>

Sergemakers who controlled the trade amassed considerable wealth. Some issued farthing tokens in the later 17th century bearing cards, combs, shears, shuttles, woolsacks and the clothworkers' arms.<sup>458</sup> A successful clothier needed capital, contacts and storage. Some owned looms, which they let out. They held large stocks of wool, combs, yarn, oil, soap, dyes and serges worth hundreds of pounds for sale or sold in Taunton, Exeter, London and Ireland and most were owed large sums for cloth.<sup>459</sup> In 1681 Alexander March had nearly 2,000 lb of wool and yarn in stock and more with dyers and spinners, owned serge and drugget being woven, mainly by women, *c.* 750 finished cloths but as with many clothiers most of his inventory wealth of over £1,300 was in his accounts.<sup>460</sup> A sergemaker died in 1682 with debts stretching back over 20 years of trading totalling *c.* £2,630, including £332 owed by the Alloway mercantile family, accounting for 70 per cent of his inventory value.<sup>461</sup> Joseph Whetham, clothier, owned what is now Bath Place with a 'banqueting house' at the east end where he had a combing shop before 1693.<sup>462</sup>

Independent weavers and even master sergemakers found it easier to sell to local clothiers with established outlets, partly because the trade depended on extended credit. A finished serge was worth up to £3 in the later 17th century. Fluctuating prices might explain why sergemakers stored large quantities at home.<sup>463</sup> As Taunton's direct overseas trade declined Exeter and London became the main outlets for cloth. The men in this trade were

<sup>457</sup> *Cal. SP. Dom.* 1680—1, p. 515; 1683, p. 251; 1686—7, p. 155; 1687—9, p. 254.

<sup>458</sup> SHC, A/DIF/44; G. Williamson, *Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century*, (1891), 987—92.

<sup>459</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1668/45, 1670/33, 1671/47, 1675/10, 1681/90, 1685/93, 1715/34; TNA, PROB 4/6912, 4/8778, 4/9058.

<sup>460</sup> TNA, PROB 4/8035.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.* PROB 4/25861.

<sup>462</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C112/17,

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SP/1671/1, 1675/10, 1681/90, 1685/93.

worth several thousand pounds and like the broadcloth clothiers a century earlier often relied on family and marriage connections for markets and credit.<sup>464</sup> One man's serges at Exeter and London accounted for over half the £833 value of his inventory.<sup>465</sup> Some lost heavily when their serges were confiscated in London to cover their agent's debts.<sup>466</sup> Planned legislation giving London's Blackwell Hall greater control in the 1690s specifically granted merchants and factors of Somerset freedom to sell woollen cloth as they had always done but at least one family included a Blackwell factor.<sup>467</sup>

Between 1666 and 1696 68 parish apprentices in St James' parish went into the serge trade including 15 girls.<sup>468</sup> In St Mary's parish c. 255 children were apprenticed to sergemaking, nearly a quarter of them girls.<sup>469</sup> A woman from Bridport in Dorset gave £3 10s. and three suits of clothing to apprentice her son, other parents paid premiums of up to £2 in 1681 although premiums fell later. In 1691 a girl in St James' was apprenticed for nine years to learn woolcombing. Children were apprenticed to couples, indicating both husband and wife practised the craft.<sup>470</sup> Between 1696 and 1726 clothworkers still accounted for most of those taking parish apprentices but only 28 girls were apprenticed in the serge trade compared with at least 146 boys.<sup>471</sup> Between 1710 and 1724 paying apprentices were taken by dyers, fullers, weavers and a comb maker. Five gentlemen apprenticed their sons to fullers, sergeweavers and clothiers in 1715—16 probably with a view to setting up in business.<sup>472</sup>

The later 17th century saw a great influx of weavers and combers and their apprentices from Somerset, Devon, Dorset and even Yorkshire. In 1666 a North Devon

<sup>464</sup> TNA, PROB 11/185/438; SHC, D/P/m.st.m/13/3/1 (1661).

<sup>465</sup> TNA, PROB 4/21981.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid. C 78/900, no 1: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/C78](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/C78) accessed May 2021.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid. PROB 11/1169/135; 11/1346/130; SHC, DD/SF/13/2/19.

<sup>468</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/13/6/1.

<sup>470</sup> Dorset HC, DC/BTB/Z/1/5; SHC, Q/SPET/1/132; D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1.

<sup>471</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; D/P/tau.m/13/6/1.

<sup>472</sup> TNA, IR 1/3; 1/41, p. 18; 1/44, pp. 37, 126; 1/45 (1716—17); 1/46, p. 137; 1/47, p. 76; 1/48, pp. 2, 87—8, 125, 171.

comber said that trade in his area was bad.<sup>473</sup> In 1690 the Huguenot refugee James Fontaine reputedly started producing cheap calamanco in 1690 and made £1,000 in three years. He moved to Ireland in 1694 as one of 43 mainly local clothworkers and soapboilers and their families.<sup>474</sup> Irish immigrants were accused of learning the trade in Taunton before returning to Ireland to make cloth cheaper undermining the English industry before an Act of 1699 outlawed the export of Irish woollens.<sup>475</sup> Throughout the 18th century Irish bay yarn or noil was imported through Minehead as spinning was cheaper in Ireland.<sup>476</sup> Settlement certificates survive for 154 clothworkers who migrated to St James between 1697 and 1726, many from rural areas but some from Minehead and east Devon towns. Families from Cambridgeshire and Leicestershire came in 1712. Removal orders of the 1700s were usually suspended when trade recovered.<sup>477</sup>

Women not only wove serge and made rugs but ran cloth businesses.<sup>478</sup> At her death in 1697 Jane Bond, clothier, had wool and yarn in her shop and serges with the tuckers and at Exeter.<sup>479</sup> Elizabeth, wife of William Harvey, deputy clerk of the castle, marketed her own cloth, although it was apparently marked with his initials. He told one Londoner she was ‘capable of serving you in anything belonging to the Woolen Manufacture made in these partes.’ She bought wool and dyes in large quantities, used spinning houses in Thornfalcon and Bridgwater, employed men and women to organise manufacture and sale of cloth, including her cousins at Lincolns Inn, had had hundreds of serges, druggets and sagathies made in a short time, adapting quickly to changes in fashion. In 1700 she ordered cloth in different colours with a ‘white chain’, apparently woven with a white warp and a coloured

<sup>473</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C/238/1—4; D/P/tau.ja/13/3/8; D/P/tau.m/2/1/2; TNA, PROB 11/347/56.

<sup>474</sup> E.P. Alexander, *The Journal of John Fontaine* (Williamsburg, 1972), 7; *SDNQ*, XII, 352. Calamanco is glossy fabric usually with a check pattern

<sup>475</sup> Ashford, ‘Woollen Trade, PSAS CLI, 173; Parl. archives, HL/PO/JO/10/3/3/189/2q.

<sup>476</sup> SHC, DD/L/1/56/6/1—2.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.ja/13/3/1, 8, 13/6/1; DD/SAS/C/238/1—6.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/2; D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; D/P/tau.m/13/5/2; Q/SR/115/85; Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 106.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1697/8.

weft, and supplied double-milled cloth to London in 1708. She dealt directly with buyers including women, allowing credit on £100 of cloth, but only got £2 5s. apiece for 22-yard serges. London buyers were difficult, changing their orders, and one of her agents tried 60 shops in 1700 but only succeeded in being robbed in the street. She sold cloth through Exeter and Lyme and even considered the East India Company but the death of Charles II of Spain had made merchants cautious and cloth unsaleable.<sup>480</sup> At a similar date Elizabeth Raw was accused of refusing to pay a woman who had dressed five serges for her.<sup>481</sup> Mary Maynard, serge dealer, insured her business in 1738 and Mary Pitts, dyer, took an apprentice in 1745 and insured her business in 1750 for £800.<sup>482</sup>

Sergeweaving was less regulated than broadcloth weaving and full apprenticeship was not enforced. Many of the 1,200 or more sergeweavers in Taunton in the late 1690s were poor or unemployed although young women earned more than for domestic service.<sup>483</sup> Trade was so bad in 1698 that no parish apprentices went into the industry but some masters took up to five apprentices for the premium. Declining literacy among sergeweavers by the early 18th century may be due to a fall in their socio-economic status. An attempt to introduce seven-year apprenticeships, restricted to two per master, and a company with a warden and council failed.<sup>484</sup> Apprenticeship remained unenforced despite a petition to Parliament in 1702, when there were reportedly 1,500 weavers and looms throughout the town including Shuttern and Holway and 500 more within three miles.<sup>485</sup> Most fathers of children baptised between 1698 and 1727 were clothworkers.<sup>486</sup> Men could weave serge with no training in the mid 18th

<sup>480</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/359, nos. 450, 466, 485, 492, 504, 607, 713; 360 (1699/1700); DD/X/WHI/1a—f.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/356 (bdle 2).

<sup>482</sup> *SDNQ*, XXX, pp. 184, 187; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1.

<sup>483</sup> SHC, T/PH/sro/25; DD/SF/13/2/51; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1680—1, 515; Ashford, 'Woollen Trade, 1500—1714', *PSAS CLI*, 177; SHC, DD/SF/13/2/51.

<sup>484</sup> SRO, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; D/P/tau.m/13/6/1; T/PH/sro/251; DD/SF/13/2/79, 83.

<sup>485</sup> J. de l. Mann, *The Cloth Industry in the West of England, 1640—1880*, (Gloucester, 1987), 100n.; SHC, D/P/tau.m/2/1/2; Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 165. Claims of 8,500 clothmakers out of a population of 20,000 cannot be substantiated: SHC, A/DIF/9.

<sup>486</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/8; D/P/tau.m/2/1/2.

century and one boy of 15 after a year's apprenticeship was a travelling sergeweaver working by the piece. A common practice often interspersed with periods of military service.<sup>487</sup> In 1706—7 during unrest among sergemakers, Taunton was called the 'nursery' of Queen Anne's wars, possibly relating to the recruiting of soldiers among cloth workers.<sup>488</sup> A runaway apprentice in the 1760s took work in Somerset and Devon for a few weeks at a time.<sup>489</sup>

In the 18th century besides serge Taunton produced druggets, at that date hardwearing wool or wool and silk cloth, duroy, a coarse cloth often figured and exported to the West Indies, sagathy, a twilled worsted for men's suits, and shalloon, a lightweight twill for linings.<sup>490</sup> Daniel Defoe was told 1,100 looms were at work in the town and children as young as five employed.<sup>491</sup> Clothiers were still well-stocked with dyes, wool, worsted, yarn and finished cloth and could raise money by mortgaging their copyholds at five per cent interest, far below the profit to be made in the cloth trade. A poem praising the town in 1724 spoke of numerous hands and thriving trade.<sup>492</sup> Midwife Sarah Stone referred to women who had difficult births from sitting for long periods at the loom, to which they returned a couple of weeks later.<sup>493</sup>

In 1725 sergemakers were accused of reducing wages, paying in truck or kind and lengthening warping bars to make larger cloths, presumably for the same pay.<sup>494</sup> Weavers responded with threats of loom-breaking and violent battles with combers. Following a reconciliation combers, weavers and tuckers marched with their flags during coronation

<sup>487</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/13/3/5, 10; DD/SAS/C/238/5/3, 7; Devon HC 3327A/PO/82/1; 4781A/99/PO19/65.

<sup>488</sup> Herts. Archives and Local Studies, DE/P/F150; SHC, A/CTP/15/5, pp. 195—6.

<sup>489</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C238/5/3/2.

<sup>490</sup> Simpson, *The Agreeable Historian*, 880; Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 177.

<sup>491</sup> D. Defoe, *Tour through Great Britain* (London, 1927), I, 266—7.

<sup>492</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1715/34; J. Toulmin, *History of Taunton*, rev. J. Savage (Taunton, 1822), 5, 374n.

<sup>493</sup> S. Stone, *A Complete Practice of Midwifery* (London, 1737), 39—48, 54, 73, 80, 85: copy extracts in SHC, T/PH/mcl 3.

<sup>494</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/1; Q/SR/310/120; A/EXN/3, p. 33.



anniversary celebrations in 1726 and 1727.<sup>495</sup> However, decline was setting in, 22 taxpayers had left the borough in 1728, a sergemaker released his Canon Street property to his major creditor in 1729 and some clothworkers absconded leaving their families and apprentices on the parish. One took his family to Norwich, possibly looking for employment, and left them there to beg.<sup>496</sup> Cash, partly gold from Falmouth, was delivered to Taunton to honour bills of exchange at a rate of £1,500 a week in 1727—34 but in the following years only £300 and by 1744 only £200.<sup>497</sup> In 1737 rising poor rates were partly on blamed woollen manufacture not being confined ‘where it ought’ possibly a complaint against woollen mills.<sup>498</sup> Starving combers and weavers roamed the countryside in the winter of 1739—40.<sup>499</sup> A woolstapler and a drugget maker were bankrupt in the 1740s.<sup>500</sup> Between 1727 and 1742 26 cloth workshops were insured for £12,500 but in 1759—74 only 11 for a total of £3,300 and one sergemaker sublet his workshops in the 1760s.<sup>501</sup> A wool house recorded in 1718 off Fore Street was a dwelling by 1771.<sup>502</sup> Between 1727 and 1766 only 38 children including 12 girls were apprenticed to sergeweaving and thereafter no poor child was apprenticed to learn a trade.<sup>503</sup>

Electioneering especially in 1754 reportedly damaged business and diverted cloth orders elsewhere as did some poor quality cloth but the decline was already severe. The industry failed to mechanise and had competition from Norwich stuffs, cheaper silk and cotton fabrics and woollens from the north of England.<sup>504</sup> Angerstein’s reference to 1,160 looms producing the best serges, sagathies and duroys, sold mostly in Exeter c. 1754 was

<sup>495</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/23/1; DD/SAS/C2548/2 [*Norris’s Taunton Jnl*, 21 Oct., 11 Nov. 1726, 13 Oct. 1727].

<sup>496</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C2402/27; DD/CN/8/4; D/P/tau.m/13/3/5, 10; D/P/tau.ja/13/3/10; DD/SAS/C/238/5/3; D/P/b.hl/13/3/5.

<sup>497</sup> SHC, A/CTP/15/5, pp. 196—7.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid. DD/TB/18/7.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid. DD/TB/24/10 cited in S. Berry, *The Carew Letters*, (Taunton, 2023), 51.

<sup>500</sup> SHC, DD/SP/298 (1749); J. H. Thomas, ‘Economy and Society in 18th-century Somerset’, *PSAS CXXI*, (1998), 70.

<sup>501</sup> *SDNQ*, XXX, pp. 183—92; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/23/9—10.

<sup>502</sup> SHC, DD/DP/58/2.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/13/6/1, 3; D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; DD/SAS/C795/TN/4.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid. A/CTP/15/5, pp. 197—9.

probably outdated.<sup>505</sup> Immigration declined and removal orders increased and were enforced from the 1740s. Settlement examinations indicate a desperate move to Taunton even in the 1750s as the cloth industry collapsed elsewhere.<sup>506</sup> There were empty and ruined houses and the Portman town rental halved between 1737 and 1762.<sup>507</sup>

A small-scale industry survived. In 1755 a merchant had wool estimated at £950 and left his wool-stapling business to one son and his fulling trade to another.<sup>508</sup> The children of Thomas Newcomen (d. 1757) carried on his business successfully until 1770 or later.<sup>509</sup> In 1765 26 woollen manufacturers signed a petition, of 568 electors in 1774 170 were woollen cloth workers and in 1784 14 manufacturers of duroys and sagathies were recorded.<sup>510</sup> There were further bankruptcies in the 1770s and the American export market was lost, the destination of many Taunton serges.<sup>511</sup> The moth-damaged wool in Sir William Yea's Pyrland wool chambers c. 1785 had possibly been kept for an improved market.<sup>512</sup> A factory system was belatedly introduced in the late 18th century when Jefferies and Chafey had weaving shops in Mount Street and a factory in Upper High Street.<sup>513</sup> In 1786 Charles Cox had wool chambers, drying house, press shop and two weaving shops.<sup>514</sup> In the 1790s woolstaplers, manufacturers of serge and dimities were recorded and clothier Robert Culverwell had a mill in Churchstanton.<sup>515</sup>

<sup>505</sup> T. and P. Berg [trans.], *R. R. Angerstein's Illustrated Travel Diary, 1753—5* (2001), 238.

<sup>506</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/3/1, 3, 5, 8; DD/SAS/C/238/1—2, 5—6.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/4/3/1; DD/PM/8/8/1, 5, 21—2.

<sup>508</sup> TNA, PROB 11/1113/211.

<sup>509</sup> SHC, DD/X/WOH/1.

<sup>510</sup> TNA, T 1/441, f. 169; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/22; *Bailey's British Dir.* (1784), 454—5.

<sup>511</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/3/10—11, 13/6/1; 23/9—10, 12; D/N/tau.mst/1/1/3; Q/AC/4 (1771); DD/HC/16/7/43, 46; TNA, HO 47/2/32.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/68/3.

<sup>513</sup> Goldsworthy, *Recollection*, 54; London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/353/542326; SHC, D/P/tau.m/9/1/1 (1787); DD/SP/180, 378.

<sup>514</sup> SHC, DD/CH/69/3.

<sup>515</sup> *SDNQ*, XXXIII (1992), 137; *The Universal British Directory* (c. 1798), IV, 587—9; London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/353/542326; 11936/358/549783; 11936/361/559898; 11936/385/598541; 11936/388/604091; 11936/390/606127.

Weavers took paying apprentices, male and female, into the 19th century and a broadcloth weaver in 1806 was paid a £7 premium.<sup>516</sup> However, superfine and twilled broadcloth was produced at a loss although the flying shuttle enabled a weaver to make up to six yards a day in the 1800s and piece rates were halved. A weaver with her own loom earned 2½ *d.* a yard *c.* 1815, well below the 6*d.* to 10*d.* paid elsewhere.<sup>517</sup> In the 1814 procession, 40 woolcombers and weavers carrying the emblems of their trade led the traders and craftsmen preceded by men dressed as bishop Blaise and Jack of Newbury.<sup>518</sup> By 1820 only 14 wool sorters and combers were recorded and 32 weavers some of whom were probably silkweavers as in 1821 only *c.* 10 woollen looms were recorded.<sup>519</sup> Trade was lost to Wellington, which had mechanised to become the centre of Somerset serge production.<sup>520</sup>

Woolstapling was worth £10,000 a year in 1824 and in 1828 Taunton clothiers were still buying Cotswold wool possibly to supply Wellington as no wool workers took part in the 1832 Reform festival.<sup>521</sup> The Capon family's wool business in Mill Lane, Bishops Hull was continued by Fox's of Wellington. The French family were also woolstaplers.<sup>522</sup> Taunton was a collecting centre for the Wiveliscombe area's coarse blue penistone blanket cloth earning the Whitmash carriers £6,000 a year in the 1830s carrying it to London.<sup>523</sup> Two worsted and serge manufacturers were based in Upper High Street and Canon Street employing 13 men and women in 1841 but only four in 1861 when only the latter survived, later switching to hosiery.<sup>524</sup>

<sup>516</sup> TNA, IR 1/66, p. 184; 1/70, p. 123; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/5.

<sup>517</sup> Mann, *Cloth Industry in the W. of Eng.*, 320—1, 325—7.

<sup>518</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (printed insert, 1814); DD/SAS/C795/TN/150.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/23/29; Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, 375.

<sup>520</sup> J. Billingsley, *Gen. Views of Agric. of Som.* (1798), 295—6; W. Marshall, *Abstr of County Reports 1817—18* (New York, 1968), 602; SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/3/5 (99).

<sup>521</sup> *VCH Som.* II, 407; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824); D/P/tau.m/13/3/13 (1832).

<sup>522</sup> Bishops Hull, forthcoming; *Pigot Dir.* (1842); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859).

<sup>523</sup> *PSAS*, IX (1884), 34.

<sup>524</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C212/13/1, p. 84; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); TNA, HO 107/972; RG 9/1618; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 107; *PO Dir. Som.* (1866).

John Gay Price established a company manufacturing heavy woollen goods before 1871 and from 1873 with Henry Corner as Price, Corner and Company manufactured coating, tweed, serges, kerseys and blankets in Rowbarton with a warehouse in Thomas Street and another opposite built in 1888.<sup>525</sup> They moved in 1893 to Bridge Street, sharing the three-storey warehouses by the river with Fox Brothers and then with Chaffey and Company, wool staplers from 1914 to 1927. They extended Tone Bridge House but apparently ceased manufacturing, buying in cloth until they went bankrupt in 1931.<sup>526</sup> A single-storey textile factory built at Wood Street for Penny Ltd in 1914 was occupied by woolstaplers in 1957 but was later demolished.<sup>527</sup> In the 1950s The Taunton Weavers specialised in handloom tweed weaving in Bath Place.<sup>528</sup>

Price, Corner and Company also made quilts, probably employing the quilters recorded between 1881 and 1911.<sup>529</sup> Escott and Company, quilt manufacturers of Duke Street in 1922, moved in 1923 to Union Gate. As The Quilt Company they produced hand-made traditional quilts using c. 16—24 outworkers but went bankrupt in 1925. The Taunton Quilt Manufacturing Company of F. C. Hawkins recorded between 1927 and 1931 at 33 East Reach had closed by 1939.<sup>530</sup>

### Dyeing and Finishing

Taunton merchants shipped woad, weld and mordants through Exmouth by 1303 and two burgesses had a cargo of 28 ton of woad and ten stone of weld in 1312.<sup>531</sup> Dyes were

<sup>525</sup> Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); SHC, DD/PRC/1/1; D/B/ta/24/1/23/954; DD/SAS/C795/SX/7.

<sup>526</sup> SHC, DD/AY/328/1—14; D/P/tau.ja/23/17; DD/CWC.ta/unlisted G/2468; DD/DP/3/8; A/DQO/404/43/7; D/B/ta/24/1/25/1687; D/CC/ta/7/22; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—1927); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 178.

<sup>527</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/47/724; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 152.

<sup>528</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/72 (1956, p. 27).

<sup>529</sup> TNA, RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875, 1877; RG 13/2276—8; RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894, 1906).

<sup>530</sup> SHC, D/DC/tau.d/7/22; 25/18 (1434); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton.* (1927), 26, 88; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1931—9).

<sup>531</sup> M. Kowaleski, *Local Customs Accounts of the Port of Exeter* (Devon and Cornwall Rec. Soc, 1993), 78, 126—7, 128, 178.

expensive, a bale of madder and two bales of woad cost £9 in 1467.<sup>532</sup> By then Taunton was a market for woad including Toulouse and island, possibly Azores green. Londoners among others bought it for 10s. to 20s. a hundred delivered to Exeter for onward shipment. Henry Bishop (d. 1493) was accused of agreeing to sell a London mercer 20 pipes for over £266 but not delivering, presumably having had a higher offer.<sup>533</sup> A 17th-century Taunton carrier marked his tokens with a bag of madder.<sup>534</sup> Personal wealth in dyestuffs was used as legacies or for charitable purposes. One merchant in 1493 left a pipe of woad for his niece's marriage.<sup>535</sup> In 1509 at least 63 pipes of woad imported from Bordeaux and Bayonne were stated by two Taunton master dyers to be below the quality stated by the vendor.<sup>536</sup> Brazil was imported through Morlaix in Brittany in the early 16th century, presumably because it was cheaper than grain or kermes, used for the best scarlet and purple cloth.<sup>537</sup> Woad, madder, indigo, orchel for violet and swarf for black were shipped mainly from Portugal and Spain through Bridgwater, Minehead and Southampton by the mid 16th century but one merchant imported 18 tons of green woad through Bristol.<sup>538</sup> In the 1580s Southampton complained that merchants of Lyme, Taunton and Bristol had taken over the woad trade.<sup>539</sup> In 1615 alum, the best fixative or mordant, was reputedly smuggled by Taunton dyers through French ships at Watchet.<sup>540</sup> By the mid 17th century indigo, fustic and logwood were traded in Taunton.<sup>541</sup> Sergemakers bought and stored gall, copperas, fustic, logwood, peachwood, sandalwood, sumach, woad and madder with the cradles and nets used to dye wool and stocks of dyed wool. In 1683 a dyer had 476 lb. of dyes and mordants and a sergemaker 356 lb. of fustic and

<sup>532</sup> SHC, D/B/bw/203.

<sup>533</sup> TNA, C 1/158/1, C 1/1212/87.

<sup>534</sup> Williamson, *Trade Tokens*, 987.

<sup>535</sup> TNA, PROB 11/10/31; PROB 11/16/530; Weaver, *Somerset Wills 1501—30*, 137—8.

<sup>536</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/M/18.

<sup>537</sup> TNA, C 1/335/31; Weaver, *Somerset Wills 1383—1500*, 314 (gift of grained gown in 1493).

<sup>538</sup> Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 167; SHC, D/B/bw/1448; TNA, E 190/1081/1; S. Flavin and E.T. Jones, *Bristol's trade with Ireland and the Continent 1503—1601* (Bristol, 2009), 715.

<sup>539</sup> F.J. Monkhouse, *A Survey of Southampton and Its Region* (Southampton, 1964), 222.

<sup>540</sup> *SDNQ*, XXXI, p. 415.

<sup>541</sup> SHC, Q/SR/93/126; Q/SR 130/30.

logwood. A dyer *c.* 1689 had over 90 cwt of 12 dyes, alum and potash, the most valuable being brazil and indigo. He charged 4s. to dye a cloth blue.<sup>542</sup>

Shears and teasel handles were valuable legacies in the 16th century.<sup>543</sup> A girl was apprenticed to a shearman *c.* 1611 and a woman sheared cloths for 4*d.* each in 1616.<sup>544</sup> Seventeenth-century shear-grinders included a man with horse-powered grindstones over 4ft in diameter in 1670 indicating the size of shears.<sup>545</sup> Small-scale finishers kept a rack in the garden like the tucker's wife who had blue kersey cloth stolen in 1624.<sup>546</sup> Mid 17th-century racks usually took three cloths and were valued at £4 but larger racks were worth £11. Rack space could be hired and one fuller mortgaged 16 racks in 1711.<sup>547</sup> There were rack fields until the early 18th century in Pauls later Crescent Field, Paul Street, near East Reach, behind St James' church, at Grassgrove and at Grasscroft, where Rack Close became Coal Orchard by 1732 as coalyards displaced racks.<sup>548</sup> By 1740 Rackfield near Mount Street was used for dressing skins.<sup>549</sup> Eleven testators between 1679 and 1788 described themselves as fullers, probably cloth finishers.<sup>550</sup> A finishing shop in 1716 was equipped with shears and boards, hot, cooling and packing presses and 13 burling irons.<sup>551</sup> In 1733 a fuller, owed for finishing 146 cloths, mainly duroys, for a sergemaker, explained that the business used tally sticks to record debts and payments.<sup>552</sup>

<sup>542</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1670/47, 1681/90, 1683/56, 1685/93, 1715/34, 1741/14; DD/X/WHI/1a; TNA, PROB 4/8035, 8778; C 10/264/56.

<sup>543</sup> Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 77, 81, 161; *Wells Cathedral Miscellanea*, 159.

<sup>544</sup> SHC, Q/SR/27/100—01; DD/SP/63 (1616).

<sup>545</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/339 (1634), 1670/70; TNA, C 8/118/68.

<sup>546</sup> TNA, PROB 11/133/257; 11/129/16; 11/159/353; SHC, Q/SR/51/22; DD/TP/4.

<sup>547</sup> SHC, DD/SP/63 (1616), 1675/59; DD/SAS/C795/TN/37.

<sup>548</sup> TNA, C 3/467/17; PROB 11/527/341; SHC, T/PH/hps/1; DD/SP/170 (1754), 178 (1798), 379; DD/TAC/2/3/1, 58, 194; DD/HC/16/7/1; DD/SAS/C112/18/3—4; tithe award, St James.

<sup>549</sup> SHC, DD/DP/44/9.

<sup>550</sup> TNA, PROB 11 *passim*.

<sup>551</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1716/3.

<sup>552</sup> TNA, C 11/2054/17.

Dyed wool had to be washed before spinning which contaminated watercourses.<sup>553</sup> A washing place north of the bridge was recorded from 1566 and the wealthy Applin family's dyehouse had a stage from Dyers Green, North Town from which wool was washed in the river until 1756 or later.<sup>554</sup> A dyehouse with right of access for dyeing and washing wool in 1636 may have used the Stockwell stream.<sup>555</sup> Dyehouses in Hollway Lane and High Street used rhynes or had ponds like that off East Street.<sup>556</sup> Another south of the bridge was rebuilt in 1672 with furnaces and dyeing vats and later with four furnaces and two dye vats. It was recorded with dyer's ground in 1759 but was later converted to a malthouse.<sup>557</sup> Itinerant traders brought lengths of white cloth to Taunton to be dyed in colours such as powder blue, seawater green, tawney or russet for resale at fairs in the late 16th and early 17th century.<sup>558</sup>

By 1693 there was a calender house in Paul's Field.<sup>559</sup> In 1696 a fuller mortgaged his High Street dyehouse and workshops with a hot press and five other presses but it was an inn by 1722.<sup>560</sup> In 1700 after a tucker burnt a hole in one of Elizabeth Harvey's cloths 'a child could pass through' she asked that her sagathies should not be hot pressed.<sup>561</sup> A dyeworks was established in Bath Place in 1812 and dyeing and calendering employed c. 10 people in the 19th century although much of their work was cleaning.<sup>562</sup> In the 1950s the Taunton dye works was in the Bell Yard, High Street and a steam-powered dye and cleaning works was north-east of High Street.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> SHC, DD/SP/22/5.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid. DD/MT/5/15; DD/SP/18/127, 22/1; 71, f. 52; 74, f. 685.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/386 (1636 paper).

<sup>556</sup> TNA, E 304/6/P8; Wilts and Swindon HC 1075/001/279; SHC, DD/DP/23/8, 74, ff. 101, 145; A/ADS/1/2; DD/SAS/C795/1 (bdle 6).

<sup>557</sup> Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 115; TNA, C 78/865, no 8: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/C78](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/C78) accessed May 2021; SHC, DD/CH/94/2; DD/ES/3/6.

<sup>558</sup> SHC, DD/SP/49 (1586, 1593); 63 (1616—17); DD/TOR/422.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C112/17. Hot presses then used to create a lustre on cloth.

<sup>560</sup> Wilts and Swindon HC 1075/001/279; SHC, DD/SP/257 (1831).

<sup>561</sup> SHC, DD/X/WHI/1a.

<sup>562</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); TNA, HO 107/1923; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—5; RG 11/2366—8.

<sup>563</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957) ix; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/15 (1678).

### Fulling Mills

Firepool mill had two fulling stocks and a house by 1468.<sup>564</sup> At 13s. 4d. the rent was a fraction of the £6 paid for the nearby Obridge grain mills, which had priority for water.<sup>565</sup> A one-stock fulling mill at Pool Wall was converted to grist milling c. 1566.<sup>566</sup> A man left a tucking mill to his wife in 1683.<sup>567</sup> Firepool mill had been in the Lissant family at least four generations before 1669 but it was disused after 1731 and by 1760 was a grist mill.<sup>568</sup> The Tone Conservators bought it in 1763 and demolished it.<sup>569</sup> The wheel trench and other remains were visible in 1862.<sup>570</sup>

### Silk

A silk weaver was recorded in 1677 but the major development came a century later.<sup>571</sup> Most silk mill owners were London businesses importing expensive raw silk initially for weaving at Spitalfields. Cheap, young labour, waterpower for throwing machines and duties on imported worked silk after 1776 fuelled the move to Somerset. Messrs Forbes and Wasdale reputedly introduced silk throwing in 1778 and by 1799 c.100 people worked in the silk mills.<sup>572</sup> Taunton was reputedly the second town in England to make organzine, strong silk warp thread, on powered throwing machines. Tram, threads simply twisted together, was too weak for warp.<sup>573</sup>

<sup>564</sup> SHC, DD/DP/325/35; T/PH/win 1505—6.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/71.

<sup>566</sup> TNA, E 134/4JasI/Mich27.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid. PROB 11/372/17.

<sup>568</sup> Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 152 [Lyffard]; SHC, DD/SP/79 (1660), 301—2; D/P/tau.ja/4/1/3, 13/2/2; DD/MK/51.

<sup>569</sup> SHC, DD/SP/301; DD/MK/51, 53; Q/REI/35/25b.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid. PAM 226, T. Hugo, 'A ramble by the Tone', 3.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid. DD/CH/74/10 (1677).

<sup>572</sup> *VCH Som.* VI, 167; VII, 33, 35, 47, 51, 56; SHC, A/AWT/1; DD/X/HFD/2.

<sup>573</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 233.



Silk articles produced included scarves and flags such as that carried in the 1814 victory procession in which 200 female silk workers in white with muslin turbans took part.<sup>574</sup> By then c.500 people threw silk in powered mills and c. 1,000 wove, often at home, using c. 800 handlooms supported by 300 winders and quillers. An 1822 petition against changes in silk duty claimed it would put up to c. 2,000 out of work.<sup>575</sup> In 1824 the industry was reputedly worth £150,000 a year, a fifth of the town's economy.<sup>576</sup> In 1826 a committee relieved c. 400 unemployed silk weavers during a trade depression and in 1830 employment fell by two thirds and many worked part-time.<sup>577</sup> The demand for high quality organzine and marabout yarn increased. Only two of seven at work in 1822 had been specialist throwing mills but by 1830 most were.<sup>578</sup>

In 1832 silk weaving had reputedly 'descended to the tomb' with cheap imports and powered looms. In 1837 female home silk weavers earned only 4—5s. a week, slightly higher than for agricultural work and men earned 8s., below the 12s. or more paid in the mill. Lodgers paid 1s. a week for loom space, rented looms from mill owners or shared with others, reducing earnings to 2s. 6d especially when work was scarce.<sup>579</sup> A woman starved to death on 2s. 6d. a week in 1858 when the factories were on short time.<sup>580</sup> In 1841 there were 132 resident silk weavers but by 1851 only 59 of 481 silk workers.<sup>581</sup>

Silk mills were regarded as safe for children, which saved childcare costs. By 1833 there had been no fatalities and only four serious accidents since the mills opened. Four mills employed up to 200 children from eight, younger if their parents could not send them to

<sup>574</sup> Humphries, *Som Parishes*, 680; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (printed insert, 1814).

<sup>575</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, 382; SHC, DD/MK/60.

<sup>576</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7.

<sup>577</sup> *Bath Chronicle*, 1 June 1826, *Dorset County Chronicle*, 6 May 1830 (report on Taunton); BNA accessed 3 June 2021.

<sup>578</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839).

<sup>579</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/9/1/5, 13/2/255, 13/9/1; TNA, HO 73/53/9.

<sup>580</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 20 March 1858; BNA, accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>581</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3.

school, so their mothers could work. Children reeled washed silk onto swifts or reels for twisting and throwing, wound yarn onto quills for weaving and knotted breaks for 9d. to 2s. a week. Some mill owners paid for part-time schooling or provided night classes. Teachers and children thought factory children were less healthy but overseers wanted pauper children sent into the mills.<sup>582</sup> In 1861 William Rawlinson employed 137 women, 34 men and 277 children under 18.<sup>583</sup>

In the 1830s hours were 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer and 7.30 or 8.a.m. to 8.p.m. in winter with three meal breaks of up to an hour each. One manufacturer claimed it was bad for children to work only 10 hours a day as extra leisure resulted in mischief. Two mills administered corporal punishment but the others preferred fines or tracts and halfpence for good behaviour. One factory worked 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. changing hands for the extra hours although another had two young boys working 18 hours a day. Some mills provided cooking and tea-making facilities and better-paid young throwsters cooked meat or fish for dinner but women with children subsisted on bread with kettle broth or weak tea, or ale with cheese or potatoes.<sup>584</sup>

In 1781 James Vansommer and Peter Paul, London mercers, built a mill on a brewhouse site north of Pool Wall grain mills powered by waterwheels and employing poor children.<sup>585</sup> They went bankrupt in 1783 and William Wilmott of Sherborne and John Norman bought the factory with machinery. In 1787 William died and his widow sold out to Norman.<sup>586</sup> By 1791 Norman employed up to 100 hands throwing and by c. 1798 worked with his son Samuel who added the grain mill site.<sup>587</sup> A mill mistress, an experienced hand,

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<sup>582</sup> *Royal Com. on employment of children in factories* (1833), 60, 72—7; SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/2/255, 13/9/1.

<sup>583</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18.

<sup>584</sup> *Royal Com. on children in factories*, 75—7, 72—7.

<sup>585</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, 374n.; SHC, DD/DP/37/2; D/P/tau.m/9/1/1 (1782).

<sup>586</sup> SHC, DD/SP/378 (1784); Dors. Hist. Centre/D/WIL cat.

<sup>587</sup> SHC, A/CTP/15/5, p. 213; *The Universal British Directory* (c. 1798), IV, 588; above, mills.

ran the machinery according to the water level and stopped the mill if supplies were low.<sup>588</sup> By 1821 Thomas Mate ran an adjoining silk factory but before 1830 George Stevenson and Company acquired both, extended the buildings and installed a steam engine.<sup>589</sup> In 1856 George Bloor, occupier by 1842, built a tumbling weir with triple sluices to improve flow to the breast shot waterwheel but after litigation had to reconstruct it.<sup>590</sup> By 1861 the factory, known as Pool Wall Mills, made silk goods for Walters and Son of London before becoming a collar factory.<sup>591</sup> In 1883 Walters built a two-storey factory in Wood Street, possibly managed by William Frost from Pool Wall and Macclesfield. After 1899 it closed and became a repository now dwellings.<sup>592</sup>

In c. 1782 James Vansommer probably built the house, now 18 Canon Street, with a silk gauze factory employing 60 hands. After his bankruptcy it was sold to John James of London. Lacking water-power, machinery was operated by women on a treadmill. Thirty-two looms produced handkerchiefs, shawls, tiffanies and muslins until 1799 or later. After use as a straw hat manufactory and a cabinet maker's workshop it became a private house.<sup>593</sup> Another Canon Street silk factory was in existence by 1822 until c. 1830.<sup>594</sup>

In 1793 Londoner Leney Smith started crepe-weaving. In 1818 he added 30 looms each employing three workers.<sup>595</sup> By 1822 his son helped run the factory in Mount Street, on the site of the later barrack gatehouse.<sup>596</sup> A Mr Every apparently started a factory in 1806 and Thomas Atkins had a crepe manufactory in St James Street, possibly that later run by Mr

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<sup>588</sup> SHC, DD/DP/37/2.

<sup>589</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); SHC, D/P/tau.m/4/3/10; tithe award, St Mary.

<sup>590</sup> *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/18 (1860).

<sup>591</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866).

<sup>592</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/18/720; A/ADR, box 4 (ins. bk); TNA, PROB 11/2021/213 (codicil); RG 12/1877; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—99).

<sup>593</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, 381; SHC, DD/X/HFD/2; DD/SP/378, 416.

<sup>594</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830).

<sup>595</sup> SHC, A/AWT/1; *Taunton Courier* 26 March 1818; BNA accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>596</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); SHC, A/ASW/1.

Blinkhorn. Crepe-weaving was largely given up in the 1830s. A Coal Orchard silk factory was last recorded in 1868 and was absorbed into adjoining foundry premises.<sup>597</sup>

By the late 1790s William Heudebourck manufactured silk, possibly in Mount Street where he lived. John Heudebourck started silk throwing c. 1811 in a small factory adjoining his Mount Street house.<sup>598</sup> Before 1840 John moved to the larger South Street factory begun by James Parsons before 1822.<sup>599</sup> By 1842 it was run by John Ballance and Company<sup>600</sup> The original four-storey brick building was three bays by twelve with a cupola. In 1846 an Easton and Amos 50 hp. beam engine was installed with three boilers and an 80-ft octagonal chimney, rebuilt in 1857. By 1864 the mill formed three sides of a square, steam-heated and gas-lit with machines by Frost of Macclesfield and Peel and Ormerod of Manchester. There were 5,000 spindles throwing up to seven cwt of silk per week. The mill had a washing house, a counting house and five cottages.<sup>601</sup> It closed c. 1868 for conversion to a lace factory but in 1873 became a collar factory.<sup>602</sup>

Two London firms, Ingleby, Jones and Company in White Lion Court, off East Street and Meat and Parsons in South Street, employed weavers making silk crepe, persians and sarsenet but after 1824 when Spitalfields' wages fell, sent yarn there for weaving.<sup>603</sup> In 1830 the White Lion Court manufactory was run by John Jones who discontinued weaving claiming competition from Manchester and London eroded Taunton's cheap labour advantage. He employed up to 150 workers in 1833, three quarters female and half under

<sup>597</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, 382; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, D/P/tau.ja/2/1/19 (1863), 13/1/8; D/P/tau.m/13/2/255; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, p. 50; tithe award, St James; DD/HR/3.

<sup>598</sup> *The Universal British Directory* (c. 1798), IV, 588; SHC, D/N/turc/1/5/1.

<sup>599</sup> SHC, A/AQM/5; A/ASW/1; *Pigot, London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830).

<sup>600</sup> SHC, A/AWT/1; *Pigot Dir.* (1842).

<sup>601</sup> SHC, A/AQM/5; *Taunton Courier*, 26 Aug. 1857, 20 Jan. 1864: BNA accessed 22 March 2019.

<sup>602</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 24 Apr. 1868: BNA, accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>603</sup> SHC, A/AWT/1; DD/SAS/TN/54; Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, 382; *Pigot, London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); VCH Som. II, 422—3.

15.<sup>604</sup> His successor George Jones suspended production in 1838 when c. 200 workers were laid off. By 1841 William Rawlinson rented the factory to run with his Tancred Street mill.<sup>605</sup>

Probably by 1810, Ingleby, Jones and Company had a throwing mill at the east end of Concord Place, off Tancred Street, which they let before 1816 to George Rawlinson. He sold yarn to Messrs Pearsall and Green in London, who supplied the Spitalfields weavers, but by 1830 ran the mill as a bobbin net or lace factory. When James Pearsall (d. 1846) retired c. 1839 Rawlinson formed a partnership with Henry Hextall known as James Pearsall and Company and bought the three-storey mill with 8 hp. engine, two boilers and 80-ft chimney.<sup>606</sup> George was succeeded by his sons William who ran the Taunton mills and Samuel who managed the London business. William took over the White Lion Court mill before 1841 with houses in Tancred Street.<sup>607</sup> He employed 448 people by 1861 and 565 by 1871 supplying silk for embroidery, fringes, knitting, netting and scarves to Samuel's retail and wholesale business. The firm's unfading embroidery silks were produced and exhibited by 1851.<sup>608</sup> In 1874 Rawlinson took on William Summerfield who succeeded him in 1881 and by 1890 had the only surviving silk throwing business.<sup>609</sup> In 1903 two employees Messrs Calway and Drillien took over the business extending the three-storey gas-powered silk thread factory in White Lion Court, which with the four-storey Tancred Street throwing mill was valued at £8,000 in 1910.<sup>610</sup>

<sup>604</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Royal Com. on children in factories*, 72.

<sup>605</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/1/8; D/B/ta/13/1/1; *Taunton Courier* 28 Nov 1838: BNA accessed 12 May 2022; below, this section.

<sup>606</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, DD/SAS/C/2550/12; A/AWT/1; D/B/ta/13/1/1; *Som. Co. Gaz.* 1 June 1839: BNA accessed 22 Mar. 2018; *Globe* 26 June 1839; *Nonconformist* 26 Aug. 1846: BNA accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>607</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja/4/3/1; D/B/ta/13/1/1.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.* A/AWT/1; TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2074—5; *Taunton Courier* 1 July 1908: BNA accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>609</sup> SHC, DD/KIT/7/13; A/ADR, box 4 (insurance book); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883, 1889; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 233.

<sup>610</sup> SHC, DD/KIT/12/16; DD/IR/T/26/1, pp. 1—2, 10; TNA, IR 58/82593 (1), 58/82594 (186).

In 1926 the firm was re-united with the London business as James Pearsall and Company Ltd.<sup>611</sup> In 1928 it sold its 1810 beam engine to Henry Ford's museum in the USA and built a second block at White Lion Court for finishing and washing silk, still called the new mill in the 1960s.<sup>612</sup> The company built created Eastgate House, a 125-machine yarn-spinning factory in the former Sibley's shop at 4—6 Eastgate and 1—3 Harmony Row, Tancred Street, employing c. 120 people, mostly local women. It closed in 1966—7 and was redeveloped for shops and White Lion Court for housing. In 1953 Pearsall's supplied silk for the Coronation and cordage for the British Antarctic Expedition. By 1959 they were part of the Bridport group of net manufacturers, producing yarns for upholstery, embroidery, knitting, crochet and fishing. They took over the Augustine Street collar factory to manufacture surgical sutures, originally made of silk, and by 1967 were the largest supplier of sutures outside America producing 50 million yards that year.<sup>613</sup> In 1965 they bought clearance land on Duke Street, adjoining the Tancred Street mill, to build a braiding factory capable of processing 1,500,000 lb. of yarn annually and replacing their other sites. It was completed in 1967 when turnover was £0.75 million and the wage bill £120,000. They made surgical sutures, industrial sewing thread, high-strength braiding for parachute lines and nets for fishing and lifting pallets. Rayon was the main yarn but silk was still thrown, although employing only 200 people compared with up to 600 in the 1920s. The modern fibre and netting machinery needed few operators.<sup>614</sup> In c. 1973 they were throwsters, dyers and braiders of pure silk, rayon, nylon, polyester and polypropylene. Despite passing through numerous owners the Pearsall name and the core business, silk, polyester and nylon surgical

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<sup>611</sup> SHC, A/AWT/1.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid. D/RA/9/21; D/B/ta/24/1/69/1361, 24/1/71/1420, 24/1/178/10567.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/47/728; D/P/wilt/23/41; A/AWT/1; A/DIF/116/217; D/B/ta/24/1/178/10657.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/157/9616.1, 24/1/159/9716; D/DC/tau.d/25/7 (1601); A/AWT/1—2.

materials, continued although fewer than 100 people were employed at the site working in two shifts five days a week in 2022.<sup>615</sup>

The silk industry suffered from overseas competition and factories lay idle in 1864 with the loss of the American market during the civil war.<sup>616</sup> By 1866 only one mill was still throwing, the rest were making silk goods, enabling the transition to shirt and collar making.<sup>617</sup> By 1883 there were only two silk businesses and four making collars and cuffs. The number of resident silk workers averaged only c. 300 from 1891 and 216 in 1939, many of whom made artificial silk.<sup>618</sup>

### Lace and other fabrics

William Charles Cox established a bobbin net factory adjoining his foundry in Foundry Square c. 1825 employing c. 100 hands. Its 18 hp. engine ran continuously in 1833 when hands in shifts worked 18 hours a day. The factory closed c. 1844.<sup>619</sup> George Rawlinson's bobbin net factory at Tancred Street was presumably absorbed into his thread business c. 1842.<sup>620</sup> In 1841 there were 11 resident lace workers in Taunton, mainly men, and 16 lace and net workers in 1851.<sup>621</sup> Lace Factory Court was recorded off Tancred Street in the later 19th century.<sup>622</sup> Elizabeth Sansome made Honiton lace in Bridge Street in 1859 but before 1864 was succeeded by Jane Coombes who employed up to nine lacemakers probably until 1891 or later.<sup>623</sup>

<sup>615</sup> Ibid. PAM 1535, *Taunton official guide* [1973]; *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 92; [www.glassdoor.co.uk/Corza-Medical-jobs](http://www.glassdoor.co.uk/Corza-Medical-jobs): accessed 7 Nov. 2022.

<sup>616</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 4.

<sup>617</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866).

<sup>618</sup> TNA, RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8; RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249; RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>619</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Royal Com. on children in factories*, 72—5.; SHC, DD/CH/22.

<sup>620</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830, 1842).

<sup>621</sup> SHC, Q/SR/529/60; TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3.

<sup>622</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617; RG 12/1877; SHC, D/P/tau.ja/23/17.

<sup>623</sup> Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 23; TNA, RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 12/1875—7.

A girl was apprenticed to spin linen thread in the late 17th century and in 1620 a man had made and supplied dozens of plain and laced shirt bands and whitework.<sup>624</sup> There are references to flax dressing in 1841, a flax factory in 1861 and cotton spinners in the mid 19th century.<sup>625</sup> Between 1871 and 1894 horsehair businesses were recorded, presumably supplying furniture manufacturers.<sup>626</sup>

### Collar and Shirt industry

Silk mills turned to making starched collars and cuffs of linen, cotton, flannelette and wool, employing large numbers of low-paid women familiar with textile work. The industry grew quickly from c. 20 resident employees in 1871 to 715 in 1891 and over 1,750 by 1911. By then production was switching to unstarched, semi-stiff collars and later to shirts with attached collars. Some factories also produced overalls, women's blouses, nightwear and underwear. Final shirt assembly might be done by rural outworkers. Attempts in the 1920s to enforce the minimum wage of 5d. an hour were thwarted by poor record-keeping by employers who threatened to withdraw work if there was trouble.<sup>627</sup> In 1939 the textile and clothing industries employed c. 2,000 insured workers in Taunton. Numbers fell during the war but in 1961 six factories employed c. 1,700, mainly women on piecework.<sup>628</sup> In 1960 council tenants were allowed one commercial sewing machine but outworkers fell from 411 in 1952 to 100 by 1972.<sup>629</sup> By the end of the 20th century every shirt factory had closed.<sup>630</sup>

In the late 1870s Pool Wall Mill became a shirt and collar factory run by McIntyre, Hogg and Company as the Taunton Manufacturing Company making shirts and ladies

<sup>624</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/6/1; DD/SP/63 (1620).

<sup>625</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1923; RG 9/1618.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid. RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 12/1875; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894).

<sup>627</sup> TNA, LAB 2/654/TBI4226/1923; LAB 2/1629/TBI/A/3025.

<sup>628</sup> SHC, D/DC/tau.d: T. Sharp, *A Plan for Taunton*, 16; A/AWT /1.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/3/22/9, p. 462, 4/22/1 (1952, 1972).

<sup>630</sup> Ibid. D/DC/tau.d/2/2/9 (21 May); 2/2/10 (14 June).



underwear. Before 1883 Wheeler and Wilson established a collar factory in High Street taken over by McIntyre, Hogg and Company and replaced by a five-storey, seven-bay wing for Pool Wall. The gas-lit factory was powered by two steam engines, had its own print works, box-making room and speaking tubes and electric bells for communications.<sup>631</sup> Nearly 800 people made shirts, collars, cuffs and blouses by the 1890s when a new engine and boiler house were installed. In 1899 c. 500 employees were photographed at the front of a two-storey extension.<sup>632</sup> The firm had a small factory in Ilminster and employed rural outworkers.<sup>633</sup> In 1904 they bought land to extend to Upper High Street. By the 1950s the company, then known as Radiac, employed c. 350, mostly women, but closed in 1958. The factory was demolished for government offices.<sup>634</sup>

From 1873 South Street silk mill was a cotton and linen collar factory run by W. B. Newland of Ilminster and renamed Alma Street Works employing 330 hands. In 1875 part was sublet to collar manufacturer Richard Moody but all leases were assigned in 1880 to Macintyre and Hogg.<sup>635</sup> They sublet to Edward and Cony one of whose partners was Edward Josephs of the Tangier collar works, Bishops Hull.<sup>636</sup> By 1889 it was run by Samuel White and Henry Van Trump as the Somerset Manufacturing Company employing 500—600 workers, mainly female, making shirts, collars and cuffs for the wholesale market.<sup>637</sup> In 1919 they were prosecuted for underpaying 123 women.<sup>638</sup> In 1940 part of factory was rented by Frederick Theak who made bow ties and waistcoats.<sup>639</sup> From 1966 they became one business. but still known as Frederick Theak and Somerset Manufacturing, making ties, cummerbunds

<sup>631</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/18/729; DD/LK/3/1.

<sup>632</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 234; SHC, D/N/tmc/4/2/27, p. 181—3, 228—9, 237; D/B/ta/4/3/2 (1896); N. Chipchase, *Taunton Revisited* (Stroud, 1998), 30.

<sup>633</sup> TNA, LAB 2/1629/TBI/A/3025.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.* IR 58/62367 (619—20); *Taunton Courier*, 31 May 1958; BNA accessed 22 March 2019; SHC, D/B/ta/3/37/3, p. 86; 24/1/132/7560, 7589.

<sup>635</sup> SHC, A/AQM/5; DD/BR/lw/1; Cook, *Several Cases*, 57.

<sup>636</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883); SHC, DD/KIT/8/9; D/P/tau.ja/23/17.

<sup>637</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889); *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 233; SHC, A/AQM/5.

<sup>638</sup> TNA, LAB 2/1629/TBI/A/3025.

<sup>639</sup> SHC, A/AQM/5.

and waistcoats using 250 machinists, handworkers and outworkers in 1986.<sup>640</sup> In 1998 the business moved to Ilminster where it soon closed. The South Street factory was demolished for housing.<sup>641</sup>

The West of England Collar Manufactory was built in Viney Street by Charles Samson c. 1881 for Richard Moody (d. 1893) and later extended to Princes Street.<sup>642</sup> In 1922 part of the two-storey factory passed to John Manning Van Heusen, an American whose company specialised in semi-stiff white and coloured collars until 1971 and shirts from the late 1920s.<sup>643</sup> He arrived with the financial backing of Harding and Tilton of Boston and remained until 1927 with Harold Hartley as general manager. In 1928 they purchased the entire factory and its equipment. Known as Harding, Tilton and Hartley they used Van Heusen as their brand.<sup>644</sup> By 1936 collar and shirt making occupied separate buildings.<sup>645</sup> In 1938 the largely female workers were paid 15s. for 43  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours a week.<sup>646</sup> After the war the firm built branch factories in Somerset and Cornwall. In 1952 they became the British Van Heusen Company and in 1956 opened a corporate office in Saville Row, London.<sup>647</sup> The Taunton factory employed 400 workers producing over six million collars a year, many exported to Europe, Africa and the Far East. In 1971 collar-making was replaced by the production of shirts with integral collars.<sup>648</sup> In 1961 a new factory covered the entire block between Viney, Victoria, Lower Queen and Princes streets. The original building was demolished for a large courtyard. An annexe across Princes Street was formerly accessed by a

<sup>640</sup> Ibid. PAM 1535, *Taunton official guide* [1973]; DD/X/DEH/7.

<sup>641</sup> Ibid. A/AQM/5; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/26 (7 Oct.).

<sup>642</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/14/508; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—94); *PO Dir. London* (1885, 1890). Moody was born in Evercreech but lived mostly near London: TNA, RG 11/712/10; *Nat. Prob. Dir.*

<sup>643</sup> TNA, IR 58/82646 (1539); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914); SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3; A/BMG/5/1; A/EQW/1/3, p. 5.

<sup>644</sup> SHC, A/EQW/1/3, pp. 8, 12, 30.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/99/2291A.

<sup>646</sup> *Taunton Courier* 19 March 1938; BNA accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>647</sup> SHC, A/EQW/1/3, pp. 16, 18.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid. D/P/wilt/23/41; W. Hordle, 'The Manufacture of the Van Heusen Collar', *Journal SIAS* (1977) 40—2.

bridge.<sup>649</sup> By then 740 people were employed but the company licensed overseas factories to make their shirts and the Taunton factory closed in 1990 when only 130 people were employed. The building became home to several businesses.<sup>650</sup>

Alfred Kirk Cook (d. 1926), a McIntyre and Hogg employee, and piano dealer Clement Smith, as Alfred Cook and Company, built the Excelsior Shirt and Collar Works at The Mount before 1885 and employed 75 machinists.<sup>651</sup> They added two-storey iron cutting, drying and ironing rooms and patented shirt starching and upright washing machines in 1893.<sup>652</sup> They had premises in Canon Street in 1894, probably for collar dressing, small factories in Ilminster and Seavington and employed up to 50 outworkers.<sup>653</sup> In 1910 the Mount factory was powered by a 12 hp. engine but was in poor repair.<sup>654</sup> The company's export business was damaged by the war and after prosecution for underpaying staff they went bankrupt in 1922. Mr Cook's widow Clara tried reopening the factory in 1927 but in 1929 its assets were liquidated.<sup>655</sup> By 1887 Mr Goldsmith's Priory Manufacturing Company occupied the former St James' vicarage as a collar works. It was demolished after a major fire in 1889 but McIntyre, Hogg and Company continued it, probably in the former Priory Gate foundry, until 1929 or later.<sup>656</sup>

In 1898—9 Henry van Trump's Tone Vale Clothing, later Manufacturing, Company

<sup>649</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/71/1440, 1448, 1460; 24/1/79/1654—5; 24/1/140/8367.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid. A/EQW/1/3, pp. 26—30; DD/CWC/bw/31; PAM 1535; *Taunton Courier*, 29 Feb. 1964; *Bridgwater Journal*, 24 Mar. 1990; BNA, accessed 8 June 2022.

<sup>651</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 29 Feb. 1964; BNA, accessed 8 June 2022; SHC, tithe award, St Mary; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—99); TNA, RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>652</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/20/804, 24/1/21/882; DD/CWC/bw/31; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1887); *Chard and Ilminster News*, 19 Aug. 1893; BNA, accessed 20 June 2022.

<sup>653</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894, 1923); *Taunton Courier*, 27 Jan. 1926; BNA, accessed 20 June 2022; TNA, LAB 2/654/TBI4226/1923.

<sup>654</sup> TNA, IR 58/82634 (368).

<sup>655</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 31 May 1922, 27 Jan. 1926; BNA, accessed 20 June 2022; TNA, LAB 2/654/TBI4193/1923; LAB 2/654/TBI4226/1923; LAB 2/1629/TBI/A/3025; SHC, DD/CWC/bw/31.

<sup>656</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1887, 1902—3); *Taunton Courier*, 6 March 1889; BNA, accessed 7 July 2021; SHC, D/B/ta/13/3/1, p. 385; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 73.

.commissioned a purpose-built collar factory in St Augustine Street. The ground floor housed washing, starching and engine rooms, the first floor the machining and turning room and the second floor was for ironing and polishing. Henry Van Trump (d. 1925) was Mayor of Taunton four times and one of its few freemen.<sup>657</sup> In 1931 the company became Kolar Makers Ltd but closed the factory after 1961.<sup>658</sup> The main red brick and slate, three-storey 12-bay range was restored in 2022.

In 1919 the Taunton Manufacturing Company of Pool Wall Mill acquired the former Rowbarton woollen factory and warehouse but it became a carrier's depot.<sup>659</sup> From 1940, however, it was occupied by Steel and Glover, manufacturers of shirts, collars and pyjamas. After a fire the factory was rebuilt in 1956 in art deco style.<sup>660</sup> Up to 50 young women made shirts using Manchester cotton.<sup>661</sup> By 1960 there were 160 employees and a new warehouse at Priorswood but the warehouse was sold in 1964 and staff were on short-time by 1967.<sup>662</sup> Mr Harry Menswear Ltd took over in 1968 and Courtaulds' Luvisca by 1978.<sup>663</sup> In the 1980s it was run as a shirt co-operative but employed fewer than 50 people. In 1990 it became Hi Point offices.<sup>664</sup>

### Other clothing

Tailors were recorded from 1290 and a vestment maker in 1472.<sup>665</sup> Tailors paid for market stalls from the 14th to 18th centuries.<sup>666</sup> A Taunton tailor reputedly invented a ruff in 1607.<sup>667</sup>

<sup>657</sup> SWHT, Som. HER 16754; *Taunton Courier* 28 Sep. 1898, 21 June 1899, 11 Nov. 1925 [obituary]: BNA accessed 4 May 2022; TNA, IR 58/82603 (1071).

<sup>658</sup> SHC, A/BKN/6/1; A/APN/2/6; above, intro, built character.

<sup>659</sup> SHC, DD/AY 328/1—14; D/R/ta/34/9/3, pp. 51, 386; D/B/ta/24/1/122/5396; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1923—31).

<sup>660</sup> SHC, A/DIF/116/225; D/B/ta/24/1/122/5396; *Taunton Courier*, 25 Feb. 1956: BNA accessed 16 July 2021; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1957), 135.

<sup>661</sup> SHC, D/P/wilt/23/41.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid. Elliott, 'Taunton: an urban study', 19; DD/X/ROW/1.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid. A/AWT/1; A/APN/2/6; D/PC/stapg/7/3.

<sup>664</sup> *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 94; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/2/2/10 (14 June); 12 (26 June); SWHT, HER 32175.

<sup>665</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1289—90; TNA, CP 40/841/777: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021.

In 1634 23 were in business in the borough and many took journeymen and apprentices.<sup>668</sup> In 1700 they wanted a charter of incorporation but it would have cost at least £100. A Tailors Arms alehouse was recorded in the early 18th century.<sup>669</sup> Some tailors specialised in riding habits or uniforms, or alterations, cleaning and mending.<sup>670</sup> In the 1814 victory procession 77 tailors followed the cloth workers.<sup>671</sup> From 1841 to 1901 there were usually between 150 and 190 including up to 52 women, who gradually took up machine tailoring whereas men specialised in cutting, providing work for scissor grinders.<sup>672</sup> In 1928 one tailor invested in cutting and fitting rooms but bespoke tailoring was already a luxury. John Collier, one of Taunton's last '50s. tailors', retired after 35 years in 1970 and only three tailoring businesses survived in 1972.<sup>673</sup>

In 1685 a tucker's wife was a needlewoman, her boxes of lace were the most valuable items the couple possessed, and a woman selling tapestry work may have made it.<sup>674</sup> Eighteenth-century mantua makers and milliners took paying apprentices.<sup>675</sup> During the 19th and early 20th centuries needlework employed an average of 350 women. Specialists made mantles, waistcoats, embroidery, carriage linings and curtains, others employed assistants or were employed by large stores to make alterations.<sup>676</sup> In the 1900s there were dressmaking workshops in Mary Street and Station Road and a few were in business in 2024.<sup>677</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1334—5, 1454—5, 1505—6, 1544—5; DD/MT/1/39, 17/36.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid. DD/WO 55/3/36; Gough, ed. *Camden Britannia*, I, 96.

<sup>668</sup> SHC, D/D/Cd/40, 65; DD/SP/339 (1634), 1644/56; D/P/tau.m 13/6/1.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid. DD/SF/13/2/51; DD/SP/61/9.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.m/23/3; TNA, IR 1/66, p. 184.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (printed insert, 1814).

<sup>672</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8; *Goodman's Taunton Dir* (1887).

<sup>673</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/69/1363; D/P/tau.a/2/9/7 (1970); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 424.

<sup>674</sup> SHC, DD/SP/438, no. 66, 1685/44.

<sup>675</sup> TNA, IR 1/41, p. 24; 1/46, p. 137; 1/48, pp. 2, 125, 142; 1/49, p. 142; 1/50, p. 271; 1/61, p. 5; 1/70, p. 91.

<sup>676</sup> Ibid. HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8; RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>677</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/26/1710, 24/1/31/202.

Cappers were recorded from the 15th century and hat manufacturers until 1830.<sup>678</sup> In 1824 the men's hat trade was worth £6,000 a year and straw bonnets a further £1,000.<sup>679</sup> Changes in fashion reduced bonnet makers from 32 in 1851 to none in 1891.<sup>680</sup> Hosiers were recorded from 1280 and in the 1740s had market standings.<sup>681</sup> A dispute in 1641 involved stockings and wooden legs, presumably for shaping hose.<sup>682</sup> Jemima Bright made hosiery in East Street from the mid 1880s, Florence Yandell produced knitted stockings at Bridge Street by 1889 and Mrs Hartnoll produced wool and silk knitted items on machines at her shop, probably employing the female hosiers and knitters recorded between 1891 and 1911.<sup>683</sup> Florence was succeeded by her sister Ada Billet assisted by Edith Yandell (d. 1922) then by Bessie Yandell until 1939 or later.<sup>684</sup> Fleming, Reid and Company made hosiery in North Street from 1914 to 1957. Machine-knitted womenswear was produced in Bridge Street c. 1983.<sup>685</sup> Staymakers, originally male, took female apprentices by the 1720s. By the 19th century it was a female occupation but mass-produced corsets reduced staymakers from 24 in 1851 to four in 1891.<sup>686</sup> Three corset makers were in business in 1972.<sup>687</sup> A crinoline manufacturer was recorded in 1866.<sup>688</sup>

<sup>678</sup> TNA, E 326/6453; SHC, DD/HC/6/1/1; D/P/tau.m/23/29, Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830).

<sup>679</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824); DD/SP/416.

<sup>680</sup> TNA, HO 107/1922—3; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>681</sup> L. Landon, *Som. Pleas 1280*, pp. 214—5; TNA, PROB 11/209/260, 11/242/538; SHC, D/P/tau.ja 13/5/2; D/B/ta/31/5/3.

<sup>682</sup> SHC, DD/SP/53 (Jan. 1641).

<sup>683</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 39, 43; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—1906); TNA, RG 12/1875, 1877; RG 13/2276—8; RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>684</sup> TNA, RG 14/14237/310; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914—39); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 9, (1957), 376.

<sup>685</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914, 1927); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929, 1957); *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 62.

<sup>686</sup> SHC, Q/SR/306/24; DD/HC/6/1/1; D/P/tau.m/13/3/5, 23/29; TNA, IR 1/48, p. 88; 1/467, pp. 113, 162; HO 107/1922—3; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>687</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3).

<sup>688</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1866).

Furriers were recorded in 1578 and the mid 19th century.<sup>689</sup> Women were making fur coats in 1939 and a retail and manufacturing furrier was in business in 1972.<sup>690</sup> Thomas Besaut, manager at St Augustine Street, started the West of England Clothing Company, which by 1901 produced mostly coats in a factory at Victoria Gate. Despite producing clothing for soldiers during the war it went into voluntary liquidation in 1920, selling 26 sewing machines, other machinery and stock.<sup>691</sup> In 1915 the Deane Manufacturing Company was created by the owners of Clements and Brown department store to manufacture munitions overalls and protective wear in their dressmaking workshops. They extended to fill the back area acquiring property in Magdalene Lane and Church Square, later cleared for a goods inward yard.<sup>692</sup> By 1957 as Wessex Textiles they built a factory at 9 Magdalene Lane but moved to new premises in Tangier in 1967 with 100 workers but closed in 1988. Their original site was cleared for a goods inward yard.<sup>693</sup> The General Textile Manufacturing Company built a two-storey factory in Peter Street in 1920, which closed between 1927 and 1932.<sup>694</sup> From the 1950s to 1990s there was a small garment and soft toy factory called Glenthorne at the former brewery site in Middle Street.<sup>695</sup>

### Rope and Twine

<sup>689</sup> TNA, CP 40/1354/258: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; HO 107/972, *Pigot Dir.* (1842); Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>690</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 392.

<sup>691</sup> TNA, IR 58/82646 (1539); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914); *Taunton Courier*, 3 Feb. 1915, 29 Dec. 1920, 31 Jul. 1943; BNA accessed 25 May 2021.

<sup>692</sup> SHC, DD/X/ROW/1; D/B/ta/24/1/112/4003; *Taunton Courier* 2 May 1917, 5 March 1960; BNA, accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>693</sup> SHC, DD/X/ROW/1; D/B/ta/24/1/112/4003, 24/1/153/9337, 24/1/191/10936; *Taunton Courier* 2 May 1917, 5 March 1960, 11 May 1963, 4 Feb. 1966; BNA, accessed 12 May 2022; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 26, 84.

<sup>694</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1927); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/50/798, 24/1/53/893, 24/1/57/008; D/R/ta/34/9/3; D/B/ta/4/3/4 (1932), 78/1633—4.

<sup>695</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 89; SHC, D/B/ta/unlisted (factory inspection cards); DD/X/ROW/1; A/BUG/5/3/1.

In the mid 15th century Henry Roper supplied cable and slings for cranes at Dunster castle and Bridgwater.<sup>696</sup> A barber was also a netmaker in 1731.<sup>697</sup> From 1769 ropers had stalls in the market, five in 1843.<sup>698</sup> A ropemaker's wife in Shuttern identified cord used in a robbery in 1788 and women made rope for sale.<sup>699</sup> The East Reach rope and twine manufactory was in business by 1872 until 1914 or later and there was a ropewalk at South Street brickworks.<sup>700</sup>

### Metalwork

Blacksmiths and smithies were recorded from the 12th century around the town and at Shoreditch.<sup>701</sup> In the 16th century large quantities of iron were imported through Combwich and Bridgwater.<sup>702</sup> The 1774 poll included c. 47 metal workers but the 1820 poll included 49 smiths out of c. 80 metalworkers.<sup>703</sup> Farriers or shoeing smiths were recorded until the 1930s but the c. 50 general blacksmiths in 1841 rising to 112 in 1891 were mainly employed in factories. White, copper and wire smiths, tinsplate workers and braziers accounted for a further 54 in 1841 but only 14 in 1901, mirroring the increase in mass production.<sup>704</sup>

Goldsmiths were recorded from the 13th century.<sup>705</sup> Richard and John Femell were goldsmiths in the 1550s.<sup>706</sup> John Garrett (d. 1560) possibly trained Henry Arnold (d. 1579) and his son Osmond (d. 1596) who both made communion cups for local churches in 1574.

Robert Wade (d. 1622) made silver spoons and apprenticed his sons Matthew and Robert to

<sup>696</sup> SHC, DD/L/P4/26/4 (1419—21); T.B. Dilks, *Bridgwater Borough Records 1400—45*, 188; *1445—68*, 62.

<sup>697</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1731/26.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/44/7; D/P/tau.m/13/3/10; D/B/ta/31/1/2, pp. 307, 326; 31/1/4, p. 317.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/96/8; D/P/tau.m/9/1/5.

<sup>700</sup> Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883, 1914); OS Map 1:500, SOM. LXX. 12.18 (1888).

<sup>701</sup> *PSAS CXXXVIII* (1994), 180; SHC, T/PH/win 1223—4, 1253—4, 1301—2; SHC, tithe awards, St James, St Mary.

<sup>702</sup> SHC, D/B/bw/1435. 1477, 1508—9, 1884.

<sup>703</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/6/1/1; D/P/tau.m/23/29.

<sup>704</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8; SHC, DD/X/HEY/1—4.

<sup>705</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1288—9, 1298—1300, 1412—13; TNA, E 179/169/6, f. 10.

<sup>706</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/M/22/1; *Cal. Pat.*, 1558—60, p. 207.



London and Bristol goldsmiths respectively. The younger Robert took over his father's business but in 1633 was fined for substandard spoons. Although there was no official Taunton mark a cross with four pellets is found alongside the Taunton rebus.<sup>707</sup>

The Dare family, whose spoons survive in west-country museums, were prominent gold and silver smiths. Thomas (d. 1663), grandson of wealthy merchant Thomas Dare, was apprenticed in London. He returned before 1633 when he was accused of producing substandard silver and using the London assay mark and in 1634 he refused to have his weights checked. His son Thomas produced good quality work but was tried for , fled to Amsterdam, leaving the business to his wife Ellen and was killed in a dispute in 1685. Ellen (d. 1740) carried on the business but her sons were retailers only.<sup>708</sup> Samuel Dell (d. 1698) made silver articles with his wife Susanna and Richard Hamlin (d. 1734) made church plate.<sup>709</sup> Some 19th-century gold and silversmiths made and engraved items and one made replica lake-village bowls in 1900.<sup>710</sup>

Craft metalworkers included cutlers from the 1260s, a girdler in 1300, a lorimer in 1302 and 1426, a kettle maker in 1404, a sievier in 1426, wire drawers and a spurrier in the later 15th century.<sup>711</sup> Pewterers were recorded from 1497 until 1715. A Welshman refurbished swords in the early 17th century.<sup>712</sup> Locksmiths were at work from the 17th century,<sup>713</sup> edge

<sup>707</sup> TNA, C 1/625/9—10; PROB 11/43/492, 11/140/46; T. Kent, *Spoons and Goblets; Seventeenth Century Somerset Silver* (Taunton, 2004), [4—5, 12, 14, 19, 21].

TNA, PROB 11/140/46; Kent, *Spoons and Goblets*, [5, 12, 14, 19, 21].

<sup>708</sup> Wilts and Swindon HC, 644/20/1—5; SHC, Q/SR/131/19, 152/3; DD/SP/339 (1633/4); TNA, PROB 11/62/392; Kent, *Spoons and Goblets*, [5—7, 10, 14, 22].

<sup>709</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1698/18; Kent, *Spoons and Goblets*, [7—8, 20].

<sup>710</sup> Hastings Museum, SOC4/4/4; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1900), 110.

<sup>711</sup> Green, *Feet of Fines 1196—1307*, 201—2; *Cal. Pat.* 1266—72, 202; 1401—5, 342; SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2; A/AHT/4; TNA, CP 40/807, 871, indexes: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; *Pardon Rolls of Edward IV and Henry VI, 1468—71*, (List & Index Soc. 360), p. 82; Devon HC, Z1/10/729.

<sup>712</sup> TNA, CP 40/907, 1420, 1434, indexes: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; SHC, Q/SR/57/100; DD/SP/63 (1619), 339 (1633/4), 1684/113..

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.* Q/SR/76/157, 111/47—8; DD/DP/24/2; DD/CH/77/3; DD/SP/162, 338, 356, 423; N. Devon RO, B1/46/106; Devon HC, 1198A-1/PO/113; TNA, IR 1/41, p. 28; 1/49, p. 184.

tool makers in the early 18th century,<sup>714</sup> and coach spring makers, file cutters, saw setters and scale beam makers in the 19th century.<sup>715</sup> In 1799 a wealthy brazier left his furnaces to his nephew.<sup>716</sup> By the 1830s brazier William Smith made and repaired domestic and commercial equipment and fitted out shops with metal counters and scales.<sup>717</sup> There were welding and electro-plating works in Yarde Place, Staplegrove Road and Greenbrook Terrace in the 1950s and in 1972 an engineering pattern maker in Belvedere Road.<sup>718</sup>

### Foundries

Roger le Belyeter or bell founder was recorded in 1296—7 and brassworkers in the 15th century.<sup>719</sup> Casting Grove near Haydon was presumably named from earlier activity.<sup>720</sup> A brass foundry east of North Street in the late 16th or early 17th century cast vessels and bells and two bells were cast locally by Thomas Purdue in 1626.<sup>721</sup> Domestic bellhangers were recorded in the 19th century and a church bellhanger used former builder's workshops in Railway Street from the 1990s to 2000s.<sup>722</sup>

In 1810 sergemaker Charles Cox (d. 1813), his brother William and nephew William Charles Cox, ironmongers, became partners in a new iron and brass foundry in Soho or Foundry Square off Tancred Street. They produced penny tokens in 1812 showing furnaces and a founder with a tapping bar and pig iron, said to have circulated for many years at a loss

<sup>714</sup> Devon HC, 3212A/PO104/10.

<sup>715</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830, 1842); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5.

<sup>716</sup> SHC, DD/BR/gd/3.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.* DD/X/FMM/1.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.* DD/TBL/72 (1953, p. 26); D/DC/tau.d/2/2/13 (2 July); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 56, 362, 386, 428c; (1972—3), 370.

<sup>719</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1296—7; TNA, CP 40/641, 861, 907, indexes: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accounts*, 22.

<sup>720</sup> SHC, DD/SP/74, f. 220; Devon HC, 74B/MT/1918. Corrupted to Gasters Grove: SHC, tithe award, St Mary.

<sup>721</sup> S. Blaylock, 'The Archaeology of West Country Brass Foundries', *West Country Households 1500—1700* (Woodbridge, 2015), 274, 292.

<sup>722</sup> SHC, A/ADR/4; A/EQS.

to the firm.<sup>723</sup> In the mid 1830s the firm moved to Tangier in Bishops Hull.<sup>724</sup> The Foundry Square property was sold in 1844 to tanner William French.<sup>725</sup> In the 1830s brothers George and William Charles Cox manufactured sets of skillets and grates at their Fore Street workshops, succeeded by Edward George Cox until the 1860s. Thomas Fisher made stoves behind his family ironmongery store at 8—9 Fore Street from the 1830s.<sup>726</sup>

In the 19th century the Savery family's foundries employed up to 30 men moulding and casting.<sup>727</sup> Robert Savery (d. 1857) built St James Foundry shortly after 1823 and was followed by Joseph Savery, who gave up his Mill Lane foundry, and Joseph's son Alfred. It was sold in 1881 and taken over by James Stevens who cast the ironwork for Firepool weir and made large weighbridges.<sup>728</sup> His successor Ernest William Stevens made heating and ventilation equipment in 1895 and later traded with Charles Samson but went into receivership in 1903.<sup>729</sup> They were followed by Hubert Rudman, H. T. Lancey and John Craven who formed a company in 1909 producing pumps, bearings, band saws and other machines with c. 50 employees. During the war the foundry became a munitions factory and in 1918 the company went into liquidation and the buildings, in Foundry Road, were converted to other uses.<sup>730</sup> The Priory Gate foundry, entered by an arch through 27 St James Street and held from c. 1824 by William Savery and in 1864 by his son James, manufactured

<sup>723</sup> Som. HER, 31755; [www.finds.org](http://www.finds.org): SOM-171DDD; SHC, T/PH/bb/4; DD/CH/22, 69/3, 70/10; Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); Harley and Dunning, *Som. Maps.* 1822.

<sup>724</sup> Bishops Hull, forthcoming.

<sup>725</sup> SHC, DD/CH/22.

<sup>726</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830, 1842); SHC, DD/CH/74/10; *PO Dir. Som.* (1861). There are Cox skillets in the Museum of Somerset, Taunton.

<sup>727</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>728</sup> SHC, Q/Rup/192; A/BKP/3; A/AQZ/2; DD/HR/3—4; DD/HWN/11; *Taunton Courier*, 7 Apr. 1880, 2 June 1883; BNA accessed 21 June 2022; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889, 1894).

<sup>729</sup> SHC, Grand World's Fair Bazaar programme (1895), 12; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1897, 1899); Som. HER 14501.

<sup>730</sup> TNA, IR 58/82602 (956); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914); Som. HER 14501; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 50.

ranges and stoves, church clocks, hydraulic rams, pumps and iron and brass castings until the 1890s.<sup>731</sup>

The steam-powered Tone Bridge iron and brass foundry began *c.* 1819 although the business claimed to have been founded in 1796.<sup>732</sup> Charles Allen took it on before 1879 and rebuilt the foundry as C. Allen and Son with large showrooms on Bridge Street. They built agricultural steam engines up to 14 hp., papermaking, laundry and brewing equipment and electric light and telephone standards in 1890.<sup>733</sup> By 1914 as Tone Engineering Works under William Allen it was primarily a motor works and the showrooms were rebuilt in mock-timbered style *c.* 1929.<sup>734</sup> It closed *c.* 1969 and the workshops were demolished.<sup>735</sup> North Town or Phoenix foundry near the junction of Bridge Street and Staplegrove Road employed 14 workers in 1871 making steam engines, boilers, pleasure boats, presses, castings, tanks, mills and small bridges.<sup>736</sup> It had an engine house and fitting shop and was used by Kallends until the mid 1870s when it was sold for housing.<sup>737</sup> Kallend or Kelland and Son, brass and iron founders, began as smiths in North Town before 1827 and manufactured coach springs and scale beams at 15 Bridge Street by 1859 until 1883 or later.<sup>738</sup> Agricultural engineers in the 19th and 20th centuries included Hawkes in East Street and others in Priory Bridge Road.<sup>739</sup>

### Instrument making

<sup>731</sup> SHC, Q/REI/35/25b; A/BKP/3; DD/SAS/C2273/1/T1/18; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864); Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>732</sup> SHC, DD/CWC/ta/unlisted acc. no. G/2468; A/DQO/404/43/7 [sign].

<sup>733</sup> SWHT, HER, 31755; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 46; TNA, IR 58/82608 (1580).

<sup>734</sup> SHC, D/PC/b/hl/2/1 (1914); D/B/ta/4/3/4 (1927); DD/TC/39.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid. DD/FIV/1/38.

<sup>736</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); TNA, RG 10/2374.

<sup>737</sup> SHC, DD/HS/1/3.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid. D/T/ta/9, p. 305; 10 (1840); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883).

<sup>739</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906—39); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 367.

Watchmakers were recorded from the 17th century, Sampson Wroth (d. 1714) made brass timepieces using a small forge and casting trough and John Coles was a clock and watchmaker in 1784.<sup>740</sup> Up to 20 clock and watch makers were at work in the 19th century including the Lake family, also opticians, and John Goodman who made gold watches with jewelled movements.<sup>741</sup> Gunsmiths were recorded from the mid 18th century.<sup>742</sup> One firm, later the West of England Gun Works, started in 1815 designing, making and repairing guns and kept a shooting range in 1890 but closed after 1977.<sup>743</sup> Another's gunpowder destroyed the houses between the George and White Hart, High Street, in 1842.<sup>744</sup> A percussion cap maker was at work in 1830 and two bullet makers in 1861.<sup>745</sup>

Organ builder James Ling rebuilt the St Mary's organ in 1853 and had a workshop in Trinity Street.<sup>746</sup> His successor John Minns built a factory off Lower Middle Street in 1883, employing five skilled workers in 1891.<sup>747</sup> Henry Knight probably trained with Minns before establishing his own business c.1900 with his son in East Reach but had ceased organ building by 1914.<sup>748</sup> In 1895 J.E. Minns and Company was bought by employee George Osmond (d. 1949) and in 1908 became George Osmond and Son, later Company, moving in 1928 to a new factory in St Augustine Street. In the 1950s they employed 25 skilled craftsmen mainly rebuilding organs for 'poverty stricken churches' but in 1954 built an organ for a church in Kingston, Jamaica.<sup>749</sup> They maintained up to 2,000 organs in 1961 but closed

<sup>740</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1693/31, 1695/35, 1714/10; DD/SAS/C238/5

<sup>741</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 12/1875—7; SHC, DD/X/SIH/1.

<sup>742</sup> TNA, IR 1/21, p. 83; 1/55, p. 89; HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 87.

<sup>743</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 35; *Taunton Silver Jubilee Programme* (1977), unpaginated.

<sup>744</sup> *Taunton Courier* 8 June 1842: BNA accessed 12 May 2022.

<sup>745</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); TNA, RG 9/1617—18.

<sup>746</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/4/1/9 (1853); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 95.

<sup>747</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/18/726; TNA, RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>748</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1900), 166; SHC, A/DIF/101/8, 101/10/192; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>749</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—1927); SHC, D/P/wilt/5/4/2, 23/41; D/B/ta/13/3/1, p. 32, 24/1/68/1309; A/BRF/1.

in 1986 and the factory was demolished. The Deane Organ Builders, based in South Street until the early 2020s, built the Cardiff Oratory organ in 2007.<sup>750</sup>

Barometer makers were recorded from the 1800s, a piano maker in 1861 and a sewing machine factory between 1881 and 1901.<sup>751</sup> A scale manufacturer was in Queen Street in 1842.<sup>752</sup> Between 1914 and 1972 scales and weighing machines were made in Upper High Street and Albemarle Road.<sup>753</sup> Lewis Dick and Son were scientific instrument makers in Guildford Place, High Street from the 1940s until 1967 or later.<sup>754</sup> From c. 1945 until the 1970s F. H. Wrigley Ltd used the former Albemarle Maltings to make plastic fillers and filters.<sup>755</sup> The East family's Exmoor Plastics Ltd began in 1970 manufacturing ear, nose and throat surgical implants at their new factory on Lisieux Way. In 2021 the firm was taken over and the factory closed although the Exmoor brand survived.<sup>756</sup>

### Engineering

Engineers were recorded from the 1860s. In 1891 53 steam and electrical engineers and fitters lived in Taunton and in 1901 over 180 engineers, fitters, armature winders, boiler and pattern makers and engine builders, 44 steam engine builders and 70 electrical engineers and fitters, mostly in St James' parish.<sup>757</sup> In 1978 1,024 people in the Taunton area worked in instrument making and electrical engineering, the second largest manufacturing employer.<sup>758</sup>

Walter Easton started the Whitehall Iron Works in Albemarle Road in 1879 working with civil engineer Samuel Waldegrave manufacturing steam engines, waterwheels, turbines

<sup>750</sup> SHC, A/AWT/1; Cardifforatory.co.uk: accessed 1 November 2023.

<sup>751</sup> SHC, DD/X/WEA/5; *Pigot Dir.* (1842); TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>752</sup> *Pigot Dir. Som.* (1842).

<sup>753</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/132/7589; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914—39); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 416.

<sup>754</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 60; SHC, A/APN/2/6; Elliott, 'Taunton: an urban study', 21; DD/X/ROW/1.

<sup>755</sup> *Taunton Courier* 14 May 1949; BNA accessed 12 May 2022; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957) 2; SHC, A/APN/2/6; D/B/ta/24/1/225/14295.

<sup>756</sup> *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 76; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/2/2/10 (14 June), 19 (9 July); Companies Reg. 2075762.

<sup>757</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>758</sup> SHC, D/PC/stapg/7/3, p. 20.

and castings. installing electric light and hiring out machinery.<sup>759</sup> In 1890 Henry Bessemer, grandson of Sir Henry replaced Waldegrave. Easton and Bessemer fitted up horizontal and vertical engines for electric lighting and woodworking and built hydraulic pumps and portable steam engines. The works included an iron and brass foundry, boiler making and pattern shops and a fitting shop with steam-powered forge hammers, turning and planing equipment operated by over 40 skilled men.<sup>760</sup> The company built the engines for the Taunton Electric Lighting Company and Creech papermill, locomotive type engines up to 680 hp. and Cornish and Lancashire boilers.<sup>761</sup> Walter Johnson replaced Bessemer c. 1909 and in 1919 Easton and Johnson bought and demolished Albemarle House for another foundry.<sup>762</sup> They supplied factory machinery throughout Britain and overseas, maintained farm machinery and steam road rollers and made street gratings and inspection covers. During the 1940s they produced valves for gun turrets and exported vertical engines to Africa.<sup>763</sup> In 1963 the firm built machinery for papermills in Exeter and Maidenhead and in 1965 became part of the Reed Group, producing their paper-making and wastepaper handling machinery as Handley Machines.<sup>764</sup> In 1975 Price and Peard took over and the works became an assembly plant employing c. 50 people. It closed c.1999 but the brick erecting shop and 1913 office building survive.<sup>765</sup>

### Electrical Engineering

<sup>759</sup> Ibid. A/GCQ cat.; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883, 1889).

<sup>760</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 233; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1899).

<sup>761</sup> SHC, Easton and Bessemer Ltd, catalogue 22; DD/X/SOM/59/6/12; D. Eaton, *Easton and Johnson and the Whitehall Ironworks* (Taunton, 2003), 5, 12—13, 20—1.

<sup>762</sup> TNA, IR 58/82613 (2058); SHC, A/CJC/1—2; D/B/ta/24/1/49/782.

<sup>763</sup> Eaton, *Easton and Johnson*, 28, 30, 33.

<sup>764</sup> SHC, A/APN/2/6; A/CGQ/2.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/46/676, 24/1/49/777; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/10 (14 June); Eaton, *Easton and Johnson*, 26, 34.

John Brewer Saunders, electrical and telegraph engineer, built systems for Welsh railway companies in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>766</sup> Electrical engineer Francis Murray Newton (d. 1905) patented improved arc lights in 1882 and in 1884 built an engineering works in a former gymnasium between Bridge Street and Yarde Place. In 1891 he moved to a large new factory by the railway in Rowbarton. The firm invented bogie dynamos to light railway carriages, built electric motors and transformers, low voltage fuse and switch boards for power stations, dynamos for large houses and submarines and designed and fitted heating, light and ventilation systems in public buildings in Britain and overseas.<sup>767</sup> The factory expanded and during the war the block by the railway was a munitions factory.<sup>768</sup> By 1922 the business had been acquired by Rotax (MA) Ltd but retained the Newton name.<sup>769</sup> Work was plentiful, a three-year apprenticeship cost £150, some of the company's c. 30 houses were demolished to expand, there were a sports ground at Hope Corner Lane, two cricket and two football teams, outings and social events.<sup>770</sup>

Increased availability of alternating current from the mains, reduced demand for Newton's direct current equipment and they went into liquidation in 1933. The factory remained empty until 1937 when H.C.M. Stevens acquired it for optical engineering for aviation and motoring hence the business name Avimo. During the Second World War the firm made Spitfire tail sections and patented a flexible coupling for tanks and aero engines producing 17 million. Women worked in the press and plating shops and optical glass production. In the 1950s there were 270 employees, including 50 women, making precision equipment for aeroplanes like Comet and vending machines. By the 1960s Avimo made sink disposal and refrigerator units, specialist cameras, an astronomical telescope, prototype rotary

<sup>766</sup> TNA, RAIL 382/75, 679/72; Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>767</sup> SHC, A/BKK/1/6; DD/DP/3/8; A/DBF/3—4; D/B/ta/24/1/30/64.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid. DD/X/WI/50; D/B/ta/24/1/48/747.

<sup>769</sup> Ibid. PAM 1428 *Focus* (1998), 4—5; A/DBF/2—3.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid. A/BKK/1/6; A/DIF/116; D/B/ta/13/1/1, pp. 305, 308—9; D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 390; A/DBF/7.



mowers and electronic typewriters but were best known for designing and fitting engine room consoles for ships including oil tankers and *HMS Sheffield*, lost in the Falklands war. In 1966 they became a public company but in 1971 were absorbed into United Scientific Holdings.<sup>771</sup> An optical factory at Lisieux Way was built in two blocks between 1967 and 1970 but by the late 1980s business was declining. The Rowbarton factory closed in 1992 and was cleared for housing.<sup>772</sup> By then Avimo specialised in infra-red cameras and thermal imaging. In 2000 they were taken over by Thomson-CSF and in 2008 by Thales as Thales Optronics (Taunton) Ltd, which was dissolved in 2018. The Lisieux Way buildings were taken over by Cambridge Technology and Southwest Pathology.<sup>773</sup>

Jarvis and Evered started armature winding in the Victoria Gate coat factory in 1920, moving to Kingston Road in the 1950s and Venture Way, Priorswood by 1983, still employing over 20 people but in supply and repair rather than manufacture.<sup>774</sup> Before 1957 Standard Telephone and Cables, later ITT, took over the Stephen Street box factory then moved to a new factory on Priorswood Road making thermistors. In 2013 Amphenol Thermometrics (UK) Limited took over the business with 111 employees.<sup>775</sup>

### Vehicle Building

Taunton wheelwrights supplied cartwheels to Taunton Castle in the 1240s and Exeter Cathedral between 1302 and 1325.<sup>776</sup> Of wheelwrights at work in the late 18th century, some worked for carriage builders who in 1861 employed 62 coach makers, painters and trimmers

<sup>771</sup> Ibid. PAM 1428, 2—22; D/P/wilt/23/41; A/AWT/1.

<sup>772</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 367; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/190/10924; PAM 1428, 1, 14.

<sup>773</sup> [gracesguide.co.uk/Avimo](https://gracesguide.co.uk/Avimo): accessed 13 Aug. 2018.

<sup>774</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 30 Sep. 1931, 26 Jul. 1947: BNA accessed 25 May 2021; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 76; *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 37.

<sup>775</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 132; SHC, DD/X/ROW/1; A/APN/2/6; [amphenol-sensors.com](https://amphenol-sensors.com): accessed July 2023.

<sup>776</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1246—7, 1248—9; *Exeter Cathedral Fabric Accounts* (Devon and Cornwall Rec. Soc. 1981), 21, 30—1, 56, 65, 74, 116, 150, 162, 165.

besides seamstresses and upholsteresses.<sup>777</sup> As late as 1911 27 carriage builders were recorded.<sup>778</sup> Employment in motor vehicle manufacture rose from 146 in 1929 to 375 in 1939. War work including building aircraft parts raised that number to 915 in 1943.<sup>779</sup>

The Reeves family started carriage building in 1758 and by 1792 had premises west of North Street and later in Mill Lane. Their successors included Charles Fuge who designed vehicles and exported them to New Zealand by 1890.<sup>780</sup> His son moved to St James Street c. 1896 and the Mill Lane repair shops became Taunton Motor Radiator Works.<sup>781</sup> In East Street James Jacobs, in partnership with Samuel Bale until 1807,<sup>782</sup> designed and built lightweight stagecoaches, which he let to west-country coaching firms. In the 1850s John Standfast from St James Street took over and when the railways killed off the stagecoach built private carriages. From the 1880s until 1906 his son made broughams, landaus, phaetons and dog carts. He owned, and his predecessors may have built, the sheriff's coach, which he donated to the castle museum in 1909.<sup>783</sup>

A succession of coachbuilders had a business in Upper High Street from 1770 or earlier.<sup>784</sup> They included Samuel Bale, former partner of James Jacobs, who went bankrupt in 1814 with stock valued at c. £550 but debts of c. £1,120.<sup>785</sup> By the 1860s the Whateley family ran the business. Before 1883 they moved to Haydon Road as Whateley and Symes and added a showroom in 1885.<sup>786</sup> Between 1891 and 1902 Louisa Whateley offered vehicles

<sup>777</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/29; DD/HC/6/1/1; TNA, RG 9/1617—18.

<sup>778</sup> TNA, RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>779</sup> SHC, D/DC/tau.d: *A Plan for Taunton*, 16.

<sup>780</sup> TNA, IR 1/58, p. 73; SHC, DD/HC/6/1/1; DD/SP/298 (1841); Q/REL/35/24; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 49.

<sup>781</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/42/9/3 (*Taunton Mail* 17 June 1896, p. 4); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914—31).

<sup>782</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/6.

<sup>783</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1842); *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 43; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906); *PSAS*, LV (1909), 92.

<sup>784</sup> TNA, IR 1/57, p. 119; 1/58, p. 4; 1/60, p. 95; SHC, DD/SAS/C112/18/3; DD/CH/82/8; *Pigot Dir.* (1830, 1842); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859).

<sup>785</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/6; Q/REL/35/24.

<sup>786</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/19/773.

built to order.<sup>787</sup> By 1914 she had sold the business to Edwin Smith who in 1929 was a charabanc proprietor and undertaker. Frederick and Sidney Symes continued carriage building at 33 Canon Street until 1929 or later.<sup>788</sup> There were carriage builders, possibly mainly repairers, in Paul Street from the 1820s, East Street, South Street, Albemarle Road and Staplegrove Road but all had closed before 1914 or converted to motor garages.<sup>789</sup>

James Beach made his Eclipse bicycles from c. 1875 in North Town and moved by 1890 to East Reach before becoming a motor engineer. Ironmonger John Burland patented a 'back action power treadle' for tricycles before 1883. Before 1902 Benjamin Denning established the Taunton Cycle Company but gave up c. 1914 to concentrate on cars. Cycle makers worked in Bridge Street, Church Square by 1901, and Greenway and Station roads by 1906.<sup>790</sup> In the 1950s Charles Dye and Company, motorcycle manufacturers, occupied a former carrier's yard in Paul Street.<sup>791</sup>

Town motor traffic was limited to 12 m.p.h. c. 1896 when the Beach family reputedly brought the first steam car to Taunton.<sup>792</sup> James Beach and Sons ran the Pioneer Motor Car and Engineering Works in St James Street building petrol-burning steam cars by 1900. They moved to Greenway Road before 1923 but as repairers only.<sup>793</sup> Allen's built cars with de Dion engines and traditional carriage bodies from 1906 but after the war assembled imported kit cars.<sup>794</sup> In 1911 44 motor vehicle workers were recorded in Taunton.<sup>795</sup> In 1912 Marshalsea

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<sup>787</sup> TNA, RG 12/1877; *Taunton and West Somerset Annual 1897* (Taunton, 1896), 112; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 191.

<sup>788</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914, 1931); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 11, 46.

<sup>789</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); SHC, DD/HC/85/12/55; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, p. 55; DD/DP/69/10; D/B/ta/24/1/16/600; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1897—1914); TNA, IR 58/82613 (2069); RG 14/14707/154; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1900, 1903).

<sup>790</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883, 1906, 1914); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 45; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 184; TNA, RG 12/1875; RG 13/2276; SHC, DD/CH/128/2 (billheads).

<sup>791</sup> SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/15 (1200); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton*. (1957), 103.

<sup>792</sup> SHC, A/DIF/101/5/93—101; *Taunton and West Som. Annual 1897*, 128.

<sup>793</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914—31); SHC, A/BWS/3; *Taunton Courier*, 3 Sep. 1938: BNA, accessed 7 July 2021.

<sup>794</sup> Chipchase, *Taunton Revisited*, 54; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1923); *Taunton Courier* 22 Feb. 1928: BNA, accessed 7 July 2021.

Brothers, whose East Street carriage works adjoined Standfast's, opened a motor garage with workshops and showroom on East and Billet streets and built Taunton's first motor bus in 1913.<sup>796</sup> Easton and Johnson supplied them with cylinders for an Adler car in 1916.<sup>797</sup> In their Wellington Road workshops Marshalseas built Daimler cars and continued coach building until the 1950s probably employing the bus and motor coach builders recorded in 1939.<sup>798</sup>

Benjamin Denning's Taunton Motor Company occupied the former Standfast carriage works from 1906.<sup>799</sup> In the 1920s they built cars in Priory Avenue where there were trimming, painting and smith's shops.<sup>800</sup> In 1928 the East Street premises, extended into the former Marshalsea works, was Taunton's most highly rated manufacturing property. In the later 20th century they moved to Priory Bridge Road as dealers.<sup>801</sup> Atherden and Sons, motor car body builders in Guildford Place, took over a cycle factory in Church Square from 1925 to 1957 or later making car hoods, trim and upholstery. A car number plate manufacturer was in business in Middle Street in 1957.<sup>802</sup> The Somerset Motor Company in Corporation Street and Vickery's, Silver Street, both founded in 1927, were dealers and repairers only.<sup>803</sup>

The Great Western Railway's carriage and wagon works remained in use until the 1980s.<sup>804</sup> There were railway wagon workshops by the sidings at Chip Lane in the 1950s.<sup>805</sup>

### Woodworking and Building Trades

Specialist wood workers included a fletcher and a hooper in 1302, bowyers, probably making oxbows, from 1458, and cabinet makers and coopers by the 1720s. The George inn had a

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<sup>795</sup> TNA, RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>796</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/35/337; 24/1/44/625; A/DIF/101/5/102; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>797</sup> SHC, A/CJC/2 (1916).

<sup>798</sup> Bishops Hull, forthcoming; TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>799</sup> SHC, A/DIF/101/5/103; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>800</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 19 Nov. 1924; 10 Mar. 1926: BNA, accessed 16 Aug. 2021.

<sup>801</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/13/3/1.

<sup>802</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1931); SHC, DD/HWN/11; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 88, 354.

<sup>803</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/13/3/1, pp. 385—6; DD/AY/331; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 389—91.

<sup>804</sup> OS Map 1:500, SOM. LXX.12.2 (1888); SHC, A/BQG/2.

<sup>805</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 128.

cooperage and four were recorded in 1864.<sup>806</sup> An 1820 borough poll included 48 carpenters, 23 cabinet makers, nine sawyers, eight coopers, and four turners.<sup>807</sup>

Furniture making was important from the 18th to early 20th centuries with 11 businesses in 1830, employing over 100 people by 1891 and up to 140 by 1911.<sup>808</sup> Japanners were replaced by carvers and gilders as fashions changed and upholsterers, mainly woman, increased to 43 in 1891 although some worked for carriage builders.<sup>809</sup> One cabinet-making workshop occupied a former silk factory in Canon Street from 1810 to c. 1840 and later two others stood together in St James Street.<sup>810</sup> John Steevens started his business in 1836 and his showrooms and workshops eventually extended up the east side of Billet Street.<sup>811</sup> He exhibited his Taunton Cabinet incorporating embroidery at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and his richly-carved Taunton Sideboard at the International Exhibition in 1862.<sup>812</sup> His son Arthur manufactured decorative and art furniture in the 1880s and A. Steevens and Company were cabinet making until the 1930s.<sup>813</sup>

Hatchers produced furniture at 13—18 Hammet Street in the 1880s, Mr Crosse made furniture in a former foundry at 15 Bridge Street and W. and A. Chapman had a cabinet and bedding factory in St James Street and manufactured tents and marquees.<sup>814</sup> The Crescent Works of cabinet makers Lawrence and Thompson at 41—2 Upper High Street was enlarged

<sup>806</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2; TNA, CP 40/788, 907, indexes: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; c 11/1803/13; IR 1/47, p. 76; 1/55, p. 90; 1/58, pp. 73, 164; SHC, DD/DP/76/2; DD/L/1/25/9/8; DD/SP/319/193; D/P/tau.m/13/3/5.

<sup>807</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/16.

<sup>808</sup> TNA, IR 1/49, p. 2; 1/71, p. 61; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); TNA, RG 12/1875—7; RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>809</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>810</sup> SHC, DD/KIT/8/12; DD/SP/416 (1712—84).

<sup>811</sup> Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>812</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 18; SHC, T/PH/rea/3/150. The cabinet is in the Museum of Somerset, Taunton.

<sup>813</sup> SHC, A/CZV/7/3/1; A/DIF/101/1/20; TNA, IR 58/82642 (1145); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1931).

<sup>814</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1887); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 29; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 239; TNA, IR 58/82604 (1124).

substantially in 1870 and 1878 but was void by 1910, council offices in the 1940s and later demolished.<sup>815</sup> A sprung mattress maker worked in Foundry Road in 1957.<sup>816</sup>

A withybere behind High Street, rooted out before 1635, probably supplied local basketmakers who later had to buy withies elsewhere.<sup>817</sup> Between the 1820s and 1841 women were basketmaking.<sup>818</sup> Brush and basket makers marched in the 1832 Reform procession.<sup>819</sup> Basketmaking continued in East Reach until 1919 or later and baskets were still made in Taunton in 1961.<sup>820</sup> A firm of brush makers begun in 1870 was at 10 East Street in 1929 and others were in Station Road in 1906 and Silver Street in 1931.<sup>821</sup> In the early 21st century cricket bats were made in a small workshop producing about 2,500 a year.<sup>822</sup> A Station Road joinery manufactured greenhouses, summer houses and artificial limbs in 1864. A steam joinery in Alma Street in the 1880s produced poultry houses and incubators.<sup>823</sup> Two boat builders worked near Obridge in 1841 and Allen's and Kelland's foundries made boats later in the century. Two men were building or repairing boats in 1929, Crescent Boats of Haydon Terrace [now Wilfred Road] built dinghies and boat kits in the 1960s and there were marine engineers in Priory Bridge Road in the 1970s.<sup>824</sup>

Old, local and imported timber was worked at several yards from the middle ages.<sup>825</sup>

Tree trunks were unloaded north-west of the town bridge for the sawmills by the early 19th

<sup>815</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/12/440, 24/1/19/781; TNA, IR 58/82640 (966—7).

<sup>816</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957).

<sup>817</sup> SHC, DD/X/MEP/1; Siraut, 'Farming account book', *PSAS CXXIX* (1985), 167; TNA, IR 1/72, pp. 38, 67.

<sup>818</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); TNA, HO 107/972.

<sup>819</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); SHC, DD/SAS/C2402/52.

<sup>820</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883); TNA, IR 58/82599 (689); SHC, A/AWT/1.

<sup>821</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 29; *Taunton Official Handbook and Guide* (1931), 62.

<sup>822</sup> *Society*, June 2013, 31.

<sup>823</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/21/877; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 76; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 44.

<sup>824</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; SHC, D/DC/tau.d: *A Plan for Taunton*, 16; DD/X/ROW/1; A/APN/2/6; *PSAS CLXII*, 141; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 401.

<sup>825</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1399—1400, 1462—3; SHC, Q/SR/356/1/6; D/P/tau.m/4/3/7 (1796); London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/357/550567, 11936/385/598298.

century.<sup>826</sup> Timber merchants occupied Bridgwater wharf, North Town by the 1830s and from the 1850s Colthurst, Small and Company occupied it and operated the adjoining steam-driven North Town Sawmills.<sup>827</sup> They remained on the river until they closed in 1990.<sup>828</sup> After 1852 George Pollard moved across from Tangier Wharf to Dyers Green off Wood Street where he cut a long, stream-fed basin from the river, since filled in, to deliver heavy materials.<sup>829</sup> From 1903 to 1910 the site, rebuilt after a flood and fire in 1889, comprised steam sawmill and woodworking shops.<sup>830</sup> Thomas Penny, Pollard's manager in 1866, established the Tone Bridge Timber Yard with sawmill on adjoining land c. 1876.<sup>831</sup> The yard, continued as Penny and Reeves, later Graham Reeves, until cleared for redevelopment in the 1980s. In the 1920s Penny had another sawmill in East Reach, bought from builder Robert Herniman.<sup>832</sup>

Skilled building workers were recorded from at least the 1200s.<sup>833</sup> In 1460 a Taunton builder repaired North Curry church and a Taunton man painted the king's arms in Pawlett church before 1620.<sup>834</sup> Cob walling was still made in the early 17th century when builders dug sawpits and cut materials on site. Later they used Castle Green.<sup>835</sup> By the early 18th century many helliers were general builders and some carpenters were building contractors.<sup>836</sup>

Building firms in the 19th century included those of Henry Davis, a skilled stone carver who built his own house in Billetfield and many churches and schools, Edward Jeboult

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<sup>826</sup> SHC, A/DAS/2 (12290).

<sup>827</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); SHC, DD/S/EW/1—2; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883).

<sup>828</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/35/337; A/DIF/60; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 265, 349; SHC, DD/X/WBB/27, p. 8.

<sup>829</sup> *Slaters Dir. Som.* (1852); SHC, DD/CWC.ta/uncat, box 1 (1862); A/ADR, box 2; Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>830</sup> SHC, T/PH/rea/1, no.110; D/B/ta/24/1/23/981; A/ADR, box 4; TNA, IR 58/82610 (1744).

<sup>831</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 39; SHC, DD/CH/22; A/ADR, box 4; A/DIF/114/19.

<sup>832</sup> SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 275, D/B/ta/24/1/150/9151; DD/X/SML/7 (Apr. 1985).

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.* T/PH/win passim.

<sup>834</sup> Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accounts 1457—1559*, 17; SHC, DD/SP/63 (1620).

<sup>835</sup> SHC, D/D/bw/1510—12, 1515; DD/SP/49 (Oct. 1606), 50 (Apr. 1615), 53 (Oct. 1643), 63 (1620).

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SP/418—19.

and Henry Spiller each employing 20 to 70 workers. Up to 410 building workers were recorded, mostly masons but later in the century bricklayers increased and thatchers virtually disappeared. There were many plasterers, glaziers, plumbers, painters and gas fitters and some electricians and sanitary engineers. By 1911 over 700 men were building workers.<sup>837</sup> William Stansell came from London to Taunton in 1814 and established Stansell and Son church and house decorators in 1823. Alfred Stansell decorated the entire interior of Holy Trinity, Pontgarthi, Carms. c. 1870.<sup>838</sup> By the 20th century they were general builders and built the Ilminster—Bridgwater Stop Line of pillboxes and several local military camps. In 1961 they moved from Billet Street to South Road, where they restored Tauntfield, building offices in the grounds. They worked on the west front of Wells Cathedral, built St Teresa's church, the art college in Wellington Road and several housing estates but became part of Morgan Sindall c. 1996.<sup>839</sup>

Thomas Norman built the indoor market and developed King Street in the 1820s. The 1820s terraces at Union Place were built by William Webber whose son George built Blake and Noble streets and the chancel of St James' church in 1884—5.<sup>840</sup> Samuel Shewbrooks helped to develop the Victoria Street area c. 1839. His son William bought George Herniman's unfinished East Reach development when George went bankrupt in 1843.<sup>841</sup> Four generations of John Spiller's family built St George's catholic church, Huish's almshouses, King's College, St James' vicarage, the electricity generating works and the Lyceum cinema from their yard in Bridge Street. Alfred Spiller, twice Mayor, developed and owned back

<sup>837</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 12/1875—7; RG 14/14234—40, 14242—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>838</sup> SHC, PAM 1100; P. Wakelin and R.A. Griffiths, *Hidden Histories: Discovering the Heritage of Wales* (Aberystwyth, 2005), 224—5.

<sup>839</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 373; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/214/11311; PAM 1100, 1222.

<sup>840</sup> SHC, DD/CH/110/11; D/DC/ta.d/25/18; D/B/ta/24/1/20/800; above intro.

<sup>841</sup> SHC, DD/HS/1; DD/SP/215, 219; DD/CH/118/3.



courts and the Cherry Grove estate, Rowbarton and built the Canon Street maltings.<sup>842</sup>

Thomas Moggridge and Sons built the public library, art college and technical institute in Corporation Street and employed 80 men in the 1920s. They built shelters and Nissen huts in the 1940s and in 1949—51 developed the Wellsprings estate for the borough.<sup>843</sup>

George Pollard (d. 1838), his son George (d. 1869) and grandson George Heudebourck Pollard (d. 1924) were builders and the elder George's son Samuel was an architect. By 1844 the firm had extensive workshops at Pool Wall and later in Wood Street. They constructed Highbridge railway carriage works and in the 1860s Wells lunatic asylum, Carmarthen Asylum and military buildings at Brean Down. With Henry Philips and Son they worked for the Great Western Railway in the 1890s.<sup>844</sup> In 1902 the firm became a limited company and remained at Wood Street until the 1950s.<sup>845</sup> Timber merchants Thomas Penny (d. 1906) and his son Thomas Stubbs Penny (d. 1944) developed and built terraced streets at Rowbarton.<sup>846</sup> William Potter started a building and joinery firm in the 1870s. Based at Watcombe House, Railway Street it employed up to 70 men in the 1950s.<sup>847</sup> Between 1910 and 1957 F. Tottle and Son had substantial premises on the corner of Leslie Avenue.<sup>848</sup> In 1939 over 2,800 people, many temporary residents, were employed in building but only c. 700 during the war.<sup>849</sup> Later national builders dominated but in 1972 there were still 21 Taunton firms. Fred Spear Ltd built local authority houses from the 1920s, Woolaways made precast concrete dwellings from 1953 and G. N. Stodgell worked until 2000.<sup>850</sup> Taunton

<sup>842</sup> *Taunton of Today* (1896), xxviii; SHC, D/P/b.hl/23/7; DD/IR/T/26/1, nos 5, 33—4; DD/DP/201/1; D/B/ta/24/1/3/100, 24/1/18/711; Lillford, 'Biog. Dict. Som. Architects and Surveyors', 504—7.

<sup>843</sup> Lillford, 'Biog. Dict. Som. Architects and Surveyors', 364; SHC, DD/X/SOM/46/1—5.

<sup>844</sup> *Taunton Courier* 17 July 1844: BNA accessed 12 May 2022; SHC, A/ADR, volume 1; box 2; Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); TNA, RAIL 252/1036, 1081.

<sup>845</sup> SHC, A/ADR, boxes 3—4; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 282.

<sup>846</sup> Above, intro.

<sup>847</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894—9); SHC, DD/CH/30; D/B/ta/24/1/35/337; D/P/wilt/23/41.

<sup>848</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 14 Sep. 1940: BNA accessed 19 July 2022; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 80.

<sup>849</sup> SHC, D/DC/tau.d: *A Plan for Taunton*, 16.

<sup>850</sup> *Ibid.* A/CPB/1; DD/X/WI (M/780); D/B/ta/24/1/70/1393, 53/908; D/R/ta/14/16/4; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/2; Glos. RO, K/46/161, K/786/20; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 371—4; Companies Reg. 03658216.

housebuilders active in 2024 included Strongvox incorporated in 2003 and Acorn Homes from 2012.<sup>851</sup>

In 1774 Mark Long, stone cutter, his son Mark in the 1790s and his grandson Mark (d. 1838) had a marble cutting yard north-west of Tone Bridge.<sup>852</sup> Maria widow of the last, who held an adjoining wharf and timberyard, was assisted by her brother-in-law Robert Long until 1852.<sup>853</sup> John Long had stone-cutting shops north of King Street by 1842 and his brother Charles was a marble mason in Canon Street.<sup>854</sup> Edward Jeboult had a marble works in North Street by 1861 but in 1875 built a large glass-fronted shop for his West of England Marble and Building Establishment in Station Road.<sup>855</sup> By 1872 five firms created graveyard memorials, chimneypieces, washstands and counter tops.<sup>856</sup> There were four monument workshops in Station Road alone in 1902 and one remained in business in 2024.<sup>857</sup>

### Brickmaking

Keuper marl around the town was used for brickmaking before the Civil War. Newly-burnt brick on farms in 1635 and 1682 was possibly made in situ.<sup>858</sup> Early Taunton brickmakers were peripatetic like John Kingston who with his son made 100,000 bricks at Nynehead c. 1680.<sup>859</sup> Before 1741 William Bailey the younger devised an engine for making bricks and supplied them possibly from South Road.<sup>860</sup> An illegal brickyard at Eastgate was occupied

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<sup>851</sup> Companies Reg. 04840085, 08042619.

<sup>852</sup> *Univ. Brit. Dir.* [1796—8]; *Pigot, London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); SHC, DD/HC/6/1/1; DD/SP/257 (1831).

<sup>853</sup> *Robsons Dir. Som.* (1839); *Pigot Dir.* (1842); *Slaters Dir. Som.* (1852); SHC, DD/SAS/C212/13/1, p. 90; DD/SAS/C795/SX/7. Long memorials survive in many local churches.

<sup>854</sup> *Pigot, London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830, 1842); SHC, DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp. 58, 67.

<sup>855</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861, 1866); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/10/340; DD/CH/77/1, 81/1, 7; DD/SAS/C909/172.

<sup>856</sup> *Morris and Co. Dir. Som.* (1872); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 27, 31—2.

<sup>857</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 205.

<sup>858</sup> SHC, DD/SP/18/20, 1635/128, 1682/515.

<sup>859</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SF/5/6/11.

<sup>860</sup> TNA, EXT 6/61; B. J. Murless, 'Taunton Brickyards', *Journal SIAS* (1981), 33.

between 1745 and 1763, when the operator absconded.<sup>861</sup> A brickyard in the former Hureditch at the Mount in 1777 was possibly run by the Collard family and a brickyard with kiln was recorded near Shuttern in the 1800s.<sup>862</sup>

South Road brickyard made half a million bricks for the failed hospital project and shipped bricks and tiles in the 1790s to Bridgwater.<sup>863</sup> In 1812 the yard had a new ‘four-eyed’ kiln, by 1819 two kilns and expanded to 7a. absorbing an adjoining 2 a. brickyard on Holway Avenue. It closed in the 1880s and since 1977 has been a housing estate. The Curry family yard near the Bridgwater road, West Monkton worked from 1809. The South Street brick works east of the South Road yard opened before the 1830s.<sup>864</sup> The Herniman family kept it from the 1840s and possibly produced the unusual chimney pots found in East Reach.<sup>865</sup> Only four brick and tile makers were recorded in 1901 and the yard closed before 1910.<sup>866</sup> Small brickyards opened to supply building sites such as Frieze Hill from the 1850s, now allotments, and Cherry Grove, Rowbarton in the 1870s.<sup>867</sup> However, the expanding Bridgwater yards supplied cheap bricks by canal.<sup>868</sup>

In the 1920s the Great Western Railway established a large concrete works on its 1912 ballast field by Priorswood Road. It employed c. 50 labourers in 1939 but closed in the 1990s and was cleared for housing.<sup>869</sup> A small concrete block works operated off Elms Parade from

<sup>861</sup> Devon HC 3327/A/PO/82/23; SHC, DD/DR/28; DD/HC/16/7/6.

<sup>862</sup> Murless, ‘Taunton Brickyards’, 33; SHC, DD/AY/16; DD/SP/319/136, 155; T/PH/dvs/1; D/P/tau.m/4/3/8.

<sup>863</sup> SHC, DD/TB/28/26; DD/X/MAY/11.

<sup>864</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/13/1/1; DD/CH/22; DD/X/TIV/2; D/P/tau.m/13/2/255; tithe award, St Mary; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); Murless, ‘Taunton Brickyards’, 29—30, 34; inf. from late B. Murless, 2017.

<sup>865</sup> TNA, PROB 11/1966/338; SHC, D/B/ta/13/1/1; ‘Somerset Archaeology’, *PSAS* CXXI (1977), 121; CXXII (1978), 147; Murless, Taunton Brickyards’, 33.

<sup>866</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8; IR 58/82649.

<sup>867</sup> Murless, Taunton Brickyards’, 34; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; D/B/ta/24/1/12/403, 489; SWHT, Som HER 217254.

<sup>868</sup> *VCH Som.* VI, 223.

<sup>869</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/3/3 (1912); 13/3/1, pp. 405—6; 24/1/106/3138; D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 472—3; A/BQG/2; TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

the 1920s until 1972 and others in Belvedere and Roman roads in the 1960s.<sup>870</sup> A ready-mixed concrete plant off Pollard's Yard, Priorswood Road from the 1960s remains in business.<sup>871</sup>

### Pottery and Glass

In 1253—65 Osbert le Potter took land in the Millane area apparently for clay, possibly the site of the later Frieze Hill brickworks.<sup>872</sup> The surname le Potter was recorded in 1316 and early 14th-century medieval floor tiles and kiln wasters indicate a tile pottery near St James' church possibly for the priory church between 1327 and 1337.<sup>873</sup> A water-closet manufacturer in 1835 was presumably assembled them.<sup>874</sup> In 1838—41 James Jeboult's pottery at Foundry Square reputedly made redware.<sup>875</sup> Later in the century Italian plaster image makers and carvers and a potter were recorded.<sup>876</sup> Clay tobacco pipes were produced from the late 17th century, possibly near Mount Street, and children were apprenticed to the trade.<sup>877</sup> A tobacco pipe factory north of East Reach recorded between 1822 and 1859 employed nine men and women. Pipe makers, mainly women, were recorded until 1871.<sup>878</sup>

A bottle maker was recorded in the 1630s.<sup>879</sup> Glass painter William Ray (d. 1846) made windows for St Mary's church in 1843.<sup>880</sup> A glass blower was at work in 1881 and

<sup>870</sup> SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 353; D/B/ta/13/3/1, p. 314; 24/1/164/9851; DD/X/ROW/1; A/APN/2/6; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 81; (1972—3), 380.

<sup>871</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/165/9948.

<sup>872</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1553—4, 1256—7, 1264—5.

<sup>873</sup> Ibid. A/BFA/4; A.D. Hallam 'Decorated Medieval Tiles from Taunton', *PSAS* XCV, 63—71.

<sup>874</sup> SHC, DD/DP/9/14 (trade card).

<sup>875</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C/212/Map/148; D/P/tau.ja/4/3/1, 13/1/8; *Taunton Courier*, 11 Oct. 1865: BNA accessed 21 Sep. 2021.

<sup>876</sup> SHC, Q/SR/564/52; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922; RG 10/2370—2; RG 11/2366.

<sup>877</sup> SHC, DD/X/SOM/47/8; D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1; D/P/tau.m/2/1/2, 13/6/2; Q/SR/284/20; *PSAS*, CXXXII, 172.

<sup>878</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); *PSAS*, CXXXII, 172; TNA, HO 107/972, 1922; RG 9/1618; RG 10/273—4.

<sup>879</sup> SHC, Q/SR/66/24, 73/118.

<sup>880</sup> VCH office, Lillford, 'Biog. Dict. Som. Architects and Surveyors', 441.

there was an art glass workshop with kilns in Foundry Road from the 1990s to the late 2010s.<sup>881</sup>

### Paper and Box

Papermakers were recorded from 1710 and paper bag manufacturers between 1859 and 1901.<sup>882</sup> Some collar and shirt makers made their own boxes. Walter Ravenhill in 1890 employed c. 50 hands in a three-storey factory in Paul Street making cardboard boxes, cloth covered boxes and portfolios.<sup>883</sup> It was probably continued by John Thomas and Company, which went into voluntary liquidation after Mr Thomas absconded in 1899.<sup>884</sup> In 1898 Frank White started Priory Works, an 84,000-sq. ft brick and iron factory on the corner of Stephen and Gyffarde Streets.<sup>885</sup> Before 1897 furnisher A. Steevens started box-making in Fore Street, then Silver Street and from 1910 in the Priory Works. By 1922 they had warehouses in Gloucester and Mary streets, the latter probably Bagg and Company's former box factory.<sup>886</sup> The Priory Works fire in 1938 put 30 people out of work. It was rebuilt but before 1957 the firm moved to South Street collar factory. It employed only 16 people by the mid 1960s and closed soon afterwards. The Gyffarde Street site became a valve factory and was later redeveloped for housing.<sup>887</sup>

### Printing and Publishing

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<sup>881</sup> TNA, RG 11/2366; *What's On Somerset*, autumn 2013, 21.

<sup>882</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.ja 13/5/1; Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); TNA, RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>883</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 240; TNA, RG 12/1875, 1877.

<sup>884</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1899); *Taunton Courier*, 24 May 1899; BNA, accessed 22 Aug. 2022.

<sup>885</sup> TNA, IR 58/82603 (1090).

<sup>886</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1897, 1899, 1914); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 57; SHC, DD/IR/T/26/1, p. 58; D/R/ta/34/9/3, pp. 18, 266, 289.

<sup>887</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/3/4 (1938); A/APN/2/6; *Taunton Courier*, 3 Sep. 1938; BNA, accessed 7 July 2021; Elliott, 'Taunton: an urban study', 20; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 124, 132.

Publisher George Treagle used London printers in the late 1640s but by 1708 Henry Chalklin was printing in Taunton, which had the county's first newspaper press in 1718.<sup>888</sup> The Norris family press, in White Lion Court, later in Fore Street, operated from the 1720s. From and from 1802 was run by Isabella Norris who sold it in the 1820s to newspaper proprietor John Marriott.<sup>889</sup> John Poole, printer, took several apprentices between the 1780s and 1800s notably Caleb Stower, author of seminal works on printing.<sup>890</sup> Newsmen and printers were represented in the 1814 victory procession. Nine printers were registered to vote in 1820.<sup>891</sup>

William Bragg and Sons, founded in the 1820s in Cheapside, took over the business of Thomas Trood of Fore and High streets as printers, lithographers and engravers and published two local newspapers.<sup>892</sup> William Toms had a three-storey printing and book binding workshop, bookshop and library.<sup>893</sup> The introduction of large mechanised newspaper presses increased the workforce from 51 in 1861 to over 100 including linotype operators in 1901.<sup>894</sup> The Taunton and Somerset Printing and Publishing Company produced newspapers on gas-powered presses in Paul Street by 1887.<sup>895</sup>

Barnicott's were printing by 1790 and c.1840 took over the business of William Toms. They established the Albion Press in North Street before 1835, the Athenaeum Press in 44 Fore Street before 1864 and by 1914 the Wessex Press. In 1890 the large three-storey, centrally-heated works off Fore Street included presses, composing room and bindery connected by a lift.<sup>896</sup> They produced *The Taunton and West Somerset Annual* and operated a

<sup>888</sup> VCH Som. II, 358; G. Williamson, *Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century*, (1891), 991—2.

<sup>889</sup> P. Mansfield, 'John William Marriott and the Taunton Courier', *SDNQ*, XXXVI, 414—17; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/106.

<sup>890</sup> TNA, IR 1/63, p. 178; 1/67, p. 114; 1/69, p. 110; 1/72, p. 13; e.g. *The Printer's Grammar*, (1808).

<sup>891</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/150; D/P/tau.m/23/29.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C2402/23, 63; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); Morris & Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>893</sup> SHC, D/P/b.hl/13/2/11; DD/DP/45/1.

<sup>894</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>895</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/21/866.

<sup>896</sup> Ibid. A/EMQ/1/2/1; A/BMG/5/2; A/BAV/1; DD/HC/15/4; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 239; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

travel agency with tourist information.<sup>897</sup> In the late 1930s they built a large printing works in Priory Bridge Road, a cycle store in 2024, and later bought the St Augustine Street collar works but ceased printing c. 1987.<sup>898</sup> Edwin Goodman (d. 1902) started his Phoenix Printing Works in Bath Place in the 1850s before moving to 29 North Street. By 1902 until 1957 or later the firm occupied the former carriage works behind 8 North Street. Goodman's Taunton directory was produced from 1864 until 1907.<sup>899</sup> In 1914 they had eight powered printing machines and cast their own type; the monotype casting machines accounting for a quarter of the inventory value.<sup>900</sup>

Alexander Hammett began printing c. 1872 at 53 North Street. His successors kept the name moving to Priorswood Road in the later 20th century where they employed up to 50 people producing business materials.<sup>901</sup> They became Lane-Hammett in 1986 but commercial printing ceased in the 1990s and retailing in 2016.<sup>902</sup> In 1919 Cecil Caswell founded a firm of engravers, illuminators and illustrators in Bath Place, Caswell and Grant from 1926, which remained in business until 1990 or later.<sup>903</sup> The Taunton Printing Company, founded by William Bowyer at 10 Magdalene Lane before 1955, was dissolved in 2019.<sup>904</sup> Paper, printing and publishing employed 1,052 people in 1978, then the largest manufacturing sector.<sup>905</sup> In the 1980s there were several lithographic printers, none employing more than 20 people and most had closed by the 21st century.<sup>906</sup>

<sup>897</sup> *Taunton of Today* (1896), iv—v; *The Taunton and West Som. Annual* (1904).

<sup>898</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/99/2246; A/BMG/5/2; Companies reg. 00315118.

<sup>899</sup> SHC, A/DWX/5/14; Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* [from 1864]; *Taunton Courier*, 7 Apr. 1880: BNA accessed 25 July 2019; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 410.

<sup>900</sup> SHC, DD/X/WBB/1080.

<sup>901</sup> Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/22/921; A/BHJ/1; T/PH/rea/3/30; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 413; *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 81.

<sup>902</sup> *Bridgwater Mercury*, 21 June 2016: [www.bridgwatermercury.co.uk](http://www.bridgwatermercury.co.uk); accessed 28 June 2022.

<sup>903</sup> SHC, A/ABA, cat.; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 386.

<sup>904</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/73; A/DAO, uncat.; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 409—10; Companies Reg. 05473558.

<sup>905</sup> SHC, D/PC/stapg/7/3, 20.

<sup>906</sup> *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 81.

Bookbinder Robert Cottle kept a volume of ink recipes and marbled endpapers in 1805, the number of bookbinders increased from three in the 1820s to 13 in 1901 and a bindery was built in Station Road in 1888.<sup>907</sup>

The Admiralty Hydrographic Office founded in 1795 moved to Taunton in 1941 employing 900 people and by the 1960s was the largest litho-printworks in the country printing *c.* two million charts a year. In 2022—3 it employed 944 staff, created and published international marine charts and sailing directions, constantly updated in printed and digital formats and generated a gross profit of over £104,000,000.<sup>908</sup>

### Newspapers

A Taunton newspaper was printed in 1718. *Norris's Taunton Journal* was published weekly by William Norris 1725—7 but its four pages had little local content.<sup>909</sup> *The Taunton Herald* established by 1794 closed when its owner drowned in 1802.<sup>910</sup> *The Taunton Courier*, first published on 22 September 1808 by John William Marriott as the *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser for Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall*, was initially distributed by light carts to towns throughout Somerset, Devon and Cornwall on Thursdays. News came from London by post horse, an expensive move that ensured the *Courier* reached rural areas before the London papers. From 1855 it came out on Wednesdays, produced on presses that could print 800 copies an hour.<sup>911</sup> The conservative *Taunton and Bridgwater*

<sup>907</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); TNA, IR 1/70, p. 17; RG 13/2276—8; SHC, A/ERY/1; D/B/ta/24/1/22/922.

<sup>908</sup> SHC, Elliott, 'Taunton: an urban study', 18; [www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-hydrographic-office-2022-2023-annual-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-hydrographic-office-2022-2023-annual-report): accessed 6 Nov. 2023.

<sup>909</sup> VCH. Som. II, 358; SHC, A/AZF/9; DD/SAS/C2548/2.

<sup>910</sup> SHC, DD/GRY/1.

<sup>911</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/120/7; P. Mansfield, 'John William Marriott and the Taunton Courier', *SDNQ*, XXXVI, 419—20; Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859).



*Journal* was managed in 1811 by the antiquary James Savage but failed in 1816 and the press was sold.<sup>912</sup>

In 1836 *The Somerset County Gazette* was first published at Cheapside. In 1843 production moved to new printworks at Castle Green. It was joined in 1852 by *The Western News and Farmer's Market Reporter*.<sup>913</sup> *The Somerset County Herald* was established in 1843 and by the 20th-century was with the *Courier* part of *The Western Gazette* group with a printworks in 48 Bridge Street. When Allen' redeveloped the site c. 1926 the *Herald* moved to new works behind 44, now 15, Bridge Street.<sup>914</sup> From 1857 to 1864 *The Taunton Gazette and Farmer's Journal* was published on Saturdays, in 1861 *Clarke's Taunton and Somerset Chronicle* was produced and in 1868—9 *Webbs Weekly News and Standard of Freedom*, a liberal paper.<sup>915</sup> Local newspapers proliferated after falling in price to 1d. and in 1883 a daily four-page *Somerset County Gazette* was sold for ½ d.<sup>916</sup> The weekly *Somerset County Mail* and *West of England Express* were published in Hammet Street in 1883. The liberal *Somerset County Express* and the independent *Taunton Echo* both founded in 1887 were published in Paul Street, with papers for Minehead, Wellington and Wiveliscombe, and the ultimately unionist *Taunton Mail* at Castle Green from 1894 to 1901.<sup>917</sup> The *Courier*, *Express*, *Echo*, *Gazette*, *Herald* and *Western News* were still published in 1914.<sup>918</sup>

Newspapers provided work for 14 newsagents and vendors and seven resident reporters 1891.<sup>919</sup> By 1894 Taunton had a branch of the Institute of Journalists.<sup>920</sup> Cheaper

<sup>912</sup> ODNB James Savage, 1767—1845: accessed 12 Apr. 2018.

<sup>913</sup> *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *Pigot Dir.* (1842); Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); Bishops Hull, forthcoming.

<sup>914</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/28/1819; 24/1/64/1210; 24/1/68/1305; TNA, IR 58/82608 (1574); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 9.

<sup>915</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861); SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/163/3.

<sup>916</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C2645/32.

<sup>917</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—99); *Taunton and West Som. Annual 1897*, 128; *Newspaper Press Dir.* (1902), 162; SHC, DD/TBL/42/9.

<sup>918</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>919</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>920</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/42/9/1 (*Taunton Mail* 5 Sep. 1894, p. 4).

national papers led to local losses. In 1936 the *Courier* and *Herald* merged, by 1947 the *Express* and *Echo* had merged and two Bristol papers had offices in Taunton. By 1972 most had closed including the *Courier* in 1964 leaving the *Somerset County Gazette* as the only Taunton paper in the 21st century, although not printed locally.<sup>921</sup>

## Gas

In 1816 John Wride had a gas-making plant in East Street where gaslight was demonstrated to gain subscriptions for a company, which failed to persuade the market trustees to light Taunton and was wound up. Another Taunton Gas Light Company formed in 1821 acquired two houses in Holway Lane in 1822 for their works using whale and cod oil. The works employed one man and a lamplighter supplying 68 customers and 45 public lamps by 1824. Gas cost 50s. per 1,000 cu. ft. and when oil prices rose in 1826 the company made a loss. Rosin from turpentine distilleries proved destructive and in 1833 seal oil was used for public lighting while the works was converted to coal gas at a cost of c. £4,000. The new gas was popular, the price fell to 8s. per 1,000 cu. ft. and most public buildings, streets, businesses and houses were gas-lit. The company had two retorts, two purifiers and two gasholders but dissatisfaction led to a new Taunton Gas Light and Coke Company being registered in 1844.<sup>922</sup> It bought out the old company in 1845, cleared the site and established a new works at Tangier.<sup>923</sup>

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

<sup>921</sup> Ibid. A/DIF/114/12; *Taunton Courier* 27 June 1964; BNA accessed 12 March 2024; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 409.

<sup>922</sup> D. Gledhill, *The First 30 Years of Taunton Gas* 1816—46, (1985), 6—8, 12, 16, 21—5; SHC, DD/CH/98, 99/1—2; T/PH/gdl/1—2.

<sup>923</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/7/1; DD/DP/75/5; Bishops Hull, forthcoming.

Under charters of *c.* 1137 and 1231—2, confirmed by the king in 1381, burgesses and tenants of the bishop of Winchester enjoyed freedom from tolls and dues trading by land or water, except the royal tronage of wool for export.<sup>924</sup> As a result Taunton merchants often went unrecorded in port accounts and attempts to levy customs at Exeter were resisted in the 15th century. Their freedom was largely accepted except in the mid 16th century when the Crown held Taunton Deane manor.<sup>925</sup> However, in 1615 merchants trading overseas claimed they paid customs dues.<sup>926</sup>

In the 13th century some episcopal tenants had to carry grain to Topsham, Devon and load it onto ships and bring wine from Topsham, Exeter and Bridgwater. The pipe rolls do not record overseas corn sales but wine was bought at Exeter and building stone and timber came upriver from Bridgwater in the mid 13th century so grain may have gone down.<sup>927</sup> In the early 14th century Taunton merchants shipped woad, weld, mordants, onions, almonds, wax, copper, pitch and tar through Exmouth.<sup>928</sup>

Richard Polruel was in debt to the Bardi, a society of alien merchants, in 1343.<sup>929</sup> Of 14th-century traders owed or owing money on statutes staple with merchants from neighbouring counties and London, the largest debt was £250 incurred by two brothers in 1397 but debts of £40 or more were common, especially in the wine and cloth trades when a pack of cloth could cost £90.<sup>930</sup> A trader *c.* 1405 was owed £49 for wine, ale, grain and the cost of 12 archers for war in Wales.<sup>931</sup> In 1429 Taunton merchants contributed £15 to the royal loan, more than any other town in the county.<sup>932</sup> Mid 15th-century merchants were

<sup>924</sup> *Cal. Chart. R.* 1226—57, 145; 1257—1300, 274, 324; *Cal. Close*, 1377—81, 447—8.

<sup>925</sup> TNA, C 1/6/329; BL, Lansdowne MS 110/19.

<sup>926</sup> *Acts of P.C.* 1615—16, 49—50.

<sup>927</sup> Hunt, *Med. Customs Taunton*, xxxiv—xxxv, 32; SHC, T/PH/win 1244—8.

<sup>928</sup> Kowaleski, *Port of Exeter*, 78, 126—8, 178, 198.

<sup>929</sup> TNA, C 241/117/498.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid.* C 1/27/164; C 1/28/291; C 1/29/98; C 1/74/107; C 241/152/3; C 241/158/31; C 241/171/21; C 241/178/49; C 241/184/2; C 241/187/87; *Cal. Pat.* 1391—6, 679; 1396—9, 128.

<sup>931</sup> TNA, E 28/25.

<sup>932</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1429—36, 60.

owed money by traders from Cornwall, Exeter, Dartmouth, Bideford and Barnstaple, Devon, Minehead, Bridgwater, Bristol, and Weymouth and Lyme, Dorset.<sup>933</sup> Much Taunton cloth passed through Exeter but also Bristol and Bridgwater where in 1385 three Taunton drapers sold cloth away from the stalls on market day.<sup>934</sup> Besides trade with Bristol and London there were inland trading links with Salisbury, Wilts., which distributed low volume imports through Southampton.<sup>935</sup> In 1440 John Glovere of Taunton paid £2 to be excused the office of Alderman of Salisbury, presumably he had property there.<sup>936</sup> A Taunton merchant sold woad to a London mercer *c.* 1500 and in 1557 another made his will in London.<sup>937</sup>

In 1426 a Bordeaux man brought two horses to Taunton to buy goods from London merchants, presumably at a fair, and was defrauded by Taunton and Exeter men.<sup>938</sup> The circulation of foreign coin may explain the counterfeiter's hoard of forged and blank 15th-century French coins and jettons found on the site of the George inn.<sup>939</sup> By the later 16th century Taunton merchants were apparently exporting cloth to La Rochelle in return for salt.<sup>940</sup> Two merchants were pardoned in 1561 for carrying money out of the realm and in 1567 another owed £600 to a Hanseatic merchant.<sup>941</sup>

Trade with Brittany was important in the 15th and 16th centuries despite wars with France. Two brothers paid a Taunton weaver to learn the trade and the Breton language.<sup>942</sup> A merchant joined with Bretons *c.* 1440 to recover a ship laden with canvas, cloth and iron

<sup>933</sup> TNA, CP 40/732/732, 748, 788, 853, 861, indexes: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021.

<sup>934</sup> Ibid. C 1/197/79; C 1/220/61; T. B. Dilks, *Bridgwater Borough Archives, 1377—99*, 439.

<sup>935</sup> TNA, CP 40/732/732, 748, 788, 841, 853, 861, 895 indexes: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; *Cal. Pat.* 1441—6, 308; 1452—61, 2; 1461—7, 173, 413; M. Hicks, ed., *English inland trade 1430-1540: Southampton and its region* (Oxford, 2015), 129, 158.

<sup>936</sup> D.R. Carr, *The First Entry Book of the City of Salisbury* (Wilts. Rec. Soc. 54, 2001), p. 179.

<sup>937</sup> TNA, C 1/58/1; Weaver, *Som. Wills 1531—58*, 204.

<sup>938</sup> TNA, SC 8/188/9375; *Cal. Close*, 1422—9, 271.

<sup>939</sup> SWHT, HER 44409.

<sup>940</sup> D. Taylor, 'Somerset's Sixteenth-Century Maritime History', *A Maritime History of Som.* (Taunton, 2010), 6; TNA, E 190/1081/1.

<sup>941</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1560—3, 99; 1566—9, 122.

<sup>942</sup> TNA, C 1/108/42

seized by a Dartmouth mariner.<sup>943</sup> In 1467 two merchants were accused of freighting 5,000 pieces of tin and 3,000 dozen woollen cloths in a St Malo carvel from Topsham without licence.<sup>944</sup> In the 1490s a Taunton vessel shipped Breton linen, wine, woad and iron.<sup>945</sup> From the early 16th to early 17th centuries Bretons bought woollen cloth from Taunton in return for linen. A widow sold linen cloth in Bristol and sued for goods bought by her late husband in Brittany.<sup>946</sup> In 1509 another widow left packs of lockram and dowlais to relatives.<sup>947</sup> Merchants had agents at Morlaix arranging shipments of linen, spices and dyes. A goldsmith settled an account with a Devon merchant with bills of exchange in Rouen.<sup>948</sup> By 1603 James Reynolds (d. 1611) was shipping black and coloured bays, russets, reddings, dunsters and blue mells through Lyme to Morlaix where he supplied his English agents with high value bills of exchange to buy large quantities of canvas, dowlais and other linen. In 1606—7 he received two shipments each worth almost £600 and in 1610 tregar and dowlais worth over £400. His son went to St Malo in 1612 to stay with the agent to learn French and the mercantile trade.<sup>949</sup>

In the 14th century Taunton narrow cloths or ‘straits’ were exported to Andalusia.<sup>950</sup> In the 1440s Richard Burton appealed for safe conduct for the 120-ton *Mary of Bilbao* to bring the goods he had bought from a Spanish merchant and to return with English merchandise.<sup>951</sup> Henry Bishop exported cloth to Spain in 1493 and tauntons, kerseys and serges from Taunton were shipped to San Sebastian in the early 16th century.<sup>952</sup> Cloth for

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<sup>943</sup> Ibid. C 1/73/84

<sup>944</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1467—77, 55.

<sup>945</sup> E. M. Carus-Wilson, *The Expansion of Exeter At the Close of the Middle Ages* (1963), 21.

<sup>946</sup> TNA, C 1/308/72; C 1/335/31, 91; C 1/507/9.

<sup>947</sup> Weaver, *Som. Wills 1501—30*, 137—8.

<sup>948</sup> TNA, C 1/308/72; C 1/335/31; C 1/625/9—10; C 1/717/23; *Acts PC*, 1587—8, p. 138.

<sup>949</sup> SHC, DD/TOR/422. Tregar: coarse linen cloth from Trequier.

<sup>950</sup> W.R. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1978), 79.

<sup>951</sup> TNA, SC 8/186/9289.

<sup>952</sup> *VCH Som.* VI, 218—19.

Spain also went via Bordeaux.<sup>953</sup> James Joyce voyaged to Toulouse and Lyons in 1534 and in 1535 died in Bilbao at the house of an English resident.<sup>954</sup>

By c. 1500 John Roper had delivered bridgwaters, ware cloth and tauntons worth £60 to a factor at Lisbon to sell for him.<sup>955</sup> A Portuguese trader bought 2 butts of sack for his host in Taunton in 1545 and borrowed money, presumably to buy merchandise.<sup>956</sup> In late 1575 two shipments from Lisbon for Taunton through Bristol included 18 ton of woad and 26 cwt of spices worth over £439.<sup>957</sup> Portuguese oil jars and fragments of medieval Spanish and French pots found in Fore Street indicate imports of olive oil and other foodstuffs.<sup>958</sup> Italian trade was less important and six Taunton men on a Fowey ship seized a Genoese carrack c. 1434, put the crew ashore in Portugal and sold the cargo.<sup>959</sup>

Overseas trade had its dangers; a servant taken at sea was ransomed in the 15th century.<sup>960</sup> Two merchants were in dispute in 1481 over the release of another chained in prison in Dieppe.<sup>961</sup> More commonly factors failed to account for merchandise or falsified sales, leading merchants to appoint relatives to act for them overseas.<sup>962</sup> The cloth trade depended on credit and a barber who invested in buying and selling cloth lost money when a purchaser absconded. In the 1590s credit for Taunton cloth was sometimes extended for several years.<sup>963</sup>

<sup>953</sup> TNA, PROB 11/10/31; C 1/253/46.

<sup>954</sup> Weaver, *Som. Wills 1531—58*, 22—3.

<sup>955</sup> TNA, C 1/567/83.

<sup>956</sup> J. Vanes, *The Ledger of John Smythe 1538—50* (Bristol Rec. Soc. 28, 1974), 271.

<sup>957</sup> Flavin and Jones, *Bristol's trade...1503—1601*, 715.

<sup>958</sup> I. Burrow, 'Excavations at 5—8 Fore Street, Taunton 1979', *PSAS CXXXII*, 130—1.

<sup>959</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1429—36, 355, 469.

<sup>960</sup> TNA, C 1/108/1.

<sup>961</sup> *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, II, C. 51786.

<sup>962</sup> TNA, C 1/253/46; C 1/1112/2; *L&P Hen.VIII Add* (1), p. 318; Weaver, *Som. Wills 1531—58*, 79; SHC, D/P/m.st.m/13/3/1 (1661).

<sup>963</sup> TNA, C 1/28/291; C 1/186/12; C 1/197/79.

From the 15th to 17th centuries Taunton merchants used several ports and traded in mixed goods, spreading the risk.<sup>964</sup> Most used Topsham and Exeter, and later Lyme, although some used Bridgwater for Welsh and Irish trade dealing with Irish importers and Bridgwater men in the 15th century.<sup>965</sup> Thomas Pope imported sack through Minehead in 1560—1, exported grain to south Wales through Bridgwater and Poole in 1567 and in 1570 sent cloth and felt hats to Aberthaw, Glam.<sup>966</sup> Some merchants used Bristol to import wine and woad in the early 16th century.<sup>967</sup> Richard Newton was in Chepstow in 1564 presumably to accompany his cargo of iron, wine and vinegar to Bristol.<sup>968</sup> Taunton merchants also used Southampton.<sup>969</sup> In 1502 Edward Goldeston was owed money by a Southampton shearman and a Lombard. He left money to St Michael's church, Southampton and 1,250 lb copper and beaten wares to Twyneham church, Hants., possibly his birthplace.<sup>970</sup>

In the 16th century mercantile families had relatives and property in Lyme, left money to maintain Lyme cobb, the church fraternity and the almshouses, and some Lyme men settled in Taunton.<sup>971</sup> In 1588 Taunton was compelled to contribute to two Lyme ships supplied to the Queen's service.<sup>972</sup> In 1620 merchants threatened to withdraw their trade when Lyme's mayor wanted them to contribute to a levy imposed to fight pirates.<sup>973</sup> In 1610 Taunton merchants still dominated trading through Lyme, shipping Taunton cottons, redding kerseys,

<sup>964</sup> Weaver, *Som. Wills 1501—30*, 124—5; TNA, C 1/475/33; PROB 11/14/794.

<sup>965</sup> [medievalandtudorships.org](http://medievalandtudorships.org): accessed 30 July 2020; TNA, C 1/28/291; C 1/220/61; SHC, D/B/bw/173; Taylor, 'Somerset's Sixteenth-Century Maritime History', *Maritime Hist. Som.* 6; R.W. Dunning and T.D. Tremlett, *Bridgwater Borough Archives* (Som. Rec. Soc. 70), p. 42.

<sup>966</sup> TNA, E 122/29/3; SP 46/28, f. 240; 46/29, f. 95.

<sup>967</sup> Flavin and Jones, *Bristol's trade... 1503—1601*, 81, 715.

<sup>968</sup> J. Vanes, *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the 16th century* (Bristol Rec. Soc. 31, 1979), 45; Flavin and Jones, *Bristol's trade... 1503—1601*, 664.

<sup>969</sup> TNA, CP 40/853, index: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; *Acts PC*, 1586—7, pp. 19, 192; P. Ashford, 'The West Somerset Woollen Trade, 1500—1714', *PSAS CLI*, 171; F.J. Monkhouse, *A Survey of Southampton* (Southampton, 1964), 222.

<sup>970</sup> TNA, C 1/561/83.

<sup>971</sup> TNA, PROB 11/12/13, 11/45/206, 11/13/242, 11/31/105, 11/45/206; 11/62/392; C 1/234/63; C 1/1507/9; C 78/99/16; *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, II, C1786; *Cal. Pat.* 1553—4, p. 426; 1558—60, p. 245; *VCH Som.* II, 411.

<sup>972</sup> *Acts PC*, 1588, pp. 56, 161, 281.

<sup>973</sup> *Cal. SP. Dom.* 1619—23, 156.

Ilminster, Devon and Dorset dozens, says and dunsters to Brittany but by 1627 although some shipped cloth to Guernsey most Taunton cloth was exported by Lyme merchants.<sup>974</sup>

Politics and war damaged trade. In 1587 a French ship claimed it had permission to seize linen and sacks reportedly worth £3,800 bought at Morlaix by Taunton merchants. French ships were held at Dartmouth pending restitution.<sup>975</sup> In 1590 one merchant was impoverished ‘by troubled times on sea’, another was accused of trading illegally with St Malo in 1592—3 while trade with France was forbidden and other were accused of using French courts in 1597.<sup>976</sup> In 1596 men from Taunton, Essex and Southampton seized a St Malo ship and stole property of English merchants.<sup>977</sup> Similar problems in the 1620s made merchants reluctant to ship goods.<sup>978</sup>

In 1588 some merchants trading to Guinea, West Africa had their ship seized by the Spanish.<sup>979</sup> Thomas Gregory explored the area south of the Guinea river Nunez with a view to trade and provided Lord Burghley with information on the Azores. In 1592 on Gregory’s petition the queen gave a group of Taunton merchants sole rights to trade in part of Guinea for 10 years with the English and Portuguese monarchs taking a share of the profits. Ten merchants hired a ship at Topsham to take their cloth and other merchandize to Guinea but were stayed. They had already sent three vessels from Lyme and Exeter merchants involved in the Guinea trade considered there was insufficient business for more than three ships a year.<sup>980</sup> Taunton cloth continued to go to Africa and the town petitioned against a monopoly Africa Company in 1698.<sup>981</sup>

<sup>974</sup> TNA, E 190/870/5, E 190/875/5. Many early Lyme port books are unfit for research.

<sup>975</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 157/32; *Acts PC*, 1587—8, pp. 138—9; 1589—90, p. 103.

<sup>976</sup> *Acts PC*, 1590, p. 152; 1592—3, p. 126; 1597, p. 20.

<sup>977</sup> *Cal. Pat.*, 1595—6, p. 167.

<sup>978</sup> *Cal. SP. Dom.* 1623—5, 173.

<sup>979</sup> *Acts PC*, 1588, p. 294.

<sup>980</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1591—2, p.56; BL, Lansdowne MSS 55/21, 24; 81/18; Mayberry, *Vale of Taunton Past*, 58—9.

<sup>981</sup> *VCH Som.* II, 416.



Taunton merchants were founder members of the Company of London Merchants trading to Spain and Portugal in 1605 and the Company trading to France in 1611.<sup>982</sup> In 1610 the East India Company paid Lawrence Femell £200 to voyage to the East Indies and another merchant went to Virginia in 1625 to buy tobacco.<sup>983</sup> In 1651 Taunton serge was sold in Boston, Mass. and in 1683 Quakers William Alloway of Minehead and William Salway of Taunton traded with serges to Pennsylvania where Salway set up a fulling mill.<sup>984</sup> Early 18th-century merchants traded in the Baltic and one died at Naples but fewer were involved in international trade and 19th-century merchants were local traders although one acted as a shipping agent.<sup>985</sup>

### Ships

Taunton had ships in the Middle Ages, probably giving more choice of port and destination. Most used Topsham including the *Anne*, *Christopher*, *Clement*, *Jesus*, *Marie*, and *Thomas*, but the *Marie* traded between Bristol and Spain in 1493 when Henry Bishop left a quarter of his vessel to his brother John to trade to Spain on his behalf.<sup>986</sup> In 1498—9 the largest and most valuable cargoes at Exeter were carried in a Taunton ship.<sup>987</sup> In the post-medieval period ship-owning declined. The *Taunton Merchant* carried cloth from Minehead to Barbados in 1700 and the East Indiaman *Taunton Castle* was built in 1790 by men with Taunton connections.<sup>988</sup> The *Taunton Packet*, an 82-ton schooner launched in 1838, sailed from Bridgwater to Ireland, Jersey, London and Newcastle.<sup>989</sup> In 1857 a linendraper bought *The*

<sup>982</sup> *SDNQ*, XXVIII, 338—9.

<sup>983</sup> TNA, PROB 11/122/533, 11/157/166.

<sup>984</sup> Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 174.

<sup>985</sup> TNA, SP 34/34/43D; PROB 11/808/360; SHC, D/P/stapg/4/1/6.

<sup>986</sup> [medievalandtudorships.org](http://medievalandtudorships.org): accessed 30 July 2020; TNA, PROB 11/10/31.

<sup>987</sup> Carus-Wilson, *Expansion of Exeter*, 21.

<sup>988</sup> Ashford, 'Woollen Trade', *PSAS CLI*, 174; painting in the Museum of Somerset.

<sup>989</sup> SHC, DD/RSS/1/36, 2/49.

*County of Pembroke*, but sold her two years later.<sup>990</sup> Taunton men invested in coastal vessels in the 19th century to import coal and lime from south Wales and Gloucestershire, including Richard Stone's 43-ton *Chard* and the Goodland family's 64-ton *James and Sarah*.<sup>991</sup>

### River and canal trade

Winter roads were difficult for laden waggons and heavy goods came upriver from Bridgwater.<sup>992</sup> By the 13th century Taunton Deane manor included a tapping weir at Lyng, probably at Burrowbridge below the Tone and Parrett junction downriver from the abbot of Glastonbury's weir, possibly representing rival control of the waterways.<sup>993</sup> There was possibly a quay near French weir in 1302 but in 1369 lead was unloaded at Bathpool, West Monkton.<sup>994</sup> In 1382 the abbot of Glastonbury, accused of obstructing waterborne trade at Bathpool, claimed boats discharged there and only went further at flood tides but in 1414, when a new Bathpool watergate obstructed the river, the loss to barks and trows carrying, timber, firewood, coal, stone, lime, peas, grain, malt and wine to Taunton was estimated at £1,000 or more.<sup>995</sup> Trows were used until the 19th century but boats were poled above the town bridge.<sup>996</sup>

Taunton merchants brought iron, coal, stone, alabaster, nails, casks, glass, trenchers, salt, vinegar, wine, Irish linen, hats, dyestuffs, train oil, salmon, figs, raisins, millstones and grindstones upriver and sent wine down. By the later 16th century most cargoes went by boat and bulk cargoes were stored in Bridgwater cellars and brought upriver in instalments.<sup>997</sup> In

<sup>990</sup> G. Farr, *Records of Bristol Ships over 150 tons 1800—38* (Bristol Rec. Soc. 15, 1950), 184.

<sup>991</sup> SHC, DD/RSS/1/1/11—12, 30—1; 1/19/17a; 1/31/22.

<sup>992</sup> *Cal. Inq. Misc.* VII, p. 259.

<sup>993</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1244—5, 1301—2, 1535—6; *Cal. Pat.* 1381—5, 511; *VCH Som.* VI, 58.

<sup>994</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1301—2, 1368—9.

<sup>995</sup> Hugo, *Taunton Priory*, 48—50; BL, Add. MS 30289 (45); *Cal. Inq. Misc.* VII, p. 259.

<sup>996</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, A/DAS/2 (12281).

<sup>997</sup> SHC, D/B/bw/1429—35, 1437—9, 1442, 1445, 1448—50, 1460, 1462, 1465, 1467, 1480, 1486—7, 1490, 1495, 1498, 1505—13, 1515, 1517, 1557, 1559, 1581, 1585.

the 1590s and 1600s Alexander Hill had his own account with the Bridgwater water bailiff and employed lighters to fetch coal and iron from Welsh ships at Comwich upriver to Taunton. During the 1625 Bridgwater plague trows were permitted to come upriver provided crews did not go into town.<sup>998</sup> One ironmonger shipped 146 ton of iron and 137 cases of glass in 1628—9 rising to 208 cases in 1630—1.<sup>999</sup> However, in the late 17th century bulk cargoes were unloaded at Coal Harbour, Creech St Michael and brought overland or in barges to Taunton. It took 30 horses to carry a wey of coal.<sup>1000</sup> In the early 18th century, after navigation improvements, up to 20 vessels a day paid toll to come upriver with pitch, tar, hemp, flax, oil, wine, grocery and dyes. In 1707 *c.* 500 labourers and 40 boatmen from Taunton objected to changes in tolls. By the 1730s goods were shipped through to Taunton in boats of between two and five tons. In the early 19th century some carried 15 tons and boatmen were prosecuted for exceeding the 7 ½-ton limit.<sup>1001</sup>

New wharves were built near Tone Bridge before 1710. One man shipped at least 1,861 chaldrons of Welsh coal upriver *c.* 1719. Glass and ceramics came upriver and agricultural produce, cloth, brick and tiles went down. By the mid 19th century bricks and tiles came up from Bridgwater yards.<sup>1002</sup> A coal merchant who used his lighters and trows to bring coal upriver between 1738 and 1761 also carried other men's iron, glass, bottles and wine.<sup>1003</sup>

River tolls increased from an average of £353 a year 1719—28 to over £2,200 in the early 1820s, mostly on goods travelling to or from Taunton.<sup>1004</sup> The smack *Concord* shipped goods from London to Lyme and Taunton in 1821 and London furniture came up the Tone in

<sup>998</sup> M. Siraut, 'Coal Harbour', *Maritime Hist. Som.* 107—8; *VCH Som.* VI, 86; SHC, D/B/bw/1477, 1485—7, 1503, 1884.

<sup>999</sup> TNA, E 190/1984/1; SHC, D/B/bw/1508—10; DD/SP/339.

<sup>1000</sup> SHC, DD/SF/13/2/48, 51, 72.

<sup>1001</sup> *Ibid.* DD/TC/9; *Hist. Navigation of the River Tone* (1832), 9; Siraut, 'Coal Harbour', 107—14.

<sup>1002</sup> SHC, Q/RUi/1; DD/X/MAY/11; D/B/bw/1644; Siraut, 'Coal Harbour', 113.

<sup>1003</sup> SHC, DD/HC/44/2.

<sup>1004</sup> *Hist. Navigation River Tone*, 10; Siraut, 'Coal Harbour', 112—3.

the 1830s.<sup>1005</sup> In 1823 28,500 tons of coal and 1,879 tons of other goods paid toll from Bridgwater to Taunton, 712 tons from Langport to Taunton and 802 tons going downriver.<sup>1006</sup> In 1824 the coal and salt trade was valued at £40,000 a year, timber and brick at £15,000 and navigation and wharfage a further £3,500.<sup>1007</sup> There were 47 boats on the Tone, towed by horses if the water was low, taking 5 to 6 hours from Bridgwater and each with a captain, two men and a boy.<sup>1008</sup> Reputedly 14 merchants employed c. 100 men on the river.<sup>1009</sup>

Opening the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal in 1827 probably increased traffic to the town wharves. It was estimated a boat brought 30 tons a week by river but 180 tons by canal, reducing coal prices. The Firepool canal wharf had storage facilities.<sup>1010</sup> By December 1830 only 511 weys of coal and 30 tons of other goods paid toll to go upriver.<sup>1011</sup> In 1840 a river wharf was offered for sale after 30 years use in the coal, culm and salt trade, a coal wharf with crane north-west of the bridge was used to import stone and marble in the 1840s and the canal office was south-east of the bridge.<sup>1012</sup> In 1845 there were two canal wharves, one belonging to the railway, and at least eight river wharves with warehouses and counting houses, most used until the 20th century.<sup>1013</sup> Some coal merchants with their own vessels were wharfingers, offering daily passage for goods to Bridgwater and lock-up facilities.<sup>1014</sup>

In 1867 the Great Western Railway bought and closed the Grand Western Canal in Somerset ending water traffic westwards.<sup>1015</sup> In 1874 sewage in the waterways increased journey time between Bridgwater and Taunton from six to 14 hours, reduced loads from 25 to

<sup>1005</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C2402/23; DD/HC/62/10.

<sup>1006</sup> Ibid. DD/TC/16.

<sup>1007</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1008</sup> Ibid. DD/MK/60.

<sup>1009</sup> Goldsworthy, *Recollections*, 14.

<sup>1010</sup> SHC, DD/MK/89; DD/TC/15 (plan 1831); BL, Parl. Papers HL 135.1: *Evidence on the Parrett Navigation Bill* (1836), pp. 27, 147.

<sup>1011</sup> SHC, DD/TC/43.

<sup>1012</sup> Ibid. DD/HC/105/14/39; DD/CH/81/7; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, p. 48.

<sup>1013</sup> Ibid. Q/RUp/192; D/P/tau.ja/13/1/8; DD/CH/78/5; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp. 90—1.

<sup>1014</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *Pigot Dir.* (1842); *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); SHC, D/P/stapg/4/1/6 (1856).

<sup>1015</sup> Buchanan, *Bridgwater and Taunton Canal*, 6.

18 tons and prevented access to Pollards' basin.<sup>1016</sup> In 1893 a woman sold five boats, presumably redundant, to the council for rebuilding the town bridge.<sup>1017</sup> By 1901 only two boatmen were recorded and the last barge was said to have reached Taunton in 1907 although Firepool lock and the wharves were maintained until the 1920s.<sup>1018</sup> A project to re-open the river and canal for coal and timber in the 1950s was abandoned.<sup>1019</sup> Riverside warehouses were demolished, North Town Wharf, renamed Hammet's Wharf, was occupied by flats and a supermarket from 1992 but one converted warehouse survives on the former Tone Bridge wharf.<sup>1020</sup>

## MARKETS

Taunton may have had a market by 904 and its tolls were given to Bishop Aelfheah I (934—51), a grant confirmed c. 970.<sup>1021</sup> In 1086 the market yielded £2 10s. to the manor.<sup>1022</sup> The bishop's tenants were exempt from fair and market tolls, which were farmed from 1349 for 13s. 4d. rising to 20s. by the 1370s.<sup>1023</sup> Strangers might trade in wool, cloth, lace, meat, salmon, porpoise and hides by wholesale only.<sup>1024</sup> The market monopoly of meat and other foodstuff continued until the 20th century. Taunton remained a major market town until 2008 but thereafter had only small pavement markets.

In the 13th century large numbers of oxen and pigs were bought at Taunton for the bishop, much of it driven to Wolvesey, Hants. for meat. By then permanent stalls were rented in the triangular Fore Street marketplace and butchers shambles were roofed. The borough

<sup>1016</sup> SHC, DD/TC/16; D/B/ta/3/5/1 (1875).

<sup>1017</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/3/12/1 (1893).

<sup>1018</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276; SHC, A/DIG/1; D/R/ta/34/9/3, pp. 235, 321—3.

<sup>1019</sup> SHC, DD/TC/30, 32, 36.

<sup>1020</sup> Ibid. D/DC/tau.d/24/2/12; A/DIF/114/19; DD/X/SML/6, pp. 52—3; A/AUS/106/4.

<sup>1021</sup> The 904 charter was probably fabricated. H.P.R. Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester, 1964), 128, 145, 234—5.

<sup>1022</sup> *Domesday*, 234.

<sup>1023</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1338—9, 1347—50, 1373—4, 1377—8; *Cal. Close*, 1377—81, 447—8; BL, Lansdowne MS. 110/19.

<sup>1024</sup> SHC, DD/X/HUN/6/2, photos of BL, Harl. MS 408, ff. 212—13.

court fined forestalling and regrating, buying produce for resale before the market.<sup>1025</sup> A large hall of c. 1300 on the corner of Fore and High Streets might have been an indoor market but is not recorded.<sup>1026</sup> Bakers, tailors and tanners paid a fixed sum by the 1330s when new stalls were farmed out and some men had several.<sup>1027</sup> Cheese and High crosses were recorded in the 14th and 15th centuries, the former on Cornhill and the latter south-west of the marketplace. Before it was demolished in 1771 the High Cross had a roof supported on six columns with statues above and the terminal spire carried a post-medieval sundial and weathercock.<sup>1028</sup>

Bishop Waynflete granted the site of an old watercourse 63 ft by 30 ft, possibly used for cleaning the market and watering livestock, to the vicar of St Mary's c. 1466 to build a hall of judicature at his own expense.<sup>1029</sup> By 1612, with 16 shambles, the guildhall belonged to the Town Lands charity.<sup>1030</sup> It was open at ground level with stalls and lockups called Cow House and Little Ease. The upper hall possibly jettied out beyond the building's footprint.<sup>1031</sup> In 1682—4 a new market house 100 ft by 80 ft with hall over was allowed provided no-one was charged for pitching goods.<sup>1032</sup> Built by subscription, it stood on brick pillars and in 1698 was used for corn sales. The upper assembly room with garret was approached by an outside staircase.<sup>1033</sup>

By the 1320s the marketplace contained tiled shops and a row of four was treated as a burgage in 1384. By 1548 there were shops on Mercery Lane in the market and on Cornhill later.<sup>1034</sup> Fore Street occupants were ordered to remove pentices, standings and other

<sup>1025</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1244—9, 1252—4, 1286—90, 1297—1300.

<sup>1026</sup> 'Somerset Archaeology 1974—5', *PSAS CXX* (1976), p. 73.

<sup>1027</sup> TNA, E 326/4960, 4968; SHC, T/PH/win 1334—5, 1336—9, 1340—1; *Cal. Pat.* 1354—8, p. 223.

<sup>1028</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1309—10, 1388—9, 1409—10, 1412—13; DD/SP/325/2; D/B/ta/31/1/1, pp. 161—2; Mayberry, *Vale of Taunton Past*, 26.

<sup>1029</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/5/3, ; DD/MK/9.

<sup>1030</sup> *5th Rep. Com. Char.* 512.

<sup>1031</sup> SHC, DD/BR/py/120.

<sup>1032</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/18/56; DD/MT/15/1 (1684).

<sup>1033</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/23/8; DD/SF/2/52/3/5—6; C. Fiennes, *Through England on a side saddle* (2009), 63.

<sup>1034</sup> TNA, E 326/4971, 4982, 4988, 5010, 5022, 5058, 5493; E 304/6/P8; *Cal. Pat.* 1547—8, 410.

extensions to their frontages in 1618 and 1700.<sup>1035</sup> In the early 17th century the Bird Cage or High Hall was replaced by the New Shambles of 12 fixed stalls but they had decayed by the 1760s.<sup>1036</sup>

In 1404 a tenant was forbidden to keep a butcher's shop.<sup>1037</sup> Shambles were held by local farmers, chantries and fraternities and sublet for up to 8s.<sup>1038</sup> In 1549 a merchant bought six shambles, former chantry property, and an Essex man bought four with chopping blocks.<sup>1039</sup> A Bridgwater man charged six shambles with payment of £110 in 1600.<sup>1040</sup> Gerard noted the flourishing state of the market in the 1630s when 140 butchers attended.<sup>1041</sup> There were checks for unbaited bull meat or meat from animals that were diseased or died before slaughter. Butchers had to bring the tallow and hides with their carcasses.<sup>1042</sup> Shamble rents varied with size and position from 6d. a year to 12s. for an inner shamble and the freehold of a fixed shamble cost £24 in 1696.<sup>1043</sup> Fish shambles were farmed out by 1305 and the rent rose to over £5 in 1555.<sup>1044</sup> An Essex man sublet two to men from Sidbury, Devon c. 1587.<sup>1045</sup>

Butter sellers came from Wedmore and in 1629, when a yarn market was recorded, two men were accused of plotting to rob market goers in Chip Lane.<sup>1046</sup> There was unrest when wheat was dear in March 1634 and traders refused to accept farthings they claimed were illegal.<sup>1047</sup> Although Saturday was the main market day there were markets most days,

<sup>1035</sup> SHC, DD/SP/50 (Apr. 1618); 61/5; DD/MT/15/1 (1700).

<sup>1036</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/2—3.

<sup>1037</sup> Ibid. DD/PM/7/2/9.

<sup>1038</sup> Ibid. T/PH/win 1412—13, 1472—3; TNA, E 40/9690; E 326/5081.

<sup>1039</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1548—9, 199—203; 1549—51, 120—2.

<sup>1040</sup> SHC, DD/DP/76/2.

<sup>1041</sup> Bates, *Gerard's Survey*, 1633, 55.

<sup>1042</sup> SHC, DD/SP/23/20; 48 (Oct. 1572), 49 (Oct. 1587, Feb. 1588), 50 (Dec. 1612).

<sup>1043</sup> BL, Add. Ch. 71738; SHC, D/B/ta/31/5/1; DD/SAS/C795/M/16.

<sup>1044</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1305; DD/MT/1/29; T/PH/hps/1.

<sup>1045</sup> TNA, C 2/ELIZ/W15/3.

<sup>1046</sup> SHC, Q/SR/6/81, 62/141.

<sup>1047</sup> *Cal. SP Dom.* 1631—3, p. 159; 1633—4, 539; 1634—5, p. 32.

giving Taunton an advantage.<sup>1048</sup> In 1668 the Saturday market was ordered to close at 10 p.m. to prevent drunkenness and disorder on Sunday.<sup>1049</sup> In the 1690s the bell was rung twice by the Cornhill keeper creating the customary two-hour market for the poor but dealers refused to sell before the 2nd bell leading to violence. Licensed hucksters could buy food after 2 p.m. By 1700 the market officers were accused of failing to prevent abuses or weigh bread.<sup>1050</sup>

In 1613 a 4-ft way was to be kept after every 4th stall to allow passage to the shops and in 1617 vegetable sellers were moved from the High Cross, where wool and fruit were sold, to High Street.<sup>1051</sup> By 1721 there was a bean market on Cornhill, in 1742 the Kitchen in the shambles possibly sold cooked food and in the 1750s a cheese market lay south of the fixed stalls.<sup>1052</sup> Glovers, shoemakers, bakers, hosiers, ropers and broom sellers had standings in the outer market.<sup>1053</sup> The marketplace was a public arena for events and election hustings, despite the limited open space.<sup>1054</sup> Inns were extended narrowing passages and by the 1750s the Island in the marketplace comprised stalls, shambles and 11 very profitable alehouses and shops.<sup>1055</sup>

In 1763 a Market House Society was formed to obtain an Act of Parliament for improvements. The 1768 Act empowered trustees to clear the old market buildings as far as the Tone Bridge to create an open market with one new building. They became the most powerful body in the town with a monopoly of sales of provisions and livestock within 1,000 yards of the marketplace. Food shops had to buy a licence although in the 1780s the sale of cake, pies and fruit in the passage into Hunts Court was allowed.<sup>1056</sup> Under an Act of 1840

<sup>1048</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/1, p. 142.

<sup>1049</sup> Dawes, *Quarter Sessions 1666—77*, 134.

<sup>1050</sup> SHC, DD/SF/13/2/51, 61/5.

<sup>1051</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/50 (Apr. 1613, Oct. 1617, Oct. 1618, Apr. 1619).

<sup>1052</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/2 (1721), 3; DD/SF/2/52/3/7.

<sup>1053</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1668/56, 1683/25, 1691/57; DD/SAS/C112/20/12; D/B/ta/31/5/3, 5; DD/DP/44/7.

<sup>1054</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 572.

<sup>1055</sup> SHC, DD/SP/18/85; 21/1; D/B/ta/31/5/3, 5; DD/BD/27; DD/DP/71/5; DD/SF/2/52/3/1—6.

<sup>1056</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 567, 571—8; SHC, PAM429: *The Taunton Town and Market Acts* (1768); DD/TAC/6/1/1; D/B/ta/31/5/3, 5; DD/PRY/1/9.



the monopoly was to continue until the market debt was paid, which never happened. A clerk of the market was appointed but the constables remained responsible for weighing, which they farmed out. New weights and measures by Liberty of Gillingham, Dorset were bought in 1824—6 and copper ones from Bristol in 1864, weighing from 2 lb. to ½ cwt.<sup>1057</sup>

In 1769 the trustees fixed charges from 1*d.* a horseload for vegetables to 1*s.* 3*d.* for a butcher's standing on Saturdays. Butchers and fishmongers were sited north of the new market and bakers, glovers, pedlars and others south. The fowl market was held in the morning, the corn market in the afternoon and the rest from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. controlled by the Cornhill keeper's bell. The market was lit, bounded by posts and chains and paved by 1797. In 1772 there were 80 standings compared with 113 in 1769 but they were wider at 8 ½ ft.<sup>1058</sup> In 1785 the trustees rented a yard in Great Magdalen Lane to store and clean the numbered stalls. In 1772 the forecourt was paved in stone and the entire Parade in 1797.<sup>1059</sup> By 1819 putting up and taking down the stalls cost £200 a year, probably one reason for building an indoor market with permanent stalls. Tolls were let for £600 a year in 1785 rising to £1,374 in 1821 but although only £18 was paid to the portreeves and 24*s.* 8*d.* to the manor, servicing and reducing the £12,000 capital debt took most of the income.<sup>1060</sup>

The Market House, combining the functions of assembly rooms and guildhall, was designed by trustee Copplestone Warre Bampfylde and completed in 1772.<sup>1061</sup> Most of the building was let, part as a public house, and it was a focus for ceremonial occasions. It

<sup>1057</sup> SHC, DD/AY/31 (1840); A/DIF/44; D/B/ta/31/1/7, p. 226; DD/SP/453; *PSAS* LXXII (1926), 90.

<sup>1058</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/1, *passim*; G.H. Kite and H.P. Palmer, *Taunton: its history and market trust* (Taunton, 1926), plan f. p. 4.

<sup>1059</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/1, pp. 168, 183, 309, 371, 378, 462; D/P/tau.m/23/37.

<sup>1060</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 586; *5th Rep. Com. Char.* 534; SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/5, pp. 253, 290, 343; 31/1/6, accts.

<sup>1061</sup> SHC, A/DQO/404/16/19; D/B/ta/4/3/4 (1924); T/PH/rea/3/27; A/DIF/101/10/206; DD/X/STONE, folder 1; Orbach, *S. and W. Som.* 619.

survived proposed demolition and is the sole relic of Taunton's market. In the early 21st century the west extension was the tourist information centre.<sup>1062</sup>

Earthenware was sold from at least the 1790s and in 1799 a Staffordshire man had a stall.<sup>1063</sup> In 1808 butchers came to market six days a week, bakers, glovers, shoemaker, turners, pedlars, ropers, confectioners, hatters, chandlers, hosiers, tobacconists, fishmongers and pork butchers had stalls but sellers of brooms, butter, cheese, poultry, grain, fruit and vegetables did not. Butchers' stalls occupied 12,000 of the 21,088 square feet and their trade was worth £60,000 a year in 1824.<sup>1064</sup>

Five houses west of Fore Street were bought and demolished in 1821 for an indoor market built by Thomas Norman to the design of William Burgess. The upper floor was let to the literary institution but the ground-floor market opened daily, except Sundays, from 8a.m. to 8 p.m.<sup>1065</sup> In 1833 the building was extended providing 17,472 square feet for 127 fixed butchers' standings let for 4s. on Saturdays added to the existing 254 stalls for poultry, butter and pork.<sup>1066</sup> In 1894 a large entrance was built on Corporation Street.<sup>1067</sup> The Parade market was reorganised mainly for non-food items sold from the market's 132 tubs and 423 stalls and boards.<sup>1068</sup>

In 1796 the fish market was east of the market house but c. 1824 a single-storey fish market was built behind a saddler's shop beside Castle Bow. In 1831 the front shop was demolished but the market's new front section was let for a shop. In 1853 Richard Carver rebuilt the market behind the portico with at least 14 stalls but there were problems with

<sup>1062</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/1, p. 183; 31/1/9, pp. 377, 515, 577—8; 31/1/13; Q/RLa/19/10, 12, 15; DD/SAS/C2402/48.

<sup>1063</sup> SHC, A/CTP/15/5, p. 372—3; Q/SR/361/4/46; 368/1/69; W. Marshall, *Rural Economy of West of England* (1796), II, 190.

<sup>1064</sup> 57 Geo. III c. lxxv; SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/2, passim; DD/DP/43/6; DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1065</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/3, pp. 5, 17, 40, 61, 78; 31/5/4; DD/X/BFD/3.

<sup>1066</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/43/6; D/B/ta/31/7/2.

<sup>1067</sup> Ibid. SANHS Tite Colln, Taunton Scrap Book.

<sup>1068</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/3, pp. 120, 214; 31/1/4, p. 317.

drainage and competition from hawkers.<sup>1069</sup> Only two fishmongers used the market by 1865 and they were relocated in 1867.<sup>1070</sup> A fish market was built in the eastern Market House arcades in 1904 but by the 1920s it was in the indoor market.<sup>1071</sup>

From 1835 butchers could buy shop licences for £50 a year provided they took a market stall.<sup>1072</sup> In 1850 butchery tolls were farmed for c. £1,100 and fish and pork tolls for £536. Toll farmers complained that shops reduced their income and the beadle was ordered to prevent street sales.<sup>1073</sup> Itinerant sellers and fresh food shops increased from the 1850s despite the cost of licences and fines.<sup>1074</sup> In 1893 51 country butchers petitioned for lower stall rents as they had to compete with shops and by the 1920s market expenses exceeded income, nearly a quarter of which came from shop licences.<sup>1075</sup> In 1926 the Market House Trust's duties and powers passed to the town council, confirmed by the 1931 Act repealing the Taunton Market Acts.<sup>1076</sup> By then the indoor market was divided between butchers, greengrocers, florists, fishmongers and itinerant traders.<sup>1077</sup> In 1930 outdoor stallholders were moved into the indoor market to improve the Parade and in 1936 sales from barrows and trucks in the town centre were banned on Fridays and Saturdays, all week from 1947.<sup>1078</sup> In the early 21st century trading was allowed in certain areas.

The market's stuccoed five-bay frontage comprised three large and two small arches alternating on the ground floor, partly glazed for shops. The central arch was set forward to carry the first-floor colonnade of four Ionic columns surmounted by a pediment. The first

<sup>1069</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/1, p. 440; 31/1/5, passim; DD/DP/8/21 (1824), 74/1; A/EAM/1—2; T/PH/rea/3/31.

<sup>1070</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/6, pp. 261, 295—6, 299, 419—20, 425.

<sup>1071</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/10, p. 85.

<sup>1072</sup> Kite and Palmer, *Taunton...market trust*, 46, 60; *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), II, p. 199.

<sup>1073</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/5, pp. 161, 253, 275, 387, 473; DD/DP/5/1.

<sup>1074</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C2273/3/12, p. 60; D/B/ta/31/1/5, pp. 437, 489, 494, 369; 31/1/6, p. 465; 31/1/7, pp. 15—16, 26, 30, 39; D/B/ch/7/2/2.

<sup>1075</sup> *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), II, p. 245, III, p. 274; SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/9, p. 389, 577—8; D/WB/t/11/1 passim.

<sup>1076</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/7, p. 408; 31/1/8, p. 322; 31/1/11, p. 384; PAM2563, p. 18.

<sup>1077</sup> *Taunton Official Handbook* (1931), 109.

<sup>1078</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/3/25/1, p. 230; A/EOB/1 (Dec. 1947).

floor, known by 1883 as the Victoria Rooms, had five pedimented sash windows with balustrades. Only the ground floor was solid stone most of the upper floor was plastered. It was restored in 1934 as the Town Hall, with assembly room and cinema.<sup>1079</sup> The ground floor was requisitioned until 1949, part was rebuilt for the electricity board and the rest demolished in 1963—5 for shops and offices.<sup>1080</sup>

### Corn exchange

By the late 18th century corn dealers sold in two-bushel bags on Saturday afternoons and held trays for sampling.<sup>1081</sup> In 1821 ten men and one woman were licensed to sell corn by sample between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturdays in the Free Exchange Room in the new market but returned to the arcades in 1825.<sup>1082</sup> Corn dealers had shops by the 1840s and more were licensed in 1858.<sup>1083</sup> In 1867 the fish market was converted into a corn exchange with 40 desks costing up to £85 a year by 1921.<sup>1084</sup> In 1929 the corn exchange moved to Canal Road and the old building was demolished in 1937.<sup>1085</sup>

### Livestock markets

Animals for butchery were probably sold between Cornhill, where there was a bullring, and the bridge, an area later divided into Horse and Groping Lanes.<sup>1086</sup> A ‘great’ monthly winter market for livestock was moved from Castle Green to East Reach c.1789.<sup>1087</sup> It disrupted traffic in 1819 and in 1823 was confined to the north side. In 1827 it relocated to a field off

<sup>1079</sup> Ibid. A/DIF/95/37, 101/11/216; A/BRP/1/6 (1934).

<sup>1080</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/3/25/3 passim; 31/1/13, p. 6; D/DC/tau.d (M/1239), box 3; Orbach, S. & W. Som. 623.

<sup>1081</sup> Marshall, *Rural Economy of W. of Eng.*, II, 190.

<sup>1082</sup> SHC, Q/RLc/1; D/B/ta/31/5/3, 214; Kite and Palmer, *Taunton...market trust*, 90.

<sup>1083</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/5, p. 496; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp. 52, 66. 3—4 East Reach bears the legend ‘English and Foreign Corn Warehouse’.

<sup>1084</sup> *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), II, p. 202; SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/6, pp. 419—20, 425, 427, 449; DD/X/BFD/3; D/WB/t/11/1, pp. 58—9.

<sup>1085</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/71/1441; D/DC/tau.d unlisted box 19 (1938—9).

<sup>1086</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/1, pp. 3, 19.

<sup>1087</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 586; SHC, DD/TB/23/32.

East Reach but was outside the market trustees' authority so returned to Castle Green where from 1841 the cattle and sheep markets, great markets, horse sales and livestock shows were held.<sup>1088</sup> A short-lived second cattle market was introduced in 1833 and a sheep market was sited by Tancred Street in 1840.<sup>1089</sup> A pig market was held possibly outside the Three Cups in East Street but before 1586 it moved to Paul Street.<sup>1090</sup> In 1821 a pig market was established in Jarman's Court, later Pig Market Lane and extended in 1831.<sup>1091</sup> By 1871 it was inadequate and moved to Castle Green, except between 1883 and 1904 when it was held in Tangier.<sup>1092</sup>

In August 1884 5,326 cattle and sheep and 858 pigs were sold and in 1888 up to 40 truckloads of cattle were dispatched by rail on Saturdays.<sup>1093</sup> Livestock auctions, disease and the outbreak of war led to declining sales.<sup>1094</sup> In 1929 the council opened a new market on Jarvis Field (6 a.) in Canal Road with accommodation for 1,320 cattle and calves, 6,500 sheep and 1,500 pigs and a Saturday corn exchange, Tuesday produce market, three firms of auctioneers and several implement merchants.<sup>1095</sup> In 1944 three cattle sales were established, livestock on Saturdays, fatstock on Tuesdays and tuberculin tested cattle on Thursdays and by 1954 each had its own sale ring and accommodation. One of the most important markets in the west, it housed a Christmas fatstock show, auctions sales and from the 1960s a general market of c. 30 stalls.<sup>1096</sup> Further sale rings were built in 1962 and in 1963 the market

<sup>1088</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/2, p. 466, 31/1/3, pp. 145, 264, 273; 31/1/4, pp. 246, 246—7, 253, 260, 266—7; 31/1/5, p. 290; DD/SAS/C2273/3/12, p. 100.

<sup>1089</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/4, pp. 12, 35; DD/SAS/C212/map148.

<sup>1090</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/49 (Apr. 1586), 50 (June 1614).

<sup>1091</sup> Ibid. DD/CH/82/8; D/B/ta/31/1/3, 21, 102, 116, 347; D/P/tau.m/4/3/9—10.

<sup>1092</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/6, p. 93, 31/1/8, p. 87; D/B/ta/24/1/12/424.

<sup>1093</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/1/8, pp. 199, 560; *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), III, p. 257.

<sup>1094</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/9, pp. 577—8, 585; 31/1/10, pp. 625; 31/1/11, pp. 182, 372, 418—9.

<sup>1095</sup> Ibid. A/DIF/95/37; D/B/ta/24/1/57/993; A/BMG/5/2.

<sup>1096</sup> Ibid. D/DC/tau.d (M/1289, box 1); DD/X/AP/1; A/AQN/64; PAM61.

handled c. 240,000 animals, rising to 370,314 in 1986 creating transport difficulties. In 2008 it moved to a site south of Bridgwater.<sup>1097</sup>

## FAIRS

Major Somerset fairs were held in spring or autumn so Taunton's summer dates may relate to the wool trade as they followed shearing. The Botolph or Borough fair (17 June), in existence by 1287 and possibly a century earlier, produced £1 10s. 4d. in 1310 for the manor, almost as much as the annual market tolls.<sup>1098</sup> A piepowder court was held by the 14th century and traders opening their shop windows in fair time had to pay a toll.<sup>1099</sup> In 1409 six Taunton men attacked the toll collectors and reportedly raised 400 supporters.<sup>1100</sup> Tolls fell from over 20s in the 14th century to 3s. 4d in 1630.<sup>1101</sup> The Tolsey or tollbooth was south of the Guildhall and the manor bailiff had an extra load of firewood for each fair, possibly for a kitchen.<sup>1102</sup>

The manorial hundred bedels manned the entrances to the town and fair to prevent animals leaving without a detailed description, any owners' marks and the names of buyers and sellers being recorded. Cattle and horses from Wales and Ireland sold for up to £5. Horses from the Somerset Levels attracted distant buyers and two men from Cornwall regularly bought for onward sale. Recorded sales peaked at 269 animals in 1630.<sup>1103</sup> Sheep were usually sent to specialised fairs like Ham Hill and Weyhill. Fairs were disrupted in the 1640s and tolsey receipts halved in the 1650s.<sup>1104</sup>

Cloth was sold in the 1670s but the fair was mainly for pedlary, entertainment, public announcements and recruiting and never recovered its regional importance. Cattle sales went

<sup>1097</sup> Ibid. A/BIV/5; D/B/ta/31/1/13; A/DIT/1; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/15 (7 Dec.).

<sup>1098</sup> Hunt, 'Some notes on the cloth trade', *PSAS* CI—II, 100; SHC, T/PH/win 1286—7, 1309—10.

<sup>1099</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1334—5.

<sup>1100</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1408—13, 179.

<sup>1101</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1348—50, 1363—4, 1377—8; Hants. R.O., 11M59/C1/19/10.

<sup>1102</sup> SHC, DD/SP/71; D/B/ta/31/5/3.

<sup>1103</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/338.

<sup>1104</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/TN/16, 149—50; DD/SP/325/190—3; 329.

unrecorded and few horses were sold.<sup>1105</sup> In the late 18th and early 19th centuries graziers bought lean cattle sold along East Street but by the mid 19th century town-based dealers and horse-breakers bought and sold privately or at regular sales.<sup>1106</sup> By 1899 the fair comprised a few sweet stalls on the Parade and Irish horses offered by the gypsy community and was last recorded in 1916.<sup>1107</sup>

In 1256 the king granted his brother Amaury, bishop of Winchester, a yearly four-day fair in Millane tithing around 5 July.<sup>1108</sup> The St Thomas fair usually produced over 20s. for the manor.<sup>1109</sup> In the early 17th century receipts rose to over £3 in 1639, often higher than at the borough fair, and cutpurses were active.<sup>1110</sup> Although cattle sales predominated ribbons and jewellery were sold and a Welsh cutler and his wife who had stock stolen at the George inn were probably attending this fair in 1761.<sup>1111</sup> North Town fair, as it was then known, was held from 7—9 July, the first day for graziers and the others for the general public.<sup>1112</sup> It was noted for garlic sold from barges in the river. In 1817 589 cattle were offered for sale but the fair mainly comprised pedlary, confectionary, sack races and greasy pole competitions.<sup>1113</sup> In the late 18th and early 19th century up to eight tolsey keepers continued to be appointed for the fair, held at the junction of Bridge Street, Station Road and Staplegrove Road, possibly on Elms Parade.<sup>1114</sup> Stock were auctioned in 1860 but by the 1880s the entertainments had

<sup>1105</sup> Dawes, *Quarter Sessions 1666—77*, 218; SHC, Q/SR/115/218; DD/SP/338.

<sup>1106</sup> Billingsley, *Agric. of Som.*, 245; Miles, *Perfectly Pure*, 84; TNA, HO 107/972; RG 10/2374—5.

<sup>1107</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 21 June 1899, 12 July 1916; BNA accessed 15 Aug. 2022; SHC, DD/TBL/59 (1916).

<sup>1108</sup> *Cal. Chart.* 1226—57, 242.

<sup>1109</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1267—8, 1301—2, 1353—4, 1509—10.

<sup>1110</sup> Hants. R.O., 11M59/C1/19/10; SHC, Q/SR/52/32; DD/SP/329 (1639).

<sup>1111</sup> SHC, DD/SP/33, 329 (1640—55)6; 325/197 (Staplegrove 100); 338; Q/SR/93/109; 115/7, 14; 313/45.

<sup>1112</sup> *Ibid.* SHC, DD/SP/338; *Fairs in Eng. and Wales* (1767), 69; Billingsley, *Agric. of Som.*, 245.

<sup>1113</sup> SHC, DD/DP/43/4/13 (1817); Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 559; Dr H. Alford, *Olden Taunton, a Cycle of Change* (Taunton c. 1921), 8.

<sup>1114</sup> SHC, DD/DP/90/2; A/ADR, vol. 1 (1870—1); Chipchase, *Taunton Remembered*, 30.

lapsed, fairs were seen as a useless nuisance responsible for absence from school, filthy streets and poor business in the town centre, and the North Town fair ceased to be held.<sup>1115</sup>

A July horse show was held from 1882 until 1949 except during the wars and from the late 20th century fun fairs and markets were allowed in Castle Green and occasionally in some streets.<sup>1116</sup>

## COAL MERCHANTS

There was a charcoal store on the manor in 1301 but firewood was the main fuel often imported upriver. Coal was available by the 15th century and after improved navigation came upriver from north Somerset and later from Wales. The area south-east of the bridge was named Coal Orchard by 1744.<sup>1117</sup> Coal merchants and coalyards were recorded from the early 18th century. In 1815 a man paid over £800 for a house, coalyard and wharf in Coal Orchard where there were at least eight coalyards by 1842.<sup>1118</sup> Coal was required for foundries, steam-powered mills and later for gas and electricity generation. By the 1820s c. 28,500 tons of coal came upriver annually and merchants employed up to 15 men to handle it.<sup>1119</sup> A coalyard let in 1849 had a counting house, a weighbridge and a wharf with a crane.<sup>1120</sup> After the opening of the railway many of the c.15 coal businesses moved near the station but some were sited in residential areas.<sup>1121</sup> In 1882 a coal merchant paid for an advertising hoarding at the station.<sup>1122</sup>

<sup>1115</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/7, p. 538; D/G/ta/8a/28; C/E/4/367/1, p. 377; *Taunton Courier*, 11 July 1860, 15 July 1885; BNA accessed 15 Aug. 2022; *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), III, p. 269; *Taunton of Today* (1896), 11.

<sup>1116</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 14 July 1886, 23 July 1949; BNA accessed 11 Aug. 2022.

<sup>1117</sup> Page, *Pipe Roll 1301—2*, 32; BL, Add. MS 30289 (45); *Cal. Inq. Misc.* VII, p. 259; TNA, PROB 4/8674; SHC, Q/SR/73/313/45; *VCH Som.* VI, 26.

<sup>1118</sup> TNA, PROB 11/659/254; SHC, A/CHM/5; D/P/tau.ja/13/1/1; DD/SP/1744/24; DD/DP/box 103; DD/SAS/C212/13/1, pp. 48—52; DD/CH/78/5; *Bailey's British Dir.* (1784), 455

<sup>1119</sup> SHC, T/PH/gdl/2; DD/TC/36.

<sup>1120</sup> *Ibid.* DD/CH/81/7.

<sup>1121</sup> Harrison, Harrad and Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); Morris and Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); SHC, DD/CH/111/2; DD/HS/1/2; A/BMG 3/1; TNA, HO 107/1922—3; RG 12/1875, 1877.

<sup>1122</sup> Wilts and Swindon HC, 2525/210, box 40/15.



The Goodland family in the mid 19th century took over the coalyards of the Youngs, Kingsburys and Troods, each with wharves.<sup>1123</sup> William Goodland started the business in 1828 and in 1830 formed a company with his brother Charles. Sons and grandsons joined the business bringing coal, culm and anthracite from Gloucestershire and south Wales through Bridgwater. From Taunton they dispatched coal and salt to Tiverton, Devon, where they had two canal wharves. They later opened depots at stations in west Somerset and east Devon and bought 70 coal waggons. From a depot in Shuttern they sold to the poor in small quantities.<sup>1124</sup> In 1920 they formed the Taunton and West Somerset branch of the Coal Traders Association. In 1926 when coal was rationed Taunton needed 1,100 tons every six weeks but in the later 20th century natural gas replaced coal, coalyards closed and Goodlands became builders' merchants.<sup>1125</sup>

## RETAIL SERVICES

The name le Chapman was common from the 13th century.<sup>1126</sup> In 1310—11 a taverner's wife had seven shops and there were shops by the market and on East Street.<sup>1127</sup> Shops were sublet profitably, shopkeepers paid to open their drop windows on fair days and some had pences to shelter goods.<sup>1128</sup> The oldest shop is 14th-century 15 Fore Street, formerly a mercer's and then a grocer's. An addition, recorded as a 24ft by 15ft pence in 1410, was superseded in 1578 by a timbered façade probably built for Thomas Trowbridge, mercer, and his wife Joan whose son later had a woollen draper's next door.<sup>1129</sup>

<sup>1123</sup> SHC, DD/CH/78/5; DD/X/WBB/371; DD/CWC/ta/G/2468; DD/GND/8.

<sup>1124</sup> Ibid. A/ARG/7; A/BMG/3/1; DD/GND cat.; Devon HC, 2062/B/L/6.

<sup>1125</sup> SHC, A/SDJ/1/1; DD/GND cat.

<sup>1126</sup> TNA, E 326/4963, 5094; Dickinson, *Kirby's Quest*, 127; *Cal. Misc.* I, p. 397.

<sup>1127</sup> Green, *Feet of Fines 1307—46*, 22—4; SHC, T/PH/win 1305, 1320—1; TNA, E 326/4965, 4989; Dilks, *Bridgwater Records*, 48, pp. 118—19, 131, 182.

<sup>1128</sup> TNA, C 1/311/40; SHC, T/PH/win 1334—5, 1338—9, 1353—4, 1409—10, 1409—10; T/PH/hps/1.

<sup>1129</sup> SHC, T/PH/win 1409—10; R. Bush, 'The Tudor Tavern, Fore Street, Taunton', *PSAS CXIX*, 1975, 15—21.

Spicers, drapers, mercers, haberdashers, a bookseller and a stationer were recorded in the 15th and 16th centuries. Servicing the local gentry was an important part of the town's economy often with goods sourced in London.<sup>1130</sup> Merchants sued shopkeepers in 1617—20 for non-payment for jars of olives, figs, two and a half cwt of raisins and a delivery of 6,000 pins.<sup>1131</sup> Twelve drapers, mercers and haberdashers petitioned against abuse of the aulnage c. 1623 when their sealed cloth was seized until they agreed to pay an annual charge.<sup>1132</sup> The 1627 borough charter confirmed that only residents or freemen might keep a shop in the town, others could trade in the market and fairs only.<sup>1133</sup> In 1634 24 mercers and four woollen drapers were recorded, mostly in Fore Street, home to goldsmiths and merchants.<sup>1134</sup> A haberdasher in 1645 had over 750 yards of c. 30 types of woollen and linen cloth, ribbons, threads, spices, dried fruits, sugar, liquorice, tobacco, papers, primers and horn books and a hatter sold clothes, caps, scarves, bands, boot hose and handkerchiefs.<sup>1135</sup> That was a common mix of wares although some like booksellers were specialists.<sup>1136</sup> Tobacco was sold by 1620 and a 1652 token had an image of tobacco.<sup>1137</sup> Barbers, drapers and grocers sold it, one man had tobacco worth £34, a press and a knife in 1674, but it was not apparently stocked in public houses until later.<sup>1138</sup> Tobacconists and tobacco manufacturers were

<sup>1130</sup> TNA, CP 40/636, 656, 664, 685, 724, 732, 748, 768, 776, 807, 841, 871, 887, 890, 893, 907, 959, 983, 1298, 1352, 1437—9 indexes: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; SHC, DD/SF/2/52/2; DD/SP/348 (1593); DD/WO 55/8/15.

<sup>1131</sup> SHC, DD/SP/63.

<sup>1132</sup> Ibid. DD/PH/216/57.

<sup>1133</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/1/2/4.

<sup>1134</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/339 (1634).

<sup>1135</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1634/20; 1645/18, 35.

<sup>1136</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1666/57, 1676/14, 1681/50, 1683/41, 1685/44, 100, 1691/57, 1695/35; DD/X/WLM/1

<sup>1137</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/63 (1620); Williamson, *Trade Tokens*, 990.

<sup>1138</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1645/35, 1666/72, 1674/9; D/DC/tau.d/25/13 (1391).

recorded during the 18th century and the trade was worth £3,000 a year by 1824.<sup>1139</sup> Cigar manufacturers were recorded from the 1880s until 1901.<sup>1140</sup>

One mercer's business in goods, bills and bonds was worth £1,000 in 1667. John Meredith from Stogursey was apprenticed to a Taunton mercer and in 1677 left c. £2,500, endowed two clothing charities and gave money to those from whom he took unfair advantage including a Salisbury supplier.<sup>1141</sup> Many tradesmen issued farthing tokens between 1652 and 1667 but unlike those of other towns rarely used livery company arms.<sup>1142</sup> A great deal of capital was required to stock a high-class shop such as that kept by William Chase between 1662 and 1676 with cloth costing up to 4s. a yard, gold and silver lace and buttons, silk ribbons and fine worsted worth nearly £900. Like many drapers and haberdashers he was owed large sums for goods bought on credit.<sup>1143</sup> In 1775 a bankrupt grocer and draper had stock worth up to £1,000 including tobacco, probably explaining the number of spittoons in the house, tea priced up to 13s. the lb. for hyson, 70 cwt of lump sugar, a coffee mill and sweetmeat glasses. He dealt with suppliers in London, Bristol, Exeter and Gloucester.<sup>1144</sup> Two women set up a haberdashery shop in 1814 selling some ready-made clothes. The stock included lace costing up to £2 a yard and ribbons up to £3 15s. a yard, more than three months wages for mill hands, and was worth £1,150 in 1816.<sup>1145</sup> By 1824 the retail drapery and grocery trades in Taunton were valued at £155,000 slightly more than silk

<sup>1139</sup> TNA, IR 1/47, p. 76; SHC, D/P/tau.ma/13/6/1; *The Universal British Directory* (c. 1798), IV, 587—9; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1140</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 81, 106; TNA, RG 11/2368; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883); TNA, RG 13/2278.

<sup>1141</sup> TNA, PROB 4/4454; PROB 11/356/385.

<sup>1142</sup> Williamson, *Trade Tokens*, 987—92; H. Symonds, 'Taunton Tokens of the Seventeenth Century', *PSAS*, LVII (1911), 55; LXI (1915), 121.

<sup>1143</sup> *PSAS*, LXI (1915), 121; SHC, DD/SP/1676/12, SP/1681/50, 59.

<sup>1144</sup> SHC, DD/DP/76/2.

<sup>1145</sup> *Ibid.* DD/HC/44/15, 46/15, 147/4; D/P/tau.m/9/1/5.

manufacturing.<sup>1146</sup> In the 1830s 50 retailers were on the electoral register and c. 80 shops were recorded.<sup>1147</sup>

In 1801 an enterprising ironmonger published a stocklist including stoves, backgammon tables, man-traps and umbrellas.<sup>1148</sup> Some ironmongers, tailors, hatters, glovers, shoemakers and milliners were still manufacturers. Marine or second-hand stores and bargain bazaars served the poor.<sup>1149</sup> Women dealt in old clothes in the late 19th century and in 1940 a man was accused of giving goldfish to children in exchange for rags.<sup>1150</sup> By the 1830s many shops were gas-lit and shop porters were a discrete trade.<sup>1151</sup> Errand boys and porters rose in number to 122 in 1851 when there were c. 180 shops and to 479 by 1911.<sup>1152</sup> By the 1860s the main streets were lined with large glass windows, replacing the older small square panes, interiors were gutted and retail space extended to upper floors with display windows. Purpose-built shops included The Bridge and several glasshouse shops, since demolished.<sup>1153</sup> Manufacturers invested in large warerooms to display products. Sun-blinds were common by 1900 but only two shops installed permanent glazed verandas.<sup>1154</sup>

In 1841 c. 300 residents were employed in retailing but 730 by 1891. There were booksellers and stationers, music and piano warehouses, jewellers and watchmakers, furriers, toy and fancy shops, chemists, ironmongers, china dealers, furnishers, wine and spirit stores, confectioners and sweet shops. Most assistants were employed in drapery and grocery.<sup>1155</sup> From 1860 51 people were licensed to sell fruit and vegetables in shops and by 1868 90 fresh

<sup>1146</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1147</sup> Ibid. D/P/tau.ma/23/16, 29; *Pigot Dir.* (1830).

<sup>1148</sup> SHC, DD/HC/4/18/1.

<sup>1149</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), passim; SHC, DD/CN/28/17.

<sup>1150</sup> TNA, RG 12/1875—7; RG 14/2276—8; SHC, D/B/ta/3/8/12, p. 226.

<sup>1151</sup> SHC, T/PH/gdl/1; DD/CH/111/6; DD/SAS/C2402/52.

<sup>1152</sup> *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 14/14234—45, 14249.

<sup>1153</sup> SHC, *Pigot Colln*, Fore Street by Buckler (1832); A/BMG/5/2; D/B/ta/24/1/9/272, 275, 277, 280, 24/1/10/312, 317—19, 328, 340, 344; 24/1/11/374; A/ADR, vol. 1 (1875).

<sup>1154</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/9/287; 24/1/10/317; 24/1/22/941.

<sup>1155</sup> TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2276—8; RG 14/14234—45, 14249.

food shops were licensed but only three butcheries as their licence was expensive.<sup>1156</sup> In the late 19th century an unlicensed butcher was convicted nine times, confining meat to market stalls reputedly kept the town cleaner. One butcher imported frozen meat from New Zealand. A fishmonger supplied hawkers and shops in Chard and Minehead, obtaining salmon by telegraphing suppliers.<sup>1157</sup> As late as 1927 licences were issued for 138 fresh food shops although for those outside the market limit a licence was not required.<sup>1158</sup>

The later 19th century saw the addition of oil and colour shops, florists, newsagents, furniture stores, tobacconists, art dealers and retail shoe shops, including Henry Massingham's, which provided toilets and a restaurant by 1890.<sup>1159</sup> In 1890 oil and colour men George Spiller and Charles Webber opened a store in Bridge Street, later noted for its 1937 black granite and glass fascia and George's penny farthing bicycle but it closed in the early 21st century.<sup>1160</sup> Expensive shops still allowed credit, shops opened late and there was concern over staff hours. From 1907 shops had to close by 9 p.m., except on Saturdays when they could open until 11 p.m. and Wednesdays when they had to close at 2 p.m.<sup>1161</sup> Fewer shopkeepers lived on the premises, upper floors were stock and work rooms, but some banks had resident caretakers in the 1920s and later.<sup>1162</sup> In 1911 more than 1,200 shop workers were resident in the town.<sup>1163</sup> The Taunton Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1919 as the Taunton Traders Association.<sup>1164</sup>

Drapers employed at least 235 people by 1891 and the larger stores had resident male and female assistants in the care of a housekeeper. In 1901 28 young assistants lived above

<sup>1156</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), passim; Kite and Palmer, *Taunton...market trust*, 63; SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/6, pp. 300—1, 465; 31/7/2.

<sup>1157</sup> *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), III, pp. 272—4.

<sup>1158</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/3/25/1, pp. 27—9, 38—9, 53, 112—14, 230.

<sup>1159</sup> Ibid. DD/X/HSTH/1—3; TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), passim; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 235.

<sup>1160</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/100/2409; PAM2831.

<sup>1161</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 237—8; SHC, DD/CH/80/8; D/B/ta/4/6/2 (June 1907).

<sup>1162</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/13/3/1 passim.

<sup>1163</sup> TNA, RG 13/2276—8; RG 14/14234—40, 14243—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>1164</sup> *Taunton Official Handbook* (1931), 95.

Chapmans and Clements and Brown stores cared for by five servants. Grocers became exclusively male including very young boys.<sup>1165</sup> The oldest drapery run by the Newberry and Hatcher families started c. 1775 at 12 High Street. After 1860 the business expanded over 11—16 High Street and created a large furniture shop in Hammet Street. In 1898 the business was incorporated as Hatcher and Sons Limited although only one family member remained by 1927.<sup>1166</sup> In 1894 the company built a three-storey, fully glazed furniture store on the site of 54—6 High Street.<sup>1167</sup> They had a coachhouse off the Crescent for their waggons, ran a removal business and built a large depository in 1920 on Kingston Road, now flats.<sup>1168</sup> In the 1920s the shop opened for ten hours five days a week and Thursday mornings, had a hairdressing salon and held mannequin parades. It remained in business in 2024.<sup>1169</sup>

William and Arthur Chapman from London, supplied furniture, flooring, ladies and children's clothing, fabrics and haberdashery in 1864. By the 1890s they had 20—26 North Street and a former coalyard and stables behind, created a continuous frontage and employed Charles Samson to rebuild 25 with a four-storey fully glazed front. They built warehouses on a large yard off St James Street, now a small shopping precinct, and had funeral and removal businesses including warehouses for overseas removals in Wood Street in 1914. Part of the main store was rebuilt in plain Art Deco style in 1938 when they acquired 19 North Street. The rest and the 1880s back showrooms were replaced in 1963—4 in matching style with a canopy to unite the frontage. In the early 1970s the store became a branch of Debenhams,

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<sup>1165</sup> TNA, RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7; RG 13/2278; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1887); SHC, A/DIX/1.

<sup>1166</sup> SHC, A/BVO/1—3; DD/AY/75; D/B/ta/24/1/11/354; D/B/ta/24/1/12/403, 424; DD/CH/30; Companies House, reg. 05594571.

<sup>1167</sup> SHC, DD/CH/30, 118/5; date on building.

<sup>1168</sup> SHC, DD/CH/118/5; D/B/ta/24/1/50/802.

<sup>1169</sup> Hatcher and Sons, *Shopping in Taunton* (Taunton, 1928), 10—12.

whose finance, printing and computing departments were on Park Street, until store and offices closed in 2021.<sup>1170</sup>

John Pottenger Sibley took over Tozer's drapery at 4—6 Eastgate in 1878 expanding into Harmony Row, Tancred Street. As Sibley and Company they survived until the late 1930s when Marks and Spencer arrived in Fore Street. After several moves the latter settled on the site of the former County Hotel in 1997.<sup>1171</sup> In c. 1900 Clements and Brown succeeded Martin and Towell, a business started in the 1860s, and expanded over 47—50 Fore Street. In 1965 the store was sold to Colmers, later part of the Owen Owen group, and closed in 1979.<sup>1172</sup>

Barter and Duder at 52 North Street, later County Stores, were tea dealers, coffee roasters, grocers, cheese factors, Italian warehousemen and dealers in British wines from c. 1836. They had one of Taunton's first telephone numbers, opened seven rural branches in the early 20th century but closed in 2018.<sup>1173</sup> John Horniman, tea dealer in North Street in the 1830s, founded a noted tea business.<sup>1174</sup> The Devon and Somerset stores, Fore Street, incorporating the former White Hart, ran from c. 1870 for nearly a century on co-operative principles, selling food and household goods.<sup>1175</sup> The Taunton Co-operative Society started in 1889 at 1 Magdalene Street, rebuilt in 1893.<sup>1176</sup> They issued tokens for bread and milk delivery services, which formed a large part of their c. £20,000 a year sales in the 1920s. Branches opened in Greenway Avenue in 1901, East Reach, Hammet Street for tailoring and St James Street for coal in the 1920s, and later in Leycroft, Cheddon and Roman roads and

<sup>1170</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 239; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/10/317; 24/1/22/948; 24/1/23/859; 24/1/28/1812; 24/1/102/2622; A/DIF/47; DD/X/SOM/53; D/DC/tau.d M/1289), box 2, album.

<sup>1171</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 24 Aug. 1878; BNA accessed 20 Sep. 2021; SHC, DD/IR/T/26/1, p. 1; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914—31); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1939), 25; (1957), 49.

<sup>1172</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—99); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 185; SHC, DD/X/ROW/1; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 8; SHC, DD/X/ROW/1; (1972—3), 383.

<sup>1173</sup> *Shopping in Taunton at the County Stores* (Taunton, 1950s), 5—11; SHC, DD/CH/80/8.

<sup>1174</sup> SHC, Q/REI/35/24 (1832); *Taunton Courier*, 6 Mar. 1833; BNA accessed 24 Aug. 2022.

<sup>1175</sup> *Taunton Courier* 11 Apr. 1877; BNA accessed 18 Feb. 2020; *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 237.

<sup>1176</sup> Date with clasped hands carved over the door.

Bridge Street. The society ran a clothing club and provided annual treats for members' children.<sup>1177</sup> In the 1920s it acquired a shop and former photographer's studio in East Street and in 1937 opened a new two-storey department store, which by 1970 occupied 25—30 East Street. It closed in 1999 but branches opened from the 2010s in suburban areas and Station Road.<sup>1178</sup>

In the 1880s a town centre shop cost up to £80 to rent so shops opened in Upper High Street or Bridge Street including Alder's furniture store.<sup>1179</sup> Station Road's mix of independent shops and restaurants have survived notably Calvert's furniture store established in 1944 and now covering numbers 94—108. In the town centre small shops spread down Bath Place, Canon Street, Hammet Street and St James Street by the 1900s and later into Magdalene Lane and Billet Street.<sup>1180</sup> By the 1950s Kingston Road was a secondary shopping centre with over 30 shops, including Pearse's furniture store, a post office, hairdressers, public houses and a garage. Pearse's was demolished for road widening c. 1984 and most shops have closed.<sup>1181</sup> Shops in Cheddon Road were widely dispersed and a few survive.<sup>1182</sup> Corner shops were built into terraced streets from the mid 19th century and older streets had tiny shops in front parlours or side yards, many short-lived.<sup>1183</sup> Large housing estates included rows of shops but half had closed by the late 20th century or been replaced by small

<sup>1177</sup> S. Minnitt and D. Young, *Tickets, Checks and Passes from the County of Somerset* (Taunton, 1990), 8, 78—82; SHC, DD/CRS.sw/16; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1927).

<sup>1178</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/34/325—6, 24/1/79/1670; 24/1/95/2126; DD/BSO/1; D/R/ta/34/9/3, pp. 5, 78, 418; D/B/ta unlisted, inspections; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929, 1957).

<sup>1179</sup> SHC, A/DAS/2 (12384—5); D/B/ta/24/1/41/549—50, 24/45, 649, 653, 24/1/99/2274, 24/1/129/6590—1, 24/1/132/7589; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894—1939).

<sup>1180</sup> SHC, A/DIF/101/15/301; D/B/ta/24/1/19/797; 24/1/25/1674; 24/1/27/1762—4, 1790; 24/1/31/205, 224, 235; 24/1/45/649, 653; 24/1/99/2274; DD/CWC.ta/unlisted box 2; C/ENPR/15/10.

<sup>1181</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 75—7; SHC, DD/X/SML/6, p. 42.

<sup>1182</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/69/1362, 24/1/77/1605, 24/1/129/6587.

<sup>1183</sup> *Ibid.* DD/HS/1/2; D/B/ta/24/1/18/711, 740; 24/1/21/888; DD/SAS/C2401/69; DD/SAS/C795/SX/7.



supermarkets.<sup>1184</sup> Further afield a shop at Shoreditch was recorded between c. 1714 and the 1920s. Pyrland still had a grocer's shop in 1957.<sup>1185</sup>

In the 20th century large shops employed women as buyers, window dressers and demonstrators and used commercial travellers and representatives. In 1939 c. 160 salesmen were resident or visiting, more than 100 delivered or sold from vans, over 1,200 people in the borough worked in shops and shopfitting was a distinct trade.<sup>1186</sup> With the loss of market gardens five wholesalers established fruit and vegetable stores. By the 1950s Whites of Duke Street, later Taunton Fruit Distributors, employed c. 20 people supplying their own shops and up to 20 other greengrocers. However, by 1983 there were only three wholesalers and none by 2021 when there was only one independent greengrocer.<sup>1187</sup>

In 1964 of 731 retailers and public houses, 508 were in the town centre including 12 department stores and 82 food shops.<sup>1188</sup> Local store New Look, opened in 1969, became an international business.<sup>1189</sup> In the early 1970s 456 town centre shops covering 580,000 sq. ft had a turnover of £21,658,000. In 1978 c. 186,500 people shopped in Taunton but 54 food shops had closed since 1961.<sup>1190</sup> Large supermarkets and retail warehouses were built on an infilled river channel north-east of Priory Bridge Road in 1985 and at Hankridge, West Monkton in 1992. All but two of the supermarkets, furniture, carpet and decorating stores in the town centre in 1979 have closed.<sup>1191</sup> In 1982 a covered shopping mall, the Old Market Centre since renamed Orchard, was built south of Fore Street. Smaller County Walk, East Street and Crown Walk, High Street replaced listed buildings.<sup>1192</sup> In 1997 the central area,

<sup>1184</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/24/1/9/280, 24/1/11/391, 24/1/18/744, 24/1/26/1711, 24/1/28/1832, 24/1/70/1390, 24/1/131/7004.

<sup>1185</sup> Ibid. DD/SAS/C795/159/4; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1927); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton.* (1957), 374.

<sup>1186</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>1187</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957). 370—1; *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 51.

<sup>1188</sup> SHC, A/BWX/5, pp. 13, 97; D/B/ta/3/22/9, pp. 246—7.

<sup>1189</sup> [bbc.co.uk/news/business-43486521](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-43486521): accessed 22 March 2018.

<sup>1190</sup> SHC, C/ENPR/9, 40; D/PC/stapg/7/3, pp. 28, 30, 36—7.

<sup>1191</sup> Ibid. DD/X/MSN/1—6; C/ENPR/15/8—11.

<sup>1192</sup> Ibid. D/DC/tau.d/2/2/8 (19 Dec. 1979); A/EFY/1; DD/X/SML/6, p. 44.

dominated by large chain stores, enjoyed enhancement but many chain stores have since closed.<sup>1193</sup>

In the late 20th century local convenience stores opened largely for the sale of alcohol but in the early 21st century supermarket companies opened small stores in residential areas. Financial crises, loss of town centre offices and changing shopping habits caused closures but only a few shops remained empty accounting for three per cent in 2018 when in the primary shopping area there were 33 clothing retailers, 21 food stores, 14 jewellers and 12 hair salons. Many ethnic food stores opened but traditional bakers, greengrocers and butchers closed. The Covid 19 pandemic of 2020—1 led to permanent closures but new shops have opened. By the middle of 2021 there were 14,505 sq. m. of vacant space in large town centre shops of which the former Debenhams store accounted for 6,815 sq. m.<sup>1194</sup>

### Post Offices

During the Civil War post horses between London and Taunton cost 14s. a day.<sup>1195</sup> In 1666 a foot post went from Taunton to Minehead twice a week, letters to Bridgwater three times and a woman kept a Taunton post office in 1667.<sup>1196</sup> By the 1690s a frequent and reliable service from London and intermediate towns enabled regular correspondence.<sup>1197</sup> In 1700 there was a twice weekly postal service to Exeter and Chester, in 1749 the London service operated six days a week and postal services to Bristol, Exeter, Minehead and Wellington ran three or four days.<sup>1198</sup> Rural post was reportedly collected from a public house in Silver Street.<sup>1199</sup> The

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<sup>1193</sup> Ibid A/EPF/201.

<sup>1194</sup> VCH office, Taunton, *Taunton Town Centre Retail Survey 2018*, 99—101; inf. Som. C.C.

<sup>1195</sup> *Cal. Pat.* 1645—7, 507.

<sup>1196</sup> *Cal. SP Dom.* 1665—6, 445, 546; 1666—7, 40; 1667, 149, 279.

<sup>1197</sup> SHC, DD/X/WHI/1a—f.

<sup>1198</sup> *Lond. Gaz.* 6 Sep. 1700 cited in A. Humphries, *Som Parishes*, 672; SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/170.

<sup>1199</sup> Goldsworthy, *Recollections*, 32.

London inn horsed the mail in the 1780s and stabled coach horses at White Ball hill on the Exeter road.<sup>1200</sup>

In the early 19th century a woman ran a post office in North Street sending mail daily to London and Exeter.<sup>1201</sup> In 1824 the service earned £4,000 a year.<sup>1202</sup> Letters from west Somerset cost 2d. in 1823 but a penny post to parishes east of Taunton was introduced by 1829 when there were mail services to and from Bath, Bristol, Barnstaple, Minehead and Bridport and by 1837 to Sidmouth.<sup>1203</sup> The postmistress moved to 1 Hammet Street c. 1839, established a night railway mail service to London in 1842 and employed two female assistants, two clerks and six carriers and messengers in 1851.<sup>1204</sup> Her male successor employed no women and moved to 9 Hammet Street adding a large single-storey extension providing savings bank services from 1864 and telegraph from 1870.<sup>1205</sup> The first telegraph service was at the railway station by 1860.<sup>1206</sup>

Pillar letter boxes were set up from 23 May 1856, replaced by wall boxes in the 1870s. By 1883 there were four daily town deliveries, one on Sunday and four collections from boxes increased to seven by 1895.<sup>1207</sup> Shoreditch post office, opened before 1858, was replaced in the 1930s by a sub post office on the corner of Mountfields Road, still open in 2024.<sup>1208</sup> Others were established at Rowbarton in 1876, North Town in 1880 and in East Reach and Shuttern in 1881, half kept by women, and by 1891 the postal service employed at

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<sup>1200</sup> SHC, DD/DP/62/5.

<sup>1201</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 589.

<sup>1202</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1203</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, DD/WY/7/2/16; PAM1003, p. 15.

<sup>1204</sup> *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *Pigot Dir.* (1842); TNA, HO 107/972, 1922—3.

<sup>1205</sup> SHC, T/PH/rea/3/14; TNA RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 41; *Morris and Co. Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>1206</sup> Kite and Palmer, *Taunton...market trust*, 63. A coach was named Telegraph by 1822 and a public house by 1864: SHC, Q/SCS cat.; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 102.

<sup>1207</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883); *Taunton of Today* (1896), 23; R. Berry, *Taunton Post Boxes* (Industrial Heritage of Taunton Deane no. 4).

<sup>1208</sup> *Exeter Flying Post*, 15 Jul. 1858; BNA accessed 21 Sep. 2021; TNA, RG 9/1617; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/98/2219; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1923).

least 65 people and 14 operated the telegraph service.<sup>1209</sup> By 1894 a Taunton branch of the Postmen's Federation, later Union of Post Office Workers, was established with its own monthly magazine by 1923.<sup>1210</sup> In 1911, when a general post office designed by John Rutherford opened in North Street, c. 162 Taunton residents were post office employees including 66 postmen. Letters were dispatched 14 times on weekdays, twice on Christmas Day, parcels 11 times daily and there were five town deliveries.<sup>1211</sup>

In the 1930s post offices opened in Cheddon, Hamilton, Roman, Station and Holway roads. Priorswood opened c. 1958. In the late 1940s 24,000 letters were posted in Taunton daily rising to 100,000 at Christmas when 114 extra staff were employed. Offices closed from the 1980s leaving only four town sub post-offices. In 2007 the head post office closed and services were provided in shops.<sup>1212</sup> Rutherford's stone and brick three-storey building with prominent stone quoins and keystones and a large clock was a restaurant in 2024. The railway parcel post depot built before 1888 was extended after 1932 as a sorting office. It was demolished in 1991 and replaced by premises in Chip Lane.<sup>1213</sup>

In the 1890s a telephone exchange was established in Hammet Street, moved to the new post office in 1911 requiring the first female operators and in 1935 a large exchange was built behind on Half Moon Court.<sup>1214</sup> By 1939 nearly half the c. 240 resident post office employees were telephone engineers.<sup>1215</sup> In 1938—41 Telephone House replaced 12—16 The Crescent. It was enlarged c. 1954, when telephonists handled 10,000 trunk calls a day, but closed in the late 20th century and was converted to flats as was the North Street exchange,

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<sup>1209</sup> [www.ukpostofficesbycounty](http://www.ukpostofficesbycounty): accessed 21 July 2017; TNA, RG 12/1875, 1877.

<sup>1210</sup> SHC, A/AVV/1—3.

<sup>1211</sup> TNA, RG 14/14234—45, 14249; Orbach, *S. & W. Som.* 626; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>1212</sup> [www.ukpostofficesbycounty](http://www.ukpostofficesbycounty); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), A9; SHC, D/B/ta/3/25/2, p. 2; A/DIF/114/12; A/EOB/1 (Dec. 1947).

<sup>1213</sup> SHC, A/BVU/2; TNA, RAIL 252/2216.

<sup>1214</sup> *Taunton and West Somerset Annual 1897* (Taunton, 1896), 143; SHC, DD/HCK/6/2/20; *Taunton Courier* 8 March 1911; BNA, accessed 12 Aug. 2024.

<sup>1215</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

after use as a telephone museum.<sup>1216</sup> In 1978 a fully automated exchange opened in Wood Street.<sup>1217</sup> In 1935 a neo-Georgian red brick ancillary exchange replaced a 1926 telephone repeating station in Hamilton Road but was a church and community centre by 2001.<sup>1218</sup>

### Banks and financial services

Until the later 18th century credit depended on professional moneylenders, merchants, goldsmiths and private individuals lending on bonds or pawned goods.<sup>1219</sup> The poor used pawnbrokers and by 1891 ten were resident.<sup>1220</sup> At least three firms operated in 2024.

The Treasury appointed goldsmith James Foy in 1774 to exchange old guineas and half guineas for new standard coins.<sup>1221</sup> In 1777 Edmund Trowbridge Halliday, Matthew Brickdale and others started the Taunton, later Taunton Old, Bank. In 1816 it suspended payments and collapsed in 1819 but its affairs were not settled until the 1850s.<sup>1222</sup> In 1789—90 Hammet, Jeffries, Woodforde and Buncombe was established, later Kinglake and Company's Somerset Bank, drawing on Esdaile and Company of London. It was taken over by Stuckey's in 1838.<sup>1223</sup> Thomas Young ran the Milverton and Taunton Bank between 1805 and 1817.<sup>1224</sup> In 1800 the Badcock family founded a Taunton Bank, which issued banknotes and had premises in Fore Street but in 1873 merged with Stuckey's of which the Badcocks became managers.<sup>1225</sup>

<sup>1216</sup> SHC, A/DQO/404/8/38, 404/41/3; A/AFU/14/53; D/B/ta/24/1/123/5732, 24/1/15400; Orbach, S. & W. *Som.* 624; *SDNQ*, XXVIII, 224.

<sup>1217</sup> SHC, D/P/stapg/7/3, p. 77.

<sup>1218</sup> TNA, WORK 13/966; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 9; Orbach, S. & W. *Som.* 633.

<sup>1219</sup> TNA, C 6/27/1/51; SHC, D/D/Ca 184; DD/TOR/154.

<sup>1220</sup> Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3); SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/14; TNA, RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>1221</sup> SHC, A/DQO/404/46/26.

<sup>1222</sup> *Ibid.* DD/SAS/C795/TN/19, 155/4; DD/DP/6/12—13, 7/2, 5, 7; DD/WY/10/27; DD/SF/17/5/3.

<sup>1223</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 586—7; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); T. E. Gregory, *The Westminster Bank Through a Century* (Oxford, 1936), II, 92; SHC, DD/AY/33B; DD/SAS/C795/TN/19; DD/DP/91/8.

<sup>1224</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/155/4.

<sup>1225</sup> *Ibid.* A/EMQ/2/1; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); Gregory, *Westminster Bank*, II, 93; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889).

Stuckey's Bank opened as Stuckey and Woodland in 1812 and moved into Kinglake's premises in 1838.<sup>1226</sup> C.E. Giles designed a new building in 1857, a large banking hall lit by overhead glass lanterns was added in 1873, strongrooms in 1900 and an extension by George Oatley with a corner entrance in 1906.<sup>1227</sup> It became Stuckey's head office, they were a limited company from 1892, but in 1909 Parr's Bank took them over. By 1921 Parrs had merged with the London County and Westminster.<sup>1228</sup> The building became a Trustee Savings Bank branch in 1983 and was two cafes in 2024.<sup>1229</sup>

By 1839 the West of England and South Wales District Bank was at 3 Hammet Street, moving in 1865—6 to 40—1 Fore Street where their impressive banking hall had wainscoted and stencilled walls under a carved ceiling.<sup>1230</sup> The bank failed 7 December 1878 and the building became the Somerset County Club.<sup>1231</sup> The Wiltshire and Dorset Bank bought 4 Fore Street in 1864 but moved out in 1873, letting it to the Inland Revenue before selling to James Drayton, jeweller in 1892.<sup>1232</sup> Eventually the bank settled in 7 Fore Street but in 1915 was taken over by Lloyds, which added the domed banking hall and ran the branch until the late 1950s.<sup>1233</sup> It passed successively to Barclays and the Royal Bank of Scotland who closed it c. 2020.<sup>1234</sup>

Fox, Fowler and Company took over 32 Fore Street and 1 Hammet Street c. 1880 and c. 1890 built façades three storeys high adding an attic floor.<sup>1235</sup> In 1921 they amalgamated

<sup>1226</sup> Gregory, *Westminster Bank*, II, 90, 92; *Pigot Dir.* (1830); SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7.

<sup>1227</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/9/269, 24/1/26/1730, 24/1/27/1754; A/CAE/1/60; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—99); Orbach, *S. & W. Som.* 623.

<sup>1228</sup> Gregory, *Westminster Bank*, II, 91—2; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914); SHC, A/BCC/2/1/2—4; D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 13; A/BMG/5/1 (1938—9).

<sup>1229</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/54/919.

<sup>1230</sup> *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 41; *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); *Som. Co. Gaz.* 23 Feb. 1867; BNA accessed 16 Aug. 2022; SHC, DD/SAS/2016/51; T/PH/rea/3/119—20.

<sup>1231</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; DD/BR/mks/1.

<sup>1232</sup> Morris & Co, *Dir. Som.* (1872); SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; DD/X/CMG/1.

<sup>1233</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—1914); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/48/750; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), p. 48

<sup>1234</sup> SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 9; A/BMG/5/1 (1938—9); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), p. 370.

<sup>1235</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/SX/7; DD/CMY/404; D/DC/tau.d (M/1289), box 1; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—1914).

with Lloyds who acquired and demolished 30—2 Fore Street and 2—3 Hammet Street in 1959, causing the collapse of an adjoining store. Lloyds' 1960 building with ground floor shops remained in use in 2024. Before 1888 the Devon and Cornwall Bank rebuilt 54—5 North Street but in 1906 were taken over by Lloyds who closed the branch before 1922. The National Provincial Bank, later National Westminster, of 21 Fore Street moved c. 1912 to 50—1 North Street, which they rebuilt.<sup>1236</sup> To replace four branches National Westminster, later NatWest, destroyed 48—51 North Street c. 1972 for a large modern bank only to leave it for a large store across the road in the early 21st century.<sup>1237</sup> In 1914 the London, City and Midland Bank built a branch in North Street but in the 1970s moved into 14—16 where it remained in business as HSBC in 2024. Between 1970 and 1983 Midland had a branch in East Reach.<sup>1238</sup> Barclays had opened at 46 North Street by 1921 and before 1938 acquired 45. They remained there in 2024, but closed branches in Fore Street and Station Road.<sup>1239</sup> In c. 1916 Prudential Insurance took 21 Fore Street from National Provincial and rebuilt it. By 1938 it was Martin's bank, which closed after being taken over by Barclays in 1969.<sup>1240</sup> The District Bank occupied 32 North Street by 1959.<sup>1241</sup>

In 1817 the West Somerset Savings Bank was established in North Street.<sup>1242</sup> In 1831 Richard Carver altered a three-storey 1829 building by Vivary park for the bank. Its stuccoed, ground floor was incised to imitate ashlar and after the installation of park gates the public

<sup>1236</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—1914); Orbach, *S. & W. Som.* 626, SHC, A/DIF/79/1; A/DQO/404/16/30; A/CAE/1/14; D/B/ta/24/1/22/944, 24/1/42/555; 42/585; D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 13.

<sup>1237</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 370; SHC, DD/BSO/1; D/B/ta/3/37/3 (Mar. 1974); 24/1/15271; DD/HWN/11.

<sup>1238</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/3/3 (1912); 24/1/47/715, 24/1/211/11963; D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 13; A/BMG/5/1 (1938—9); DD/BSO/1; *Som. Business Dir.* (1983), 7.

<sup>1239</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/52/858; DD/HCK/6/2/20A/BMG/5/1 (1938—9); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 370.

<sup>1240</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/59 (14 Oct. 1916); A/BMG/5/1 (1938—9); A/DIF/101/3/55,114/12, 116/218; D//DC/tau.d (M/3252), box 1; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 370.

<sup>1241</sup> SHC, A/BMG/5/1 (1959).

<sup>1242</sup> SHC, Q/RSb/8; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 41.

entrance was moved from east to north.<sup>1243</sup> By 1904 there were 9,343 depositors and home savings boxes were distributed.<sup>1244</sup> The bank amalgamated with the Wells saving bank in 1909 and later with that of Warminster to become the Somerset and Wiltshire Savings Bank with a branch in Kingston Road by 1931.<sup>1245</sup> The Trustee Savings Bank group took on the business and c. 1970—83 had branches in Station Road and Corporation Street.<sup>1246</sup>

In 1938 seven banks had a total of 13 branches. Four banks had offices in the 1929 livestock market until 1972 and four had branches in Station Road, closed in the 1980s.<sup>1247</sup> Mergers and closures reduced the number. In 2024 most major banks maintained a branch in the town centre although Handelsbanken was based at Blackbrook business park.<sup>1248</sup>

The Second Taunton Benefit Building Society in 1847—8 implies the existence of an earlier one.<sup>1249</sup> The Taunton and Bridgwater Building Society, the Taunton and West of England Building Society, the Western Counties Permanent Benefit Building Society and the Taunton Loan Discount and Deposit Company were in existence by 1864.<sup>1250</sup> The Taunton and West of England Perpetual Benefit Building Society opened in 1857 and the Equitable Benefit Building Society in 1867 were still in existence in the 1890s. The latter survived until 1914 or later despite an absconding manager in 1899.<sup>1251</sup> By the 1970s there were branches of 11 building societies, none local, and many, some converted to banks, remained in 2024.<sup>1252</sup>

<sup>1243</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/2/8; A/DAS/2 (12356); T/PH/cwc.ta/1; Orbach, *S. and W. Som.* 624; SHC, A/DAS/2 (12356).

<sup>1244</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906); SHC, DD/TBL/71.

<sup>1245</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889); TNA, NDO 20/18, 76; SHC, A/BMG/5/1 (c. 1938—9).

<sup>1246</sup> SHC, DD/BSO/1; A/DBL/128/1; A/DIG/1.

<sup>1247</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 82—3; *Taunton Official Handbook* (1931), 63; SHC, D/DC/tau.d (M/1289, box 1); A/BMG/5/1 (c. 1938—9).

<sup>1248</sup> SHC, D/PC/stapg/7/3, p. 33.

<sup>1249</sup> Devon HC, 5982/B/L/7—9.

<sup>1250</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 42—3.

<sup>1251</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/42/9/3 (*Taunton Mail* 1 Jan. 1896, pp. 1, 4); 42/9/6 (*Taunton Mail* 21 June 1899, p. 5); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>1252</sup> SHC, D/PC/stapg/7/3, p. 33 *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 375.



The number of accountants rose from six in 1841 to c. 20 by 1891.<sup>1253</sup> There were 41 practices in 1972.<sup>1254</sup> Stockbrokers were recorded by 1845 and financial services probably employed some of the commercial clerks whose numbers rose from 11 in 1851 to 96 by 1891, when female bookkeepers were recorded.<sup>1255</sup> Insurance agents increased from 22 in 1839 to over 80 in 1939 and there were nine branch offices in 1978.<sup>1256</sup> Five firms of auctioneers were in business by 1822 rising to seven by 1859 and three had offices in the livestock market in the 20th century. One of the oldest surviving estate agencies was founded by Richard Greenslade in 1843.<sup>1257</sup> There were five house and letting agents in business by 1859, ten firms of auctioneers and estate agents by 1938 and c. 24 by 2024.<sup>1258</sup>

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

A notary public was recorded in 1466 and 1477.<sup>1259</sup> Before 1690 wealthy scrivener John Morse prepared bonds and deeds and lent money.<sup>1260</sup> The 12 scriveners and writers in business in 1841 were probably law writers and by 1871 shorthand writers worked in the courts.<sup>1261</sup> Several lawyers took apprentices from the mid 18th century including attorney John Southey who trained William Kinglake from 1785.<sup>1262</sup> Lawyers served as trustees of the market, charities and chapels. They were a close-knit group, reluctant to give evidence against a solicitor prosecuted for perjury in 1820.<sup>1263</sup> Some like William Kinglake were also

<sup>1253</sup> TNA HO 107/972; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>1254</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton*. (1972—3), 366—7.

<sup>1255</sup> *Taunton Courier* 3 Sep. 1845: BNA accessed 16 Aug. 2022; TNA, HO 107/1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 11/2366—8; RG 12/1875—7.

<sup>1256</sup> *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861); TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG; SHC, D/PC/stapg/7/3, p. 33.

<sup>1257</sup> SHC, D/WB/t/11/1, pp. 36—7; PAM2563, p. 30; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852).

<sup>1258</sup> Harrison, Harrad & Co., *Dir. Som.* (1859); SHC, A/BMG/5/1.

<sup>1259</sup> *Cal. Papal Letters XII*, p. 525; *Cat. Ancient Deeds*, II, C1786.

<sup>1260</sup> TNA, C 6/27/1/51; Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 164.

<sup>1261</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5.

<sup>1262</sup> SHC, DD/HC/6/1/1; TNA, IR 1/24, p. 213; 1/52, p. 109; 1/63, p. 160; 1/67, p. 114; 1/71, p. 41.

<sup>1263</sup> SHC, A/ADGC/3.

bankers although he sublet his law practice, offices and clerks in 1815 to a fellow attorney.<sup>1264</sup>

In 1858 his son planned to add offices and waiting rooms to his Canon Street house.<sup>1265</sup>

Barristers, solicitors and their clerks rose in numbers from 36 in 1841 to 52 in 1891. Law

clerks predominated as their employers rarely lived in town.<sup>1266</sup> Increasingly solicitors

worked in partnerships and later in large practices sharing offices and staff. There were 31

practices in 1972, many in Hammet Street where they had been since the 19th century, but

later several firms moved to Blackbrook.<sup>1267</sup> Porter Dodson and Foot Anstey of Blackbrook

Avenue succeeded the early 19th-century Beadon and Pinchard family firms respectively.<sup>1268</sup>

Barristers' chambers were established in Melville House, Middle Street c. 1978 and by 2024

there were four sets in Taunton.<sup>1269</sup>

One of the earliest recorded Taunton architects was George Hare in 1786.<sup>1270</sup> Richard Carver (1782—1862), trained by Jeffry Wyatt, designed Holy Trinity church and was county surveyor. Charles Edmund Giles (1822—81), pupil of Carver and Henry Shaw, designed 21 Somerset churches, Kings College and the Huish almshouses. Charles Samson (1837—1925) designed the former St James' vicarage and the first Viney Street factory and was followed by his son Harold (1873—1956). John Houghton Spencer (1844—1914) built St Andrew's church and schools and the Nursing Institute.<sup>1271</sup> Weston-super-Mare architect Hans Price had an office in Taunton in 1864.<sup>1272</sup> In the 1880s Edwin Howard (d. 1920) built houses at French Weir and Kilkenny and the eastern shops on The Bridge.<sup>1273</sup> From the 1890s Frederick

<sup>1264</sup> Ibid. DD/AY/33A—B.

<sup>1265</sup> Ibid. DD/RI/C1660/25.

<sup>1266</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; RG 12/1875, 1877.

<sup>1267</sup> SHC, DD/CH/128/2; Morris & Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 421—2.

<sup>1268</sup> SHC, DD/AY cat.; DD/DP cat.

<sup>1269</sup> Ibid, D/DC/tau.d/2/2/5 (23 Aug. 1977).

<sup>1270</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/178 (1800).

<sup>1271</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/52/2; VCH Office, Taunton, Lillford, 'Som. Architects and Surveyors', 103—11, 218—24, 465—72, 501—3.

<sup>1272</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 75.

<sup>1273</sup> VCH Office, Taunton, Lillford, 'Som. Architects and Surveyors', 284—6; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/12 (1884, 1921).

Roberts designed housing in Eastleigh Road and Wilton. After studying with Roberts and others Henry Stone created arts and crafts houses from 1909. In the 1930s with Eric Francis he built the moderne-style houses at Highlands, Wilton. Francis designed St Teresa's church and Leycroft almshouses. Stone and Partners was the oldest architectural practice in Taunton in 2024.<sup>1274</sup> There were eight practices from 1957 to 1972, including Michael Torrens, and c. 20 in 2022. Steel, Colman and Davis founded in 1953 and Smith Gamblin founded by Richard Shirley-Smith have left Taunton.<sup>1275</sup>

Four commercial photographers were at work by 1859 and 14 in 1891 including the Blizzard and Chaffin families.<sup>1276</sup> East Street photographer Henry Montague Cooper created postcards of working-class streets and disasters in the early 20th century.<sup>1277</sup> Bill posters were recorded from 1861 and signwriters from 1881, one of whom rented railway hoardings.<sup>1278</sup> The Taunton Bill Posting Company operated between 1929 and 1948.<sup>1279</sup> In 1957 there were three commercial photographic studios and three firms of signwriters and c. 20 photographic and c. 7 signwriting businesses in 2024. A digital innovation centre in Trenchard Way opened in 2024.<sup>1280</sup> Taxidermy was offered between 1841 and 1902.<sup>1281</sup> Registry offices for domestic servants were established by 1841 and six by 1887. At least one remained open in the 1920s.<sup>1282</sup>

<sup>1274</sup> SHC, A/AUS uncat.; D/RC/ta.g/2/5/1 (1933); Lillford, 'Som. Architects and Surveyors', 4, 454—7, 517—19.

<sup>1275</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 335, (1972—3), 368.

<sup>1276</sup> Harrison, Harrad & Co. *Dir. Som.* (1859); TNA, RG 12/1875, 1877; *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 44.

<sup>1277</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1889—1814); Chipchase, *Taunton Remembered*, passim.

<sup>1278</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 77; TNA, RG 9/1617; RG 10/2370—2; RG 11/2368; Wilts and Swindon HC, 2515/210, box 40/6, 15, box 50/12.

<sup>1279</sup> SHC, D/R/ta/34/9/3, p. 471; TNA, BT 31/33132/243088.

<sup>1280</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957).

<sup>1281</sup> *Taunton Courier* 13 Jan. 1841: BNA accessed 16 Aug. 2022; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1864), 77; (1902—3), 176, 182; SHC, A/EJF/2/1 (1887).

<sup>1282</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; SHC, DD/CPHS/50; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—1814); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 6.

In 1682 a woman left 10s. to each woman who prepared her for burial.<sup>1283</sup> Drapers in the 18th and early 19th centuries advertised a mourning coaches and hearses and ‘furnished’ funerals.<sup>1284</sup> In the late 19th century two drapers had glass hearses and c. 14 specialist undertakers were in business in 1887.<sup>1285</sup> There were at least six firms in 1972 most in business in 2024, one with a horse-drawn glass hearse.<sup>1286</sup> Early 20th-century drapery stores and specialist firms provided removals and travel arrangements, notably Pickfords who arranged passage abroad.<sup>1287</sup> There were two travel agents in the town in 1957 and despite the rise in internet booking four remained in business in 2024.<sup>1288</sup>

### Hairdressers

A barber was recorded in 1401 and several in the 17th century.<sup>1289</sup> A 1666 barber’s shop had chairs, razors, scissors, and bottles of oil and another in 1679 had 10 washbasins, 20 washballs, aprons, napkins and powder boxes.<sup>1290</sup> Wigmakers worked from the late 17th century until 1804. In the 1740s one took a girl apprentice and a peruke maker held the Lamb coffee house.<sup>1291</sup> An 1851 wigmaker presumably made wigs for women.<sup>1292</sup> For most of the 19th century hairdressing and perfumery were exclusively male. One female hairdresser was recorded in 1841 and 26 men.<sup>1293</sup> In 1887 13 businesses were recorded with at least one having baths for customers in 1900.<sup>1294</sup> In 1911 of 28 hairdressers and barbers only two were

<sup>1283</sup> SHC, DD/SP/423.

<sup>1284</sup> PSAS CXXXII (1988), 113; SHC, DD/HC/13/1—2; DD/TBL/64/5; DD/DP/58/8.

<sup>1285</sup> *Goodman’s Dir. Taunton* (1887); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 24.

<sup>1286</sup> *Kelly’s Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 392; *Living*, Oct. 2021, 58.

<sup>1287</sup> *Kelly’s Dir. Som.* (1914); Chipchase, *Taunton Revisited*, 26.

<sup>1288</sup> *Goodman’s Dir. Taunton* (1957).

<sup>1289</sup> TNA, CP 40/561, image 392: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; SHC, D/D/Ca/151; Q/RLa/1.

<sup>1290</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1666/72, 1679/25.

<sup>1291</sup> *Ibid.* D/P/tau.m/2/1/32; 13/6/1, 13/10/4; D/B/ta/31/5/1; DD/HC/6/1/1.

<sup>1292</sup> TNA, HO 107/1923.

<sup>1293</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/387/603965; TNA, IR 1/71, p. 133; HO 107/972; SHC, D/P/tau.m/23/29.

<sup>1294</sup> *Goodman’s Dir. Taunton* (1887), (1900), 160.

female and even in 1957 most of the 20 ladies' hairdressers and all the 18 men's were male.<sup>1295</sup> By 1948 there was a Taunton federation of master hairdressers and in 1972 there were 46 businesses.<sup>1296</sup> In the early 21st century there were at least two hairdressing academies and 58 salons, primarily employing women although the traditional male barber enjoyed a revival. Large numbers of beauty and tattoo parlours opened in the 2010s but many were short-lived.<sup>1297</sup>

### Laundry

Agnes le Lavender was recorded in 1316.<sup>1298</sup> Starch was made locally from the early 18th to mid 19th centuries.<sup>1299</sup> In 1841 111 laundresses were recorded but for the rest of the century there were 200—250 besides c. 50 in Bishops Hull. The Applin family laundry at Holway had seven resident laundresses, mainly family members, between 1871 and 1894 when the owners died.<sup>1300</sup> Some factories and hotels had their own laundries.<sup>1301</sup> The Somerset Sanitary Steam Laundry, built in Gladstone Street, Rowbarton c. 1899, employed 56 people in 1911.<sup>1302</sup> It cleaned carpets, collected and delivered laundry within two miles c. 1928 and invited women to inspect the premises.<sup>1303</sup> In 1964 it took over a steam-powered dyeing and cleaning business in High Street but closed in the 1970s and the laundries were demolished.<sup>1304</sup> The Taunton Priory Steam Laundry, incorporated in 1922, took over the Gloucester Street mission site but by 1932 it had passed to Finch's County Laundry and by

<sup>1295</sup> TNA, RG 14/14234—45, 14249; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957).

<sup>1296</sup> SHC, A/EOB/1 (Jan. 1948); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 394—4, 400—1.

<sup>1297</sup> VCH office, Taunton, *Taunton Town Centre Retail Survey 2018*, 37—99.

<sup>1298</sup> SHC, A/BFA/4.

<sup>1299</sup> TNA, IR 1/35, p. 107; SHC, D/P/tau.m/2/1/2 (1727); Q/AGW/1/1 (1799); DD/SP/416.

<sup>1300</sup> TNA, HO/972/1922—3; RG 9/1617—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2374—5; RG 12/1875—7; *West Somerset Free Press*. 17 Feb 1894: BNA accessed 18 Feb 2019.

<sup>1301</sup> SHC, PAM2160: R. Bush, *The Story of the County Hotel*, 18; Wilts and Swindon HC, 1075/001/396.

<sup>1302</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/42/9/3 (*Taunton Mail* 25 March, 24 June 1896, p. 4); A/EMA/2; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1897—1914); TNA, RG 14/14234—40, 14243—5, 14247, 14249.

<sup>1303</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/24/1641; 24/1/66/1256; A/BMG 5/1.

<sup>1304</sup> *Ibid.* D/DC/tau.d/25/15 (167); *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 401.

1957 was the South Western Co-operative Laundry. It closed before 1972.<sup>1305</sup> By 1957 the first self-service launderette had opened.<sup>1306</sup>

#### HOSPITALITY SERVICES [PUBLIC HOUSES AND HOTELS]

Five men sold wine in the borough in breach of the assize in 1242—3, taverners and vintners were recorded from the 14th century and the Corner inn, Fore Street in 1427—8.<sup>1307</sup> Sack, malmsey, canary and madeira were shipped in quantity through Bridgwater in the 16th and 17th centuries.<sup>1308</sup> One vintner bought *c.* 7,000 gallons of sack, Malaga and canary wine from Exeter and Lyme merchants between 1617 and 1621.<sup>1309</sup> Vintner William Lantrowe (d.1644) rebuilt the Castle Tavern, probably creating the long room over the inn and two adjoining houses still recorded in 1783.<sup>1310</sup>

Unlicenced alesellers were presented in the 1580s and in 1588 all tipplers had to have their vessels measured at the guildhall. Ale was sold in a hooped quart pot for 1*d.* and wine for ½ *d.* for home consumption, but ale cost 4*d.* by the 1660s.<sup>1311</sup> Twelve people held licences in St James' parish in 1630 and 38 in St Mary's in 1633 but many were unlicensed.<sup>1312</sup> During the Interregnum licences were refused even for existing businesses but there were six licences in 1657 in St James' parish, one for the parish clerk.<sup>1313</sup> In 1677 poverty in that parish was blamed on 'unnecessary alehouses'.<sup>1314</sup>

<sup>1305</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1923, 1939); *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1928), 138; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/25/18 (1389, 1598); D/B/ta/13/3/1, p. 386; TNA BT 31/27557/185539.

<sup>1306</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 384.

<sup>1307</sup> Chadwyck-Healey, *Som. Pleas c. 1200—1256*, p. 296; Green, *Feet of Fines 1307—4*, 22—4; TNA, CP 40/656, 685, 732 indexes: at [waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; SHC, DD/SP/325/4, 71; Hants. RO, M11/59/C1/19/3.

<sup>1308</sup> SHC, D/B/bw/1439, 1446, 1448—9, 1460—2, 1480, 1508, 1512.

<sup>1309</sup> TNA, E 134/2Jas1/Mich31 [total assumes standard measures]; SHC, DD/SF/11/1/34.

<sup>1310</sup> SHC, DD/X/MDT/393, p. 17; D/P/stapg/13/3/1; DD/CWC/ta/unlisted acc. no. G/2468; TNA, PROB 11/206/38.

<sup>1311</sup> SHC, DD/SP/36 (1589); 49 (1587—8), 44.

<sup>1312</sup> *Ibid.* Q/RLa/1 (1621), 3; DD/SP/339 (1634); Q/SR/63/111, 73/137—8.

<sup>1313</sup> *Ibid.* Q/SR/89/32, 94/101; Q/SPet/1/150; Q/RLa/7.

<sup>1314</sup> Dawes, *Quarter Sessions 1666—77*, 224.

The Three Cups, renamed London from the 1790s, had a shuffleboard chamber, and other inns had musical instruments, provided coffee or pasties, fine dining and luxuries like a rabbit fur bolster.<sup>1315</sup> In 1695 31 innkeepers, including three women, thanked Edward Clarke MP for getting soldiers' bills paid.<sup>1316</sup> By the 1720s there were 96 licensed public houses in Taunton, falling to 73 in 1793 and 58 in 1809.<sup>1317</sup> They remained a popular investment, despite being on annual licences, apart from the George and the London. A coaching inn was bought for £1,600 in 1809 and the town's wine and spirit trade was worth £20,000 a year in 1824.<sup>1318</sup> In 1828 61 licences were granted but in the 1830s millowners and the Guardians complained of the proliferation of public houses.<sup>1319</sup> By 1894 there were 76 public houses, 20 beer houses and 10 wine and spirit retailers besides private hotels, temperance hotels and coffee taverns.<sup>1320</sup>

The Salutation, several Angels, Maidenhead, Noah's Ark, Rose and Crown, Lamb, where church courts were held in 1663, Blackamoor's, Saracen's and Turk's heads, Katherine Wheel, George and Green Dragon possibly had medieval origins. The Butchers Arms, Bull, Plough, Wheat Sheave and Sugar Loaf were in the marketplace before 1769.<sup>1321</sup> Beerhouses called the Ring of Bells stood outside St Mary's and St James' churches but only the latter survives. Armorial symbols included Antelope, Unicorn, Cornish Chough, Spread Eagle, lions of various colours, and White Hart.<sup>1322</sup> Trade names included Bishop Blaise, patron saint of woolcombers, Press and Shears, Painters or Weavers Arms, Wool Pack, Brassfounders, Gardeners, Cogwheel, Packhorse and Waggoners. In the mid 19th century

<sup>1315</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1666/14, 23, 43; 1667/4; 1670/53, 1672/66, 1683/63, 1684/148, 164.

<sup>1316</sup> Ibid. DD/SF/13/2/51.

<sup>1317</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/61/9; Q/RLa/19/10, 12.

<sup>1318</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/1; D/PS/tau.b/3/1; A/AZK/1; DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1319</sup> Ibid. Q/RLa/19/15; *Royal Com. on employment of children in factories* (1833), 72; TNA, HO 73/8.

<sup>1320</sup> SHC, DD/TBL/42/9/1 (*Taunton Mail* 29 Aug. 1894, p. 5).

<sup>1321</sup> Ibid. D/B/ta/31/5/1—2; Q/RLa/19/10—12; D/D/Ca/338; W. Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough (1806), I, 96.

<sup>1322</sup> SHC, DD/DP/71/5; Q/RLa/19/10—11.

three East Reach public houses were called the Waggon and Horses.<sup>1323</sup> Patriotism was reflected in alehouses called the King George, Queen Caroline, King and Queen, Victoria, Prince Albert, Princess Royal, Alma, Duke of Wellington, Naval and Military, Nelson, Royal Marine and Waterloo.<sup>1324</sup>

Among the coaching inns was the White Hart, Fore Street, which had elaborately wainscoted rooms in 1653 and was used for judicial hearings. Colonel Kirke reputedly hanged a rebel from the sign in 1685.<sup>1325</sup> It achieved further notoriety by association with Frederick and Maria Manning in the 1840s and was rebuilt as a furniture shop in the 1860s.<sup>1326</sup> The Castle was a substantial business, insured for £1,300 in 1801 and changing hands for £3,000 c. 1810 shortly before entertaining the exiled Queen Maria II of Portugal.<sup>1327</sup> Central inns were used by carriers and from the 1850s by omnibuses,<sup>1328</sup> provided ‘market dining rooms’, stabling and newspapers, hosted auctions and sales, advertised events, distributed handbills and hired out vehicles and horses.<sup>1329</sup> Apart from a few family businesses such as the Scarletts’ Nag’s Head, the Tites’ Spread Eagle and the Handels’ New inn, Trinity Street, public houses changed hands frequently sometimes annually.<sup>1330</sup> Roadside public houses probably served poorer travellers, some beerhouses were involved in gambling and prostitution and many provided take-away or jug and bottle services, skittle alleys, clubrooms and cheap lodgings.<sup>1331</sup>

<sup>1323</sup> Ibid. Q/RLa/19/10; DD/SP/61/9; DD/SAS/C795/TN/41(Extra Portam); D/DC/tau.d/25/13 (1366); T/PH/up/1; *Pigot Dir.* (1842).

<sup>1324</sup> SHC, Q/RLa/19/12—13, 15; A/CHM/5; Morris & Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872); TNA, RG 12/1877.

<sup>1325</sup> North Devon RO, 1142B/FP71; SHC, T/PH/vch/39; Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 541.

<sup>1326</sup> North Devon RO, 1142B/EC97.

<sup>1327</sup> J. H. Thomas, ‘Economy and Society in 18th-century Somerset’, *PSAS CXLI* (1998), 72; SHC, DD/AY/29; Goldsworthy, *Recollections*, 12n.

<sup>1328</sup> *Pigot Dir.* (1830); *Slater’s Dir. Som.* (1852); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861); *Kelly’s Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>1329</sup> Ibid. DD/DP/117; DD/SAS/C2273/3/12, pp. 55, 100; DD/X/MIS/1; Wilts and Swindon HC, 1075/001/396.

<sup>1330</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/3/2; DD/DP/43/17; D/DC/tau.d/25/13 (1391); Q/LIC/1/5.

<sup>1331</sup> Ibid. tithe awards, St James, St Mary; D/PS/tau.b/3/1; Q/LIC/1/5; A/BUG/1/28/59; *Taunton Courier*, 10 June 1868, 29 March 1882: BNA, accessed 16 Mar. 2017.



During the 19th century beerhouses opened in residential areas or to serve canal and railway workers.<sup>1332</sup> In the late 19th century breweries paid high prices to tie houses.<sup>1333</sup> By 1903 there were 98 on and 14 off licences in the borough, one for every 188 people, many in poor condition, difficult to police and dependent on lodgers and in 1915 only 85 licences were renewed. After the war consumption in public houses doubled especially in suburban beerhouses.<sup>1334</sup> In 1937 of 99 borough licences 79 were for beerhouses, some selling below 50 barrels of beer annually when 140 barrels was considered poor trade.<sup>1335</sup> A few became licensed restaurants or provided games rooms, meals and women's toilets to increase trade.<sup>1336</sup> From the mid 20th century public houses moved from clearance areas to housing estates but some notably the Master Thatcher on Lisieux Way were new businesses and off-licences and private bars increased.<sup>1337</sup>

Most older inns have been demolished or rebuilt like the Phoenix, which had galleried courtyards until the mid 19th century.<sup>1338</sup> Some former inns in East Reach preserve their carriage entrances and the Racehorse is a surviving long narrow burgage inn. Taunton had no 'gin palaces', although there were three gin shops in 1840. Its licensed premises were usually modest but in the late 20th century retail stores and public buildings became large public houses.<sup>1339</sup>

## Hotels

<sup>1332</sup> SHC, T/PH/up/1; SAS/C795/SX/7; D/PS/ta.b/3/1; TNA, RG 9/1617—18, RG 12/1877; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883—1914); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 50.

<sup>1333</sup> Wilts and Swindon HC, 1075/001/396; SHC, A/BUG/1/26/2—3; D/PS/ta.b/3/1; DD/TBL/42/9/4 (*Taunton Mail* 7 March 1897, p. 4).

<sup>1334</sup> SHC, Q/SR/810/2; Q/LIC/1/5; A/DIF/95/32; DD/HCK/6/2/20.

<sup>1335</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 3 July 1937; BNA, accessed 27 Sep. 2016; SHC, Q/LIC/1/3—5.

<sup>1336</sup> SHC, Q/LIC/1/3; A/BUG/1/24/18, 1/28/61; A/BIL/52/1.

<sup>1337</sup> *Ibid.* C/PL/2/25, p. 6; Q/LIC/1/3; D/DC/tau.d/2/2/25, 25/7; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton.* (1972—3).

<sup>1338</sup> Goldsworthy, *Recollections*, 7. 11.

<sup>1339</sup> SHC, DD/X/WBB/27 (map 1840).

In the later 16th century a goldsmith obtained lodgings for visitors.<sup>1340</sup> Many 17th-century inns provided high-class accommodation and by the 19th century the Castle and London, later County, were increasingly run as private hotels. Each had 13 resident staff in 1881, as accommodating guests, hosting dinners and private functions became more important than selling alcohol.<sup>1341</sup> The London expanded over adjoining shops and its façade, 1856 porch and a few internal feature survived its closure.<sup>1342</sup> In 1891 eight licensees described themselves as hotelkeepers and employed porters, chambermaids and boots.<sup>1343</sup> Temperance hotels opened from the 1840s in Hammet Street and Station Road.<sup>1344</sup> The Great Western Hotel and station refreshment rooms, divided into three classes, were let in 1882 for £468.<sup>1345</sup> The Parade Hotel, North Street opened in the 1890s followed in the 20th century by several hotels that had never been public houses. However, by 2024 most hotels were on major roads and near the motorway.<sup>1346</sup>

Private lodgings varied from respectable houses with servants around Station Road to overcrowded and dangerous dosshouses in East Reach.<sup>1347</sup> In 1939 there were at least 40 boarding house but hundreds of private houses had lodgers.<sup>1348</sup> Later guesthouses catered for motorists especially on Wellington Road. In 1988 national and international visitors complained of the weather, lack of toilets, poor bus services, dirty, overcrowded streets and traffic.<sup>1349</sup>

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<sup>1340</sup> Siraut, *Trevelyan Letters* (Taunton, 1990), 33.

<sup>1341</sup> TNA, RG 11/2366.

<sup>1342</sup> SHC, A/DAS/2 (12336—8, 12364).

<sup>1343</sup> TNA, RG 12/1875, 1877.

<sup>1344</sup> *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1902—3), 205; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/26/1702, 1725, 24/1/27/1777; DD/DP/63/2.

<sup>1345</sup> SHC, DD/CH/118/5.

<sup>1346</sup> TNA, RG 13/2278; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/118/4992, 24/1/128/6468; DD/HWN/11.

<sup>1347</sup> TNA, HO 107/1972; RG 9/1817—18; RG 10/2370—2, 2370—5; RG 11/2366—8; SHC, D/B/ta/2/1/3, 366; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1914).

<sup>1348</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>1349</sup> SHC, C/ENPR/28.

### Coffee and eating houses

In 1683 a lavishly furnished inn had a coffee house chamber.<sup>1350</sup> Coffee houses included the Plough by 1698—9 and the Lamb, both demolished in 1769. The Market House coffee room was for subscribers only. There were coffee stalls in the market by 1845 and eight coffee houses by 1872.<sup>1351</sup> In 1877 the Taunton and West Somerset Coffee House Company was created, opening the Paul Street Coffee Tavern in 1880 and a hotel, later King Alfred, in 1881. By 1885 there were three coffee taverns in High Street.<sup>1352</sup> In the late 20th century coffee shops became popular again.

Cooked food, often at tripe shops, was exempt from the market's meat monopoly.<sup>1353</sup> Eating houses and refreshment rooms increased to c. 15 in 1891 and confectioners catered for meals on and off their premises including Maynard's, who succeeded Wickenden's before 1852 at 19 North Street.<sup>1354</sup> A shop advertised cheap meals in 1890 and by the 1900s there were tearooms in the principal streets.<sup>1355</sup> The 1922 art deco Deller's, in the rebuilt Tone Bridge House, had a dance floor and an upstairs supper room with elaborate plasterwork but in the late 20th century became a night club.<sup>1356</sup> In 1890 there was an oyster saloon in North Street and by 1914 there were at least five fried fish shops and more opened in the 1920s.<sup>1357</sup> Some, notably in St James Street, survived into the 21st century despite competition from other take-away food businesses and ethnic cafes.<sup>1358</sup>

<sup>1350</sup> SHC, DD/SP/1683/63; *Cal. SP. Dom.* Jul.—Sep. 1683, 77.

<sup>1351</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/4, p. 404; Morris & Co. *Dir. Som.* (1872).

<sup>1352</sup> Minnitt and Young, *Tickets, Checks and Passes from Som.*, 19—20; Goodman's *Dir. Taunton* (1887); SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/19/765; A/DIF/101/10/198; D/DC/tau,d/25/15 (1685).

<sup>1353</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/22; *Royal Com. On Market Rights and Tolls* (1888), III, p. 253.

<sup>1354</sup> TNA, RG 12/1875, 1877; Slater's *Dir. Som.* (1852); Goodman's *Dir. Taunton* (1864), 80; SHC, A/DWX/5/14.

<sup>1355</sup> *Industrial Great Britain* (c. 1890), 237; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/27/1798, 24/1/65/1234.

<sup>1356</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/53/890.

<sup>1357</sup> *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 47; Kelly's *Dir. Som.* (1914); SHC, D/B/ta/4/2/3 (Apr. 1921); D/B/ta/24/1/52/863, 865.

<sup>1358</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/69/1369; DD/AY/159.

## ROAD TRANSPORT SERVICES

### Coaches

Stagecoaches operated between Taunton and London by the later 17th century using inns called the Saracen's Head at each end for £1 16s. inside and a free luggage allowance of 14 lb. A private hire coach from Salisbury to Taunton cost £6 in the 1690s. John Whitmash and Thomas Lilley operated 'flying machines' in the early 18th century taking two days to London via Salisbury.<sup>1359</sup> By 1786 daily diligence services to London, Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Plymouth, set down and picked up passengers at the Duke William in East Reach and by 1809 there was a thrice weekly coach to Bridgwater and Barnstaple.<sup>1360</sup> By 1814 there was a Bath and Taunton coach house in Aldersgate Street, London.<sup>1361</sup> In 1822 the *Royal Mail* and two other coaches came from London daily, three went to Bristol, four to Exeter and one each to Bath and Bridport. The *Traveller* left every night for Liverpool via Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester.<sup>1362</sup> By 1824 stagecoaches and posting were worth £20,000 a year to Taunton.<sup>1363</sup> Lighter coaches cut journey times. In 1833 the Bath Coach Company retimed its Bath to Exeter via Taunton coach to take ten hours, the Whitmash coach reached London within a day by 1834, in 1836 the *Magnet* ran daily to Southampton and in 1840 *The Little Wonder* reached Exeter in four hours. Edward Whitmash's *Railway* met the line as it progressed to Bridgwater but he gave up coaching when the line reached Taunton.<sup>1364</sup> *The Fairy*, one of the last coaches, linked Taunton with Langport and Yeovil in the 1850s.<sup>1365</sup>

<sup>1359</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 603; *Cal. SP Dom.* 1680—1, p. 492; A. Humphries, *Som Parishes*, 672; SHC, DD/X/WHI/1c; DD/X/WBB/1100.

<sup>1360</sup> SHC, A/DAS/2 (12366); DD/HC/8/19/2, 96/8; *The Universal British Directory* (c. 1798), IV, 585—6; Devon, HC, 3321M/3.

<sup>1361</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, 11936/462/889996.

<sup>1362</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 606—8; SHC, Q/SCS, loose advert, missing 2019; Pigot, *London and Provincial Dir.* (1822—3).

<sup>1363</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/BA/9/7 (1824).

<sup>1364</sup> D. Gerhold, 'The Whitmash family...1685—1848', *PSAS*, CXLIII, 127—8; SHC, DD/DP/54/3 (2); A/BQG/4/11; DD/X/WBB/688; *Pigot Dir.* (1842); SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/4, acct. 1843.

<sup>1365</sup> *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); *VCH Som.* III, 19.

## Carriers

Two loaders were recorded in 1420 and carriers from the later 16th century.<sup>1366</sup> In 1606 and 1617 four carriers to London were accused of starting work on Sundays. Most used packhorses but some had carts.<sup>1367</sup> Carrier John Bobbett, issued tokens, two inns had carriers' chambers in the later 17th century and in 1699 a carrier was entrusted with £500 in gold for a Taunton trader.<sup>1368</sup> By then caravans were on the roads regularly and in the mid 18th century there was a weekly waggon service to London but one waggon proprietor went bankrupt in the 1770s.<sup>1369</sup>

In 1685 John Whitmash established his business between North Street and Whirligig Lane, where it remained until c. 1842, had a London warehouse and in 1724 left at least four waggons and over 30 horses to his wife and son John.<sup>1370</sup> The younger John (d. 1769) started coaching and in 1782 his sons bought the Saracen's Head.<sup>1371</sup> Maria Whitmash ran the business in the 1820s and 1830s sending waggons and fly vans to London on alternate days and to Yeovil, west Somerset and north Devon. Between 1758 and 1842 the Parsons and Brice families ran a carrier's yard west of Paul Street.<sup>1372</sup> A driver had seven guineas a year, a frock and accommodation expenses for carrying between Taunton and Exeter up to three times a week in the 1790s when ten carriers operated on the major routes.<sup>1373</sup> In 1828 Snell and Company's flying waggons left London for Taunton every Friday.<sup>1374</sup> Local services were slow; in the early 19th century an overnight waggon from Crewkerne to Taunton (28 miles)

<sup>1366</sup> TNA, CP 40/636, images 33, 1342; 1352, image 977; 1374, image 413: [www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40](http://www.waalt.uh.edu/index.php/CP40) accessed May 2021; Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 89.

<sup>1367</sup> SHC, D/D/Ca/151, 206, 342a; Q/SR/300/120; D/B/bw/1429.

<sup>1368</sup> Ibid. DD/SP/1666/14, 1695/19; DD/DN/463 (1699); Williamson, *Trade Tokens*, 987.

<sup>1369</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 606—8; BL, 1881.c.6 (93); SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/22.

<sup>1370</sup> SHC, DD/DP/9/1 (1726); D/P/tau.m/4/3/10 (1839); DD/AY/75; DD/X/WHI/1c—d; TNA, PROB 11/600/18; *Pigot Dir.* (1842).

<sup>1371</sup> Gerhold, 'The Whitmash family', 119; SHC, DD/X/HOR/1.

<sup>1372</sup> SHC, DD/SAS/C795/PR/463/2; D/DC/tau.d/25/15 (1200); *Pigot Dir.* (1830, 1842); Siraut, 'Farming account book', *PSAS CXXIX* (1985), 167.

<sup>1373</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/3/5; *The Universal British Directory* (c. 1798), IV, 586.

<sup>1374</sup> SHC, A/DZE/7.

took eight hours.<sup>1375</sup> By the 1860s c. 20 carriers took goods to and from the station and weekly to villages and towns in Somerset, Devon and Dorset.<sup>1376</sup> Horse-drawn drays were still used in the 1930s but in 1939 only seven carters were resident compared with over 270 van and lorry drivers.<sup>1377</sup>

## Buses

The first buses in the 1840s were probably owned by hotels. Drivers and conductors were recorded from 1851. In the 1860s the Taunton Omnibus Company had an office in Cheapside and until 1878 parked its buses on Castle Green. There were weekly omnibuses from Williton and Wiveliscombe on Saturdays but the main route was from the town centre to the railway station.<sup>1378</sup> The 6d. fare in 1890 was only half that of a cab and the buses resembled elongated hansoms. Rural omnibuses were slow, open wagons with side benches and in 1887 the Bishops Lydeard ‘Punctuality’ took an hour for the five mile journey.<sup>1379</sup> The council licensed 16 omnibuses in 1897.<sup>1380</sup>

The Parade Hotel’s *Klondyke* of 1898, a small double decker in the style of a stage coach, was short-lived but in 1908 the Castle hotel had three buses and the London two.<sup>1381</sup>

Trams were cheaper, quicker, carried many more people and had a longer route.<sup>1382</sup>

Taunton’s first motor bus, built in 1913 and resembling a large car, was by 1918 the only bus in the borough.<sup>1383</sup> Following the loss of the trams in 1921 the council ran two subsidised bus routes for a year but buses only held 16 to 21 people. The National Omnibus Company ran

<sup>1375</sup> Goldsworthy, *Recollections*, 29—30.

<sup>1376</sup> *PO Dir. Som.* (1861); Goodman, *Dir. Taunton* (1864), 45—7; *Taunton of Today* (1896), 21—2.

<sup>1377</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>1378</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/18/714, 31/1/7, pp. 346, 406; TNA, HO 107/1972; *Slater’s Dir. Som.* (1852); *PO Dir. Som.* (1861).

<sup>1379</sup> BL, Add MS 30293, Parade c. 1850; SHC, A/DIF/79/2; Goodman’s *Dir. Taunton* (1887), 73; *Taunton and West Somerset Annual 1897* (Taunton, 1896), 110, 129.

<sup>1380</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/6/1 (Jan. 1897).

<sup>1381</sup> *Ibid.* A/DIF/101/14/271; D/B/ta/4/6/2 (Jan. 1907); C/E/1/162, 14 Jan. 1908.

<sup>1382</sup> *Ibid.* D/DC tau.d/24/4/4; above intro.

<sup>1383</sup> SHC, A/DIF/101/5/102; D/B/ta/4/6/3 (Jan. 1918).

five routes from its Corporation Street ticket office and from 1929 used the former Dunns Services' depot in Hamilton Road, still in use in 2024.<sup>1384</sup> In 1933 three bus companies used 11 bays round the Parade. Single deckers served towns and villages as far as Sidmouth, Devon.<sup>1385</sup> By 1939 c. 70 Taunton men worked on the buses.<sup>1386</sup> In 1926 Cosy Coach Services ran between Taunton, Watchet and Minehead.<sup>1387</sup> In the 1930s Associated Motorways had a coach park in Billet Street.<sup>1388</sup>

In the 1950s there were frequent bus services but by the 1970s the county council subsidized them by £300,000 annually, there were few evening or Sunday services and some town routes halved their frequency in four years. Kingston Road had 52 buses on weekdays in the early 1970s but only 28 in 1977 and four each way in 2021.<sup>1389</sup> Town shuttle buses, introduced in the 1980s, were soon replaced by standard single deckers and remaining routes had their numbers changed from triple to double digits, single for town services. Following de-regulation First, through its subsidiary Buses of Somerset, Hatch Green, Webbers, Berry's and National provided services but by the early 21st century many estates and villages had no buses. A park and ride service connected car parks on the western and eastern outskirts with the town centre.<sup>1390</sup> When the bus station closed in 2020 buses stood on the Parade, Corporation Street and Castle Way and many coaches used Blackbrook Way.

### Private transport services

The Castle hotel's posting yard employed postboys, horse keepers and chaise washers who worked up to 17 hours a day in summer in 1826.<sup>1391</sup> The numbers employed in all forms of

<sup>1384</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 18, 73; SHC, D/B/ta/3/16/2, p. 257; 3/16/4, pp. 128, 134; 4/6/3 (Apr. 1921); 24/1/51/825, 834; 24/1/70/1394; 24/1/89/1970; DD/HCK/6/2/20.

<sup>1385</sup> SHC, A/DVY/1; A/BMG/5/2; DD/S/FRI/12, no. 86822.

<sup>1386</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>1387</sup> SHC, DD/AY/237

<sup>1388</sup> *Ibid.* D/B/ta/24/1/92/2050, 24/1/94/2089; DD/cwc.ta/16.

<sup>1389</sup> *Ibid.* 1962—3 bus map in Somerset Regional Report; DD/X/ROW/1; D/PC/stapg/7/3, pp. 68—9.

<sup>1390</sup> *Ibid.* D/DC/tau/2/2/3 (Aug. 1975); 2/2/13 (3 Oct. 1985); D/PC/stapg/7/3, pp. 68—9.

<sup>1391</sup> *Ibid.* DD/X/BRO/2/3.

horse transport increased from *c.* 90 in 1841 to over 170 in 1891 and 1901, mainly waggoners, coachmen, bus and cab drivers and livery stable staff.<sup>1392</sup> The largest livery business, begun by James White *c.* 1850 in Silver Street, hired out carriages and hearses and ran omnibuses. Its successor, the Thomas Posting Establishment, supplied 40 horses for the council, gas and electricity works in 1918 and charabancs and taxis.<sup>1393</sup> A farrier bled horses in 1595.<sup>1394</sup> There was a veterinary practice in Castle Green by 1830, in East Street by 1839 and in Bridge Street by 1852. Robert Gibbs had an equine infirmary and was the county veterinary inspector by 1899. The Bridge Street practice continued until the early 21st century when there were eight.<sup>1395</sup>

Eleven sedan chairs could be hired in 1822 and one was still used in 1859 although by then bath chairs were available.<sup>1396</sup> Carriages and cabs were moved *c.* 1880 to the Parade, hansoms on the east and landaus or broughams on the west.<sup>1397</sup> In 1895 22 cabmen petitioned for a shelter and one was installed at the station *c.* 1896 and later another at the Parade.<sup>1398</sup> The borough licensed 42 cabs in 1897 and 36 cab stands but by 1908 only eight hansoms and 12 landaus were licensed, half operated by owner drivers.<sup>1399</sup> In 1909 the first motor taxicab was licensed and by 1916 there were 13 and only four horse cabs. From 1920 all cabs had to have meters.<sup>1400</sup> There were at least eight taxi and car hire firms in business in 1972, and 28

<sup>1392</sup> TNA, HO 107/972; RG 12/1875, 1877; RG 13/2276—8.

<sup>1393</sup> SHC, D/P/tau.m/4/4/1; D/B/ta/24/1/8/236. *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 40; SHC, D/PC/b.hl/2/1 (1918).

<sup>1394</sup> SHC, DD/SP/49 (May 1595).

<sup>1395</sup> Bishops Hull, forthcoming; *Robson's Dir. Som.* (1839); *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); *Where to Buy: Taunton* (1890), 34, 42; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1899).

<sup>1396</sup> Toulmin, *Hist. Taunton*, rev. Savage, 608; *SDNQ*, XXXIII, pp. 86—7; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852); TNA, RG 9/1671; RG 11/2366—7; *Goodman's Dir. Taunton* (1887). One sedan chair is in the Museum of Somerset.

<sup>1397</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/31/1/7, pp. 412, 414, 438, 457, 533; T/PH/rea/3/33; A/DIF/101/3/53.

<sup>1398</sup> *Ibid.* DD/TBL/42/9/2 (*Taunton Mail* 18 Dec 1895, p. 4); Wilts and Swindon HC, 2515/210, box 89/4.

<sup>1399</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/4/6/1 (Jan. 1897), 4/6/2 (Feb. 1897); C/E/1/162, 14 Jan 1908.

<sup>1400</sup> *Ibid.* D/B/ta/3/13/13, p. 199; 4/6/2 (Feb. 1909), 4/6/3 (Jan. 1916, Jan. 1920).



cabs were licensed in 1976. In 2024 ranks in the main streets were served by firms and independent drivers.<sup>1401</sup>

The petrol trade was established before 1896 when 16 licences were issued.<sup>1402</sup> Power Petroleum hired out pumps and storage tanks to garage owners.<sup>1403</sup> Two petrol companies had their own railway sidings in the 1930s and several had storage in Canal or nearby roads.<sup>1404</sup> In 1941 72 business were licensed to store 100 to 50,000 gallons.<sup>1405</sup> Stones' of Staplegrove Road hired out cars from c. 1903 until a fire destroyed the business in 1907.<sup>1406</sup> Salerooms opened, although some went bankrupt during the 1930s, and carriage workshops, stableyards and smithies became motor repair businesses.<sup>1407</sup> Small garages opened in backyards and by 1939 at least 160 residents worked as salesmen and mechanics. From the late 20th century supermarkets built fuel stations, large dealers and workshops moved to arterial roads and many independent fuel retailers and repairers closed.<sup>1408</sup> A female driving instructor was in business in 1939, by 1957 there were four driving schools and c. 15 in 2024.<sup>1409</sup> The test centre was at Belvedere Road until 1988 and eventually moved to Crown Close.<sup>1410</sup>

<sup>1401</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 377, 418; SHC, D/DC/tau/2/2/4 (10 Dec. 1975).

<sup>1402</sup> TNA, RG 11/2366; SHC, D/B/ta/4/6/1 (Jan 1896).

<sup>1403</sup> SHC, DD/AY/331

<sup>1404</sup> TNA, RAIL 788/983; SHC, D/B/ta/3/25/4, p. 126, 24/1/55/954, 24/1/57/1022, 24/1/61/1106, 24/1/71/1463, 24/1/73/1485, 24/1/94/2083; A/EHL/1.

<sup>1405</sup> SHC, D/B/ta/3/13/13, pp. 200—1.

<sup>1406</sup> *Ibid.* A/CAE/1/18, 26, 28, 42, 53, 61; *Taunton Courier*, 8 Jan. 1908, 4 Mar. 1908; BNA accessed 2 Sep. 2021.

<sup>1407</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1931, 1939); SHC, D/CC/ta/7/52, 96; A/CHM/1—3, 8—9; DD/TBL/75; DD/X/SML/8, p. 19.

<sup>1408</sup> *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1929), 48, 75; TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOOA—WOPG.

<sup>1409</sup> TNA, RG 101/305/1/WOPD, p. 9; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), 398; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1972—3), 409.

<sup>1410</sup> SHC, D/DC/tau.d/2/2/16 (6 Sep.).