

Economic History

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Agriculture

The parish of Chipping Sodbury had little agricultural land, although the inhabitants enjoyed access to pasture land in the neighbouring parish of Old Sodbury.¹ A 1795 survey of the parish recorded *c.*55 a. of land was farmed within the parish, lying to the south and east of the high street, of which *c.*2 a. was arable land.² It was estimated by the tithe commissioner in 1850 that there was 30 a. of gardens and another 30 a. of agricultural land divided between about 50 crofts.³ There was *c.*50 a. of agricultural land in 1867, of which slightly more than 4 a. were sown with wheat, 10 a. with potatoes, and another 2 a. with beans, peas, root vegetables, and vetches. Twenty-five inhabitants maintained a total of 12 head of cattle, 36 sheep, and 70 pigs.⁴ In 1900 $\frac{1}{2}$ a. was sown with potatoes, and another $3\frac{1}{2}$ a. was under grass in rotation; *c.*27 a. more was under permanent grass and there was *c.*1 a. of orchards. The nine occupiers of this land kept 37 head of cattle of all ages, 28 sheep and five lambs, and 17 pigs.⁵

Following the First World War, the agricultural land within the parish was reduced by the development of the town, in particular through the building of new houses.⁶ The two ridings held by the town trust charity on behalf of the townspeople provided access to land for grazing and mowing outside the boundaries of the parish.⁷ By 1925 the amount of land farmed within the parish had fallen to *c.*27 a., none of which was arable; *c.*2 a. were occupied with orchards, predominantly for apples, although plums and pears were also grown. Of the remaining land, 14 a. was for mowing and *c.*10 a. for grazing. Consequently the number of livestock kept within the parish fell significantly, with a total of 11 horses, three cows and one pig recorded. Of the eight holdings within the parish, six were smaller than 5 a. in size, and none exceeded 20 a. in total.⁸ On the eve of the Second World War the size of the orchard land had fallen below an acre, and the remaining *c.*20 a. of agricultural land was under grass, of which 18 a. was intended for grazing. Despite this, the number of horses and cows kept in the parish fell to six and one respectively, although there was an increase in the number of sheep and pigs to 24 (including six lambs) and 22 respectively.⁹ Following the Second World War, much of the remaining undeveloped land within the ancient parish boundaries was acquired for new building.

¹ See Commons.

² GA, D2071/R32.

³ TNA, IR 18/2673.

⁴ TNA, MAF 68/127 (11).

⁵ TNA, MAF 68/1837 (5).

⁶ See Landscape, Settlement, and Buildings.

⁷ See Commons.

⁸ TNA, MAF 68/3241 (18).

⁹ TNA, MAF 68/3867.

Commons

In conjunction with neighbouring parishes the inhabitants of Chipping Sodbury had common of pasture in the two large commons of Horwood and Kingrove.¹⁰ They also shared common rights with the inhabitants of Old Sodbury in Gaunt's Field during the summer months, although it was held in private hands for the remainder of the year.¹¹ In the 17th century there were numerous disputes concerning the right of common belonging to the townspeople. In 1636 the bailiff, claiming the authority of an ancient deed, led a number of his neighbours in breaking the hedges of Gaunts Field on Lammas Eve, causing the owner of the field to sue for trespass and the value of the hay eaten by the townsmen's cattle.¹² The inhabitants still claimed common rights in Gaunt's Field in the late 19th century, when the field was thrown open on 10 August for a whole year, held in severalty for the following 12 months, and thrown open in the third year between 10 August and 10 February, and held in severalty again until 10 August.¹³

The townsmen also held two large pasture grounds lying to the north of the borough called the Mead Riding and the Stub Riding. Although held exclusively for the use of the inhabitants of Chipping Sodbury, they lay within the manor of Old Sodbury and the bailiff paid £5 a year as rent to the lord of the manor for their use.¹⁴ The Stub Riding was stocked from Holyrood Day (3 May) until All Saints Day (1 November), when the cattle were moved into the Mead Riding. After that date, the bailiff was entitled to take any sheep, cattle or horses into the Stub Riding, receiving 2d. per beast.¹⁵ The Mead Riding was enclosed at Candlemas and the Stub Riding within a month afterwards, and they were kept closed until after the hay was mowed.¹⁶

The smaller Stub Riding, comprising 90 a. in 1795,¹⁷ was used as summer pasture for up to 60 head of cattle. Each year the bailiffs and burgesses nominated 60 persons who would each be entitled to pasture one cow in the riding for the ensuing year.¹⁸ By the late 19th century pasture rights in the Stub Riding were called spring stems. A fixed payment of 3s. 6d secured the right to pasture one horse, one cow, or five sheep in the Stub riding between 20 May and 10 September each year.¹⁹ Stems were allocated by the bailiff and the burgesses every year to resident householders, who had lived within the town for at least three years. Many residents, particularly those with no animals of their own, sold their rights to others, although non-residents had the right to pasture a horse or sheep. Occasionally the corporation sold some or all of the stems by public auction in order to

¹⁰ See Old Sodbury, Economic History.

¹¹ GA, D2071/L1, 3, 9.

¹² GA, D2071/L9.

¹³ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 30.

¹⁴ GA, D2071/L6.

¹⁵ GA, D2071/L6.

¹⁶ GA, D2071/L1.

¹⁷ GA, D2071/R32.

¹⁸ GA, D2071/L6, 10.

¹⁹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 25.

raise funds for public work, such as draining the pasture or repairing the town hall.²⁰ In the late 19th century each member of the corporation would keep a list of applicants for stems, and on the day on which the stems were distributed each burgess would nominate a recipient in turn, usually without any objection, until all of the stems had been distributed.²¹ The burgesses and their widows claimed the right of receiving one spring stem every year for the terms of their lives, and the hayward was entitled to one spring stem every year during his term of office.²²

The larger Mead Riding, comprising 109 a. in 1795,²³ was divided into 83 portions, called acres although they measured larger than a statute acre. These were allocated to individual inhabitants of the town at the nomination of the bailiff and burgesses.²⁴ These acres were to be held for life, and could not be bought and sold, although they could be inherited by widows, who retained them for their own life so long as they remained resident within the town. No-one could hold more than two acres. Vacant acres were to be reallocated immediately, with priority to be given to any burgess who did not already hold an acre.²⁵ Former bailiffs and under-bailiffs who did not already hold an acre were given first preference whenever a vacancy occurred, after which remaining acres were usually distributed according to the poverty and need of the applicants, although accusations of partiality and nepotism were also levelled at the corporation.²⁶ Should money or gifts be offered in exchange for a vacant acre the grant was to be voided.²⁷ Despite this, there was evidently a healthy trade in acres during the 16th century, with a number of townsmen offering money, cloth or beasts for the land.²⁸ By an order of 1585 any bailiff who granted an acre in return for money or goods would be subject to a fine of £10, to be paid to the town masters, and be stripped of all of his rights as a townsman.²⁹ In 1869 it was decided that possession of an acre constituted a freehold estate, and entitled the holder of an acre to vote.³⁰

The acres were held separately from 16 December until 31 August. The Mead Riding was then stemmed in the same manner as the Stub Riding from 10 September to 15 October each year, called fall stems, upon the payment of 1s. 6d. as a fixed due by each recipient.³¹ Every former bailiff was entitled to claim two fall stems each year for the duration of his life and that of his widow, and the hayward was entitled to one fall stem

²⁰ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 25.

²¹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 9.

²² TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 25.

²³ GA, D2071/R32.

²⁴ See Local Government.

²⁵ GA, D2071/L3.

²⁶ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 9.

²⁷ GA, D2071/L3.

²⁸ GA, D2071/B4.

²⁹ GA, D2071/L3.

³⁰ *Trenfield v. Lowe* (1869), LR IV, CP 454.

³¹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 26.

each year during his service.³² The inhabitants of the borough claimed common of pasture without limit for all animals except pigs and geese in both ridings from 15 October to 15 December each year, upon payment of 2*d.* per animal into the bailiff's fund. In 1894 a total of 271 head of cattle were turned into the ridings during this period.³³ In 1776 the grazing rights for both ridings between Candlemas (2 February) and Lady Day (25 March) were let by the borough for seven years, the tenant agreeing to stock them only with sheep during this period,³⁴ and the practice continued in the late 19th century.³⁵ Occasionally other grazing rights were also sold by auction to raise funds for public uses. Thirty spring stems and 42 fall stems were auctioned in 1873 to pay for the fencing of the Stub Riding where it bordered the turnpike road, which was to be disturnpiked and the gates removed later in that year.³⁶

During the 16th century the inhabitants of Chipping Sodbury found cheaper pasture at Old Sodbury park, necessitating the bailiffs to take cattle and horses into the ridings from the neighbouring parishes.³⁷ In 1600 the court leet clarified that undertenants could not exercise their landlord's right to pasture.³⁸ An order of 1583 restricted the right to pasture in the ridings to individuals who had inhabited the town for at least seven years, unless they were made a burgess before this time.³⁹ In 1663 the right of pasture was restricted to those who had inhabited within the town for 21 years, but this was reduced to 14 years in 1704,⁴⁰ and to five years in 1853.⁴¹ It was reduced still further to three years in 1879, but was also restricted to householders.⁴² Those with a cow in the riding were to do one day of work cutting down the thorns and stubs growing there, but this was commuted in 1619 for a payment to the bailiff of 8*d.* per beast.⁴³ They were also to bring one load of dung into the riding for each cow pastured there to improve the soil.⁴⁴ Those who failed to bring dung were to be excluded from the ridings for seven years.⁴⁵ Regulations prohibited pasturing animals in the ridings for short spells of time or if their milk was sold at the market, preventing the use of the ridings by drovers or dairy farmers.⁴⁶ In the late 19th century it was reported that the abundant access to pasture within the town encouraged hauliers to move to the town.⁴⁷

³² TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 27.

³³ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 25.

³⁴ GA, D2071/B6, 19 Jan. 1776.

³⁵ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, Appendix D, 34.

³⁶ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, Appendix D, 38.

³⁷ GA, D2071/L10.

³⁸ GA, D2071/B4.

³⁹ GA, D2071/B3-4.

⁴⁰ GA, D2071/B4.

⁴¹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 46, Appendix D, 35.

⁴² TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 46.

⁴³ GA, D2071/B4.

⁴⁴ GA, D2071/L6.

⁴⁵ GA, D2071/L6.

⁴⁶ GA, D2071/B3-4.

⁴⁷ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 46.

A keeper of the ridings was appointed to prevent trespass and to maintain the hedges and ditches of the ridings.⁴⁸ Only the keeper had the right to keep animals in the ridings that did not belong to him, charging 2s. 6d. each for eight head of cattle in the Stub Riding, and 8d. each for eight head of cattle in the Mead Riding.⁴⁹ There had been a pound for the ridings, but by 1607 this was in decay.⁵⁰ Consequently, strays were impounded initially at Chipping Sodbury, and then transferred to the pound of Old Sodbury to be amerced. In the late 19th century the haywarden was to maintain the regulations of the ridings, repair the boundaries and hedges, and to collect the dues owe from those pasturing animals in the ridings.⁵¹ He was also charged with preventing trespasses, but in 1896 the pound was out of repair and he was unable to carry this out. In 1826–7 the haywarden's salary was £1 13s. 4d.⁵² In 1896 the haywarden was paid a salary of £5 a year, to which was added 13s. commission for collecting the dues, and 2s. 6d. from each person who held an acre in the Mead Riding. The haywarden was also entitled to an acre, called the hay ward's piece, and a spring and fall stem, whilst he held the office. These holdings by virtue of his office did not affect the haywarden's own rights.

Following widespread dissatisfaction with the management of the ridings by the dissolved corporation of the borough, and a public enquiry held earlier in the year by the charity commissioners, a parish meeting in December 1896 approved the creation of a number of extra acres within the Stub riding to increase the supply.⁵³ During the Second World War the ridings were requisitioned by the Gloucestershire Agricultural Committee in 1941 and ploughed. By the time the land was derequisitioned in 1954 ploughing had destroyed all vestige of the old boundaries and the ridings were used thereafter for mowing and grazing.⁵⁴ The trustees of the town trust procured a new scheme for the management of the ridings in 1960, confirmed by Act of Parliament.⁵⁵

Industry

Mills

There was a mill at Chipping Sodbury by the late 15th century, standing on the river Frome to the north of the high street. It was held by the Browne family in 1497–8,⁵⁶ and still in the mid 16th century.⁵⁷ It had been sold by the lord of the manor by 1688, when it was purchased from Bernard Orchard by Richard Codrington of Didmarton.⁵⁸ It was

⁴⁸ GA, D2071/B3–4.

⁴⁹ GA, D2071/B3–4.

⁵⁰ GA, D2071/L6.

⁵¹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 32.

⁵² TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, Appendix. F, 46.

⁵³ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 45; GA, P300a PC 1/1, 40–2.

⁵⁴ Hansard, *HL Deb.* (19 May 1960), vol. 223, col. 1057.

⁵⁵ 8 & 9 Eliz. II, c.v.

⁵⁶ TNA, DL 29/638/10362.

⁵⁷ GA, GDR Wills, 1553/89.

⁵⁸ GA, D185/16/14.

occupied by the Weare family in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and by the Trotman family for much of the 19th century, when it was known as Trotman's mill. It had ceased to operate by 1931, when an application was made to convert it into a private house.⁵⁹

The mill race and pond, which ran behind premises on the north side of the High Street, were susceptible to contamination with sewage and household waste. It was occasionally necessary to clean them, and in the 19th century eels were caught by hand in the mud when the mill pond was drained.⁶⁰ The water flowing into the mill pond was stated to be little better than sewage in 1899,⁶¹ and there was sewage in the mill race again in 1912.⁶² The mill race was filled in c.1932.⁶³ Eels, dace and roach were all common in the Frome in the late 1930s, when concern was again expressed about pollution in the river near Chipping Sodbury.⁶⁴

Quarrying

Quarries were opened to the north of Chipping Sodbury in the mid 19th century, at Brook Street in Old Sodbury⁶⁵ and at Barnhill in Yate parish.⁶⁶ By the start of the 20th century these had expanded towards each other, and they combined to form a single quarry in the 1920s.⁶⁷ In 1901 the Old Sodbury portion of the quarry comprised c.2 a., but by 1955 the Barnhill quarry had expanded to occupy most of the land to the west of the Stub Riding, including the former Riding Quarry, and c.22 a. of the site lay within the parish of Sodbury. In 1923 blasting at the expanding Barnhill site caused the road between Brook Street and the Wickwar Road to collapse.⁶⁸ In 1941 the quarry employed 186 men and 6 women, but before the second World War there had been 300 men working at the site, which produced 240,000 tons of stone a year.⁶⁹ In 1941 there was also a concrete roofing tile factory in the parish, which had employed 25 men before the war and produced c.10,000 tons of tiles each year.⁷⁰ An asphalt mixing plant had also been established by 1949.⁷¹ Both factories were still functioning in the early 1970s,⁷² but were subsequently demolished.

⁵⁹ GA, DA33/100/25, p. 111.

⁶⁰ *Bristol Mercury*, 18 Aug. 1866; 25 Aug. 1866.

⁶¹ GA, DA33/100/4, 20.

⁶² GA, P300a PC 1/1, 158–62.

⁶³ GA, DA33/100/25, 119.

⁶⁴ *Western Daily Press*, 13 Sep. 1937.

⁶⁵ See Old Sodbury, Economic History.

⁶⁶ Rose Wallis, *Yate* (2015), 48–51.

⁶⁷ OS Map, 1:10560, Glos. LXIX.SW (1903, 1924 edns).

⁶⁸ GA, DA33/100/17, 33.

⁶⁹ GA, C/AP/R1/SB1/21.

⁷⁰ GA, C/AP/R1/SB1/21.

⁷¹ GA, P300 PC 1/7, p. 17.

⁷² OS Map, (1971 edn.); GA, P300 PC 1/13, 4 Dec. 1974.

Hampstead Farm was purchased by the British Quarrying Company in 1943,⁷³ but it was not until 1977 that quarrying began at the 198 a. site.⁷⁴ Quarrying at Barnhill had ceased by the mid-1950s,⁷⁵ and the focus of quarrying moved to the northern boundary of Sodbury parish. Part of the disused site has been redeveloped to provide a new housing estate and supermarket.⁷⁶ In the early 21st century the quarry continued to produce limestone, which was converted on site into crushed stone, asphalt, concrete, and agricultural lime.⁷⁷ In 2018 the quarry, including the Hampstead Farm site, employed 18 people, and produced 1,000,000 tonnes of limestone aggregate every year.⁷⁸

Markets and fairs

In 1218 William Crassus was granted a weekly market on Mondays on his manor of Sodbury⁷⁹ and in 1227 a weekly market on Thursdays and a yearly fair there, on the feast of St John the Baptist (24 June) and for the seven following days.⁸⁰ A second market and fair was granted to William de Weylaund in 1270: the market to be held on Mondays, and a fair on the vigil, feast and morrow of the decollation of St John the Baptist (29 August).⁸¹ By 1337 the two fairs were held on Ascension Day and the feast of St John.⁸²

In the late 13th century the pleas and perquisites of the borough were worth 40s.⁸³ The tolls of the markets and fairs were variously valued at 26s. 8d. and 40s. at the end of the 13th century.⁸⁴ In 1327/8 the toll of the market was valued at 13s. 2d. over a thirty-week period from October to June.⁸⁵ In 1338/9 the toll of the market was valued at 5s. a year.⁸⁶ In 1488 the bailiff accounted for 2s. 2d. of tolls for the markets and fairs of the manor.⁸⁷

Maurice Walsh granted the tolls of the two fairs to his nephew John Norton for his life in 1556,⁸⁸ and in the early 17th century the tolls of the borough were let to Alice Walsh for 5s. a year.⁸⁹ These were subsequently let to Mrs Lene, who surrendered them to Edward Stephens c.1628. The tolls of cattle sold at the fairs were let by Stephens to

⁷³ GA, D2299/7547.

⁷⁴ Hanson Aggregates, *Chipping Sodbury Quarry Overview*, <<https://www.hanson-communities.co.uk/en/chipping-sodbury-quarry-overview>> [accessed 29 Dec. 2018].

⁷⁵ Ridge Wood, *Quarrying In and Around the Ridge*, <<http://www.ridge-wood.org.uk/thequarries.html>> [accessed 29 Dec. 2018].

⁷⁶ See Settlement.

⁷⁷ D.I.E Jones *et al*, *Spon's Quarry Guide to the British Hard Rock Industry* (2006), 31.

⁷⁸ Hanson Aggregates, *Chipping Sodbury Quarry Overview*, <<https://www.hanson-communities.co.uk/en/chipping-sodbury-quarry-overview>> [accessed 29 Dec. 2018].

⁷⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus. I*, 368.

⁸⁰ *Cal. Chart.* 1226–1257, 43; *Rot. Litt. Claus. II*, 188b.

⁸¹ *Cal. Chart.* 1257–1300, 156.

⁸² *Cal. Inq. p.m.*, 1336–47, 78–9; TNA, C135/51/12 (5).

⁸³ TNA, SC 11/236.

⁸⁴ TNA, SC 11/236; TNA C 133/77/3 (16).

⁸⁵ TNA, E 199/13/2.

⁸⁶ TNA, C 135/51/21 (5).

⁸⁷ TNA, DL 29/638/10362.

⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/38/131.

⁸⁹ GA, D2066/1.

Elizabeth Lancaster, who sold the lease to Robert Webb of Old Sodbury. The lessee also acted as clerk of the market, charging fees for use of the weights and sealing of measures, but it was later contended that no tolls were collected at the markets before the middle of the century. The under-bailiff and bailiff of the manor collected the pitching fees at the fairs, dividing them between themselves. There was also a wool and yarn market held at the high cross on the two annual fair days during the early 17th century, but this had ceased by the Restoration. A cryer or bellman of the market was appointed by the bailiff, who was allowed to keep the tolls of wheat of the weekly market.⁹⁰

About 1649 large quantities of cheese that had formerly been carried to Tetbury began to be brought to the market at Chipping Sodbury.⁹¹ The borough was apparently in possession of the tolls of the market and the fairs by 1653, when the court leet ordered that half of the profit was to be put towards maintaining the market weights, apprenticing poor children, providing accommodation for the poor in the town hall, and keeping it in good repair; the other half was to be kept by the bailiff for himself.⁹² A fresh lease of the tolls with the office of clerk of the market was taken by the townsmen in 1654 for a term of 31 years, apparently because of the establishment five years earlier of the weekly cheese market.⁹³ An order of that year set tolls for the sale of cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, bread and cheese.⁹⁴ The tolls of barley and oats and of peas and beans were taken by the owners of the two houses under which they were respectively pitched each week.⁹⁵ During the controversy between Sir Thomas Stephens and the borough in the 1670s,⁹⁶ the tolls were again let to a private individuals.⁹⁷ In 1679 Chancery ordered that the lease should be cancelled.⁹⁸ During the 17th century, the market weights were kept in the town hall, where produce was also stored between markets, and the tolls were collected in the building in the middle of the street known as the Tolzey.⁹⁹

In the late 18th century there was an annual great market, held on the second Thursday after Old Michaelmas Day (10 October).¹⁰⁰ The market in Chipping Sodbury was still noted for the sale of wheat and cheese in 1830.¹⁰¹ A toll-free monthly market for horses, cattle, sheep, grain, wool, cheese and other agricultural produce was commenced in 1837, although the weekly market also continued to be held.¹⁰² The success of the new monthly market, with 3,000 sheep and 300 head of cattle reported to have been sold in the

⁹⁰ GA, D2071/L10.

⁹¹ GA, D2071/L10.

⁹² GA, D2071/M1.

⁹³ GA, D2071/E15.

⁹⁴ GA, D2071/M1.

⁹⁵ GA, D2071/L10.

⁹⁶ See Local Government.

⁹⁷ GA, D2071/L10.

⁹⁸ GA, D2071/E17.

⁹⁹ GA, D2071/L11.

¹⁰⁰ *Bath Chronicle*, 10 Oct. 1776; *Glouc. J.* 7 Oct. 1782.

¹⁰¹ *Pigott's Directory* (1830), 386.

¹⁰² *Glouc. J.* 7 Oct. 1837; 2 Dec. 1837.

first three months, resulted in the establishment of an agricultural society to promote the market.¹⁰³ An effort in 1838 to establish two wool fairs, in August and October, was apparently short-lived.¹⁰⁴ The weekly market was said to have been entirely superseded by the monthly market for cattle, sheep, pigs and cheese by the 1870s, when the two traditional fairs were described as entirely nominal.¹⁰⁵ The monthly market was replaced with a fortnightly market in 1886, to be held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month.¹⁰⁶

In 1899 the parish council proposed to pave a section of the high street west of the clock tower for use as a pig market.¹⁰⁷ The committee appointed to undertake the work handed the completed market to the parish council in 1901.¹⁰⁸ The profits of the market were said to amount to £104 a year in 1902, arising principally from fees paid by auctioneers for their stands.¹⁰⁹ In the same year the Board of Agriculture expressed concerns regarding the cleansing of the town after the fortnightly markets, and required that the market place, between Broad Street and the footpath, be paved or they would close the market.¹¹⁰ A public meeting in the town resolved to maintain the markets in the streets of the town,¹¹¹ and a committee of the parish council took over the management of the markets in January 1903.¹¹² A fee of £1 a year was agreed with the ladies of the manor for paving the market chippings.¹¹³ A 21-year lease of the market chippings was granted to parish council in 1929; although it expired in 1950, the market continued to be held in the street until 1954.¹¹⁴ A market committee was established in 1983,¹¹⁵ and consideration was given in 1989 to establishing a weekly market.¹¹⁶ A new lease of the chippings was made by the Somerset Trust in 1991.¹¹⁷ A monthly farmers' market was established in 2000,¹¹⁸ which by 2002 was held fortnightly.¹¹⁹ A weekly market was established in Hatherell's Yard in 2015, and competition from this may have been responsible for the demise of the farmers' market in 2016.¹²⁰

¹⁰³ *Bath Chronicle*, 11 Jan. 1838; *Glouc. J.* 5 Dec. 1840.

¹⁰⁴ *Glos. Chron.*, 4 Aug. 1838.

¹⁰⁵ *Kelly's Directory of Glos.* (1879), 740.

¹⁰⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 10 Dec. 1886.

¹⁰⁷ GA, P300a PC 1/1, 72–3.

¹⁰⁸ GA, P300a PC 1/3, 41–2; P300a PC 2/1, 33.

¹⁰⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 20 Aug. 1902.

¹¹⁰ *Glouc. J.* 9 Aug. 1902.

¹¹¹ GA, P300a PC 2/1, 63–4.

¹¹² *Western Daily Press*, 8 Jan. 1903.

¹¹³ G. Tily, *The Three Sodburys* (1994), 233, 257.

¹¹⁴ GA, P300a PC 1/16, 72; Tily, *The Three Sodburys*, 233.

¹¹⁵ GA, P300a PC 1/15, 23; P300a PC 2/12–16.

¹¹⁶ GA, P300a PC 1/16, 19.

¹¹⁷ GA, P300a PC 1/16, 135; P300a PC 1/17, 148.

¹¹⁸ GA, P300a PC 2/12, 99.

¹¹⁹ GA, P300a PC 2/13.

¹²⁰ *Yate & Sodbury Gazette*, 18 Oct. 2015; 27 Jan. 2016.

A biannual hiring or mop fair was first instituted at Chipping Sodbury in 1807, to be held on two days in March and two days in October.¹²¹ One correspondent of a local newspaper gave a detailed account of the fair in 1836, likening it to a slave market, comparing the large number of female servants lining one side of the street to the rows of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs standing on the opposite side.¹²² Men and boys stood in the middle of the street, holding whips or wearing animal hair in their hats to denote their occupations. Through this scene strolled respectable gentlemen, ladies in veils, farmers with their wives, and clergymen. The mop fair at Sodbury was one of the more popular in the district, and this may have contributed to its survival into the present day. It was said to more popular with those looking for employment than Chippenham fair in 1852.¹²³ Despite, or perhaps because of, its popularity, the mop fair was not without its detractors.¹²⁴ Besides servants seeking masters, the mop fairs attracted travelling salesmen, entertainers, and fairground stalls, and they became notorious occasions for drunkenness, debauchery and petty crime.¹²⁵ In an effort to reduce the demand for the fairs, the Earl of Ducie promoted the creation of registration offices for servants seeking employment, and employers were encouraged not to attend the fairs at all.¹²⁶ A registration office was established at a grocer's shop in Chipping Sodbury in 1858.¹²⁷ In the following year the mop fairs at Chipping Sodbury, Dursley and Thornbury were said to have been much less well attended than previously.¹²⁸ In the following decade the fair was said to be still well-attended, however,¹²⁹ and it remained a popular institution in the 1880s,¹³⁰ when it was preferred by servants than the mop at Thornbury.¹³¹ The pleasure fair that accompanied the hiring fair became larger, comprising roundabouts, swingboats, miniature railways, travelling theatres, and shooting stalls.¹³² The pleasure fair in 1887 was said to have been the largest it had been in fifty years,¹³³ and during the 1890s the amusements began to take precedence over the hiring fair.¹³⁴ The mop fair continues to be an important source of amusement in the 21st century, with rides, food vendors and stalls occupying the High Street for two days in March and September each year.¹³⁵

¹²¹ *Glouc. J.* 28 Sep. 1807.

¹²² *Bath Chron.* 7 Apr. 1836.

¹²³ *Bath Chron.* 5 Aug. 1852.

¹²⁴ *Bristol Mercury*, 19 Sep. 1857.

¹²⁵ *Hereford Times*, 4 Oct. 1856; *Bath Chron.* 30 Sep. 1858.

¹²⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 3 Aug. & 7 Oct. 1859.

¹²⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 27 Feb. 1858.

¹²⁸ *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 27 Sep. 1859.

¹²⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 21 Mar. 1868.

¹³⁰ *Bristol Mercury*, 26 Sep. 1885.

¹³¹ *Bristol Mercury*, 26 Sep. 1888.

¹³² *Glos. Chron.* 27 Oct. 1888 & 28 Mar. 1891.

¹³³ *Bristol Mercury*, 27 Sep. 1887; *Citizen*, 20 Mar. 1897.

¹³⁴ *Bristol Mercury*, 21 Mar. 1891.

¹³⁵ *Yate & Sodbury Gazette*, 28 Sep. 2018.

Distributive and service trades

In the late middle ages Chipping Sodbury was an important regional market place. The proximity to Bristol meant that the trading links between the two towns were strong. In the 14th century Thomas atte Hulle and Nicholas Phelpes were merchants trading with Bristol, purchasing wine amongst other commodities.¹³⁶ In the 16th century the town's cloth merchants occur in the records of Bristol, such as Richard Adams in 1512,¹³⁷ and Richard Colymore in 1540.¹³⁸ Colymore owned property in the city and his will was witnessed by the vicar of St Stephens and a host of Bristol merchants.¹³⁹ Thomas Smyth of Sodbury traded in large amounts of iron at Bristol in the 1540s.¹⁴⁰ There is also evidence of economic relationships further afield: in the early 16th century a Chipping Sodbury cloth merchant combined with men from London and Oxfordshire to take credit from a wool merchant of Calais.¹⁴¹ The merchant tailor John Colymore was trading with London in the 1530s,¹⁴² and two clothiers of Chipping Sodbury sold white cloth at London in the 1560s.¹⁴³ A Chipping Sodbury man was owed money by a man of Bath in 1588.¹⁴⁴

There is also good evidence of strong links with other market towns in the region. In the 15th century butchers from Chipping Sodbury travelled to the market at Castle Combe.¹⁴⁵ In the same century the Chipping Sodbury clothier Henry Somers purchased wheat at the market in Chippenham.¹⁴⁶ Probate records from the 16th and early 17th centuries reveal associations with Iron Acton, Calcot, Hawkesbury Upton, and Marshfield in Gloucestershire, and Corsham, Hankerton, Lacock, and North Wraxall in Wiltshire,¹⁴⁷ while one man was owed money from as far afield as Torrington (Devon).¹⁴⁸

Chipping Sodbury lay within a broad region that was an important focus of the woollen industry, taking in the towns running along the fringe of the Cotswolds to the north of the town, and east Somerset and west Wiltshire to the south. The town's location, at the confluence of important routes between Bristol, London, and the Cotswolds, and its proximity to north Wiltshire markets such as Castle Combe and Chippenham, ensured the significance of the cloth trade in Chipping Sodbury from at least the early 16th century. However, it seems to have had little relationship with the more important cloth-producing area centred upon Stroud. Despite its local importance, John Leland made no reference to

¹³⁶ TNA, C 241/105/168; C 241/106/187; C 241/109/168; C 241/117/1; C 241/119/93

¹³⁷ *The Staple Court Books of Bristol* (BRS, 5, 1934), 154.

¹³⁸ *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538–50* (BRS, 28, 1975), 62.

¹³⁹ TNA, PROB 11/39/174.

¹⁴⁰ *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538–50* (BRS, 28, 1975), 172–3.

¹⁴¹ TNA, C 241/275/74.

¹⁴² TNA, C 1/1010/75.

¹⁴³ *EHR*, LVII (1942), 364, 367.

¹⁴⁴ GA, GDR Inventories, 1588/255.

¹⁴⁵ E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'Evidences of Industrial Growth on Some Fifteenth-Century Manors', *Economic History Review*, XII (1959), 204.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, C 1/1157/39.

¹⁴⁷ GA, GDR Wills, 1554/47; 1565/85; 1569/147; 1580/25; 1585/93.

¹⁴⁸ GA, GDR Wills, 1565/85.

the cloth trade when he visited Chipping Sodbury, in contrast to nearby towns such as Wickwar and Thornbury.¹⁴⁹

The clothier Robert Tailor occurs in 1504,¹⁵⁰ and Richard Adams in 1512.¹⁵¹ Thomas Tailor, probably the son of Robert, was also a clothier in the town¹⁵² and was one of three cloth merchants assessed at £40 in 1534, the highest assessment in Chipping Sodbury.¹⁵³ The others were Richard and John Collymore, members of a family prominent in the cloth trade. Sir Thomas Kytson, the London Merchant Adventurer, purchased broadcloths called 'Castlecombes' from Harry Somers of Chipping Sodbury in 1535.¹⁵⁴ In the early 1560s Thomas Collymore and Richard Walter were selling cloth at London.¹⁵⁵ Cloth was produced as well as sold within the town. The military survey of 1522 listed eight weavers, the largest single occupation identified. In 1557 Richard Colymore left legacies for each of his poor spinners and weavers.¹⁵⁶ Two weavers were named within the deeds belonging to the borough, and four more men bequeathed looms in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.¹⁵⁷ Some of these might have been amongst the weavers and spinners employed by Thomas Gower, a clothier of Wotton under Edge, in the 'clothing town' of Chipping Sodbury during the reign of Elizabeth.¹⁵⁸

The cloth trade continued to be important in the early 17th century, although its importance declined over time. An early-17th-century list recorded five clothiers and three mercers resident in Chipping Sodbury,¹⁵⁹ to whom can be added another two clothiers and five mercers named in the borough deeds between 1607 and 1654.¹⁶⁰ Two drapers occur in these deeds in the later 17th century;¹⁶¹ one clothier, two merchant tailors, and four mercers were named in 18th-century deeds;¹⁶² and two men described themselves as linen drapers in the early 19th century.¹⁶³ Another 81 tradesmen and craftsmen employed in 22 separate occupations were recorded in the early 17th century, those engaged in the textile trades being prominent with 15 weavers and nine tailors. Several weavers occur in the deeds of the borough,¹⁶⁴ including one who served as bailiff in 1672–3,¹⁶⁵ and there was a

¹⁴⁹ Leland, *Itin.*, ed. Toulmin Smith, V, 94.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, C 241/275/74.

¹⁵¹ *The Staple Court Books of Bristol* (BRS, 5, 1934), 154.

¹⁵² TNA, C 1/585/65.

¹⁵³ TNA, C 1/1010/75; E 179/114/217.

¹⁵⁴ Colin Brett, 'Thomas Kytson and Wiltshire Clothmen, 1529–39', *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, 97 (2004), 43, 55.

¹⁵⁵ *EHR*, 57 (1942), 364, 367.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, PROB 11/39/174.

¹⁵⁷ GA, GDR wills, 1553/101; 1562/107; 1595/99; 1602/78.

¹⁵⁸ *Trans. BGAS*, 66 (1945), 113.

¹⁵⁹ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 194–5.

¹⁶⁰ GA, D2071/E10, 13, 15; D2071/L7, 10.

¹⁶¹ GA, D2071/E15, 17.

¹⁶² GA, D2071/E21, 26, 28.

¹⁶³ GA, D2071/E31.

¹⁶⁴ GA, D2071/E10, 17; D2071/L7, 10.

¹⁶⁵ GA, D2071/E17; TNA, C 8/502/51.

felt maker in the town in 1686.¹⁶⁶ The leather trades were also prominent in the early 17th century, employing another 24 men, including 11 shoemakers, and nine glovers. Seven more shoemakers can be identified during the first half of the 17th century,¹⁶⁷ and the Cabbells were a prominent family of tanners in the later 17th century,¹⁶⁸ The town's importance as staging post is reflected in the presence of two victuallers and a cook in 1608, but there were only two butchers, despite the town's market.¹⁶⁹ In the early 17th century William Cooke is described as a collier, but a reference in his will to his shop and his comparative wealth suggests he was a coal merchant.¹⁷⁰

Gentleman	2	Baker	4
Yeoman	1	Butcher	2
Husbandman	9	Victualler	2
Servant	2	Cook	1
Clothier	5	Tucker	2
Mercer	3	Smith	4
Weaver	15	Carpenter	1
Tailor	9	Cooper	1
Shoemaker	11	Joiner	1
Glover	7	Mason	2
Tanner	3	Tiler	2
Currier	2	Labourer	1
Saddler	1	None given	10

During the late 17th and early 18th century the town provided medical and legal services to the surrounding countryside. Jasper Windle combined his practice as an attorney with keeping of the Bear inn in the 17th century,¹⁷¹ and attorneys are also recorded in the 18th and early 19th centuries.¹⁷² These included members of the Ludlow family, who were also leading doctors within the county,¹⁷³ and established the town's first bank late in the 18th century, although it went bankrupt early in the 19th century.¹⁷⁴ Malting was an important industry in the 18th century, and the borough deeds record the names of six maltsters, three of whom served as bailiffs.¹⁷⁵ Malting was still said to be

¹⁶⁶ GA, D2071/E18.

¹⁶⁷ GA, D2071/E12, 14–15; D2071/L7, 10.

¹⁶⁸ GA, D2071/E15.

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 194–5.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, PROB 11/106/39.

¹⁷¹ GA, D2071/L10.

¹⁷² GA, D14195/3; D1799/C172; D2071/E31.

¹⁷³ See Social History.

¹⁷⁴ GA, D6822/44; *Monthly Magazine*, Aug.–Dec. 1811, 190; *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, nos. 43–5.

¹⁷⁵ GA, D2071/E21; D2071/E26; D2071/E29.

significant industry in 1830, although a directory of that year listed just two maltsters.¹⁷⁶ By the early 18th century the town benefited from the considerable traffic which passed through it laden with coal and lime from local collieries and quarries,¹⁷⁷ and the distribution of both minerals remained important to the town's economy in the late 18th century. At that time the market was said to be little frequented 'being nothing more than a few neighbouring people assembled in the public houses'. The cloth industry had also declined from its former strength, and Rudder recorded a solitary master clothier employing a few hands.¹⁷⁸ Other trades recorded in the 18th-century deeds of the borough included collar makers, curriers, saddlers, tanners, and a fellmonger.¹⁷⁹

In the early 19th century the town's prosperity continued to be derived from its role as a regional market centre, and as an important staging post along some of the principal routes in the area. Besides the market, the town accommodated four grocers and drapers, five bakers, and ten butchers in 1830, while more particular tastes were catered for by a spirit merchant and a confectioner.¹⁸⁰ The carriage of lime and coal from the surrounding countryside was an important source of income, while lime burning and salt manufacture also occurred within the town.¹⁸¹ The medical professions continued to be an important presence with three surgeons, two chemists, and two apothecaries based there in 1830. Other professions included three attorneys and two insurance agents.¹⁸² In 1831 almost half of the men aged 20 or over were employed in retail or handicrafts. Despite the limited size of the parish, 16 men described themselves as farmers, six with large enough holdings for them to employ labourers.¹⁸³

A branch of the National Provincial Bank of England had been established in the town by 1842,¹⁸⁴ and a printing press was licensed in 1844.¹⁸⁵ In 1851 shoemakers (21), tailors (16) and carpenters (15) formed the largest groups for men, and 33 women were employed as dress or bonnet makers. There were a range of retailers, including grocers, drapers, and chandlers, but none dealt in luxury goods. Most trade was on a small scale, and the largest employer was a shoemaker employing 4 men. The vitality of the market and its continuing importance to the area beyond the town was indicated by the 13 butchers.¹⁸⁶ At a meeting in the Town Hall in 1854 it was decided to form a company for lighting the town with gas.¹⁸⁷ Despite this, a company was not established until 1870,¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁶ *Pigott's Directory of Glos.* (1830), 386.

¹⁷⁷ *Atkyns, Glos.* 673.

¹⁷⁸ *Rudder, Glos.*, 671–2.

¹⁷⁹ GA, D2071/E21–24, 26, 28–29.

¹⁸⁰ *Pigott's Directory of Glos.* (1830), 387.

¹⁸¹ *Pigott's Directory of Glos.* (1830), 387.

¹⁸² *Pigott's Directory of Glos.* (1830), 385.

¹⁸³ *Census*, 1831

¹⁸⁴ *Piggott's Directory of Glos.* (1842), 127.

¹⁸⁵ GA, Q/RP/1.

¹⁸⁶ *Census*, 1851.

¹⁸⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 8 July 1854.

¹⁸⁸ TNA, BT 31/34108/4810.

and its works were erected near the Union workshop in Yate. Chipping Sodbury was illuminated with gas for the first time in January 1871.¹⁸⁹ The company was dissolved in 1949,¹⁹⁰ under the terms of the Gas Act of the previous year.¹⁹¹ Members of the Iles family were printers and stationers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁹² Murray Dowding, photographer and local historian, established his photography business in the 1920s.¹⁹³

A cycle shop was established in the former Swan inn by Ernest Powell in 1913 where bicycles could be purchased, repaired or hired. It closed before 1960.¹⁹⁴ Garages were opened in High Street and Broad Street in 1919, but the former had closed by the early 1930s, when its proprietors were instead managing the latter. It closed in 1998.¹⁹⁵ Another garage was opened in the 1920s in Rouncival Street by Henry Dando, who had previously run a bicycle repair business. The business was sold to Stanley Ball in 1947,¹⁹⁶ but continued to be known as Dando's Garage until its parent company, Chipping Sodbury Motor Cars, relocated to Hatters Lane in the early 21st century. The development of Chipping Sodbury during the 20th century as an overflow for Bristol, particular following the Second World War, resulted in an increasing proportion of its population commuting to work away from the town,¹⁹⁷ while the establishment of the large shopping centre at Yate diminished the role of Chipping Sodbury as a regional centre.¹⁹⁸ By the early 21st century more than two-thirds of the population of Yate and Chipping Sodbury commuted to work outside the area.¹⁹⁹ In 2011 some 40% of the population of Sodbury parish was employed in managerial or professional roles, and another 10% were small employers or self-employed, while c.28% were employed in routine or technical occupations. Trade, including motor vehicle repairs, remained the largest industry, providing employment for 13% of Sodbury's population; health and social work, education, and manufacturing each provided employment for a further 10% of the parish.²⁰⁰ A supermarket was constructed in 2013 on part of the former Barnhill quarry site, providing employment for 150 people and a large free car park to the north of the high street.²⁰¹ Hatherell's Yard, connecting the high street with the supermarket, was subsequently developed with several boutique shops and a regular market. The town's banks closed in 2016 and 2017,²⁰² although a branch of the Coventry building Society

¹⁸⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 27 Jan. 1871.

¹⁹⁰ TNA, BT 31/34108/4810.

¹⁹¹ 11 & 12 Geo. VI c.67.

¹⁹² *Kelly's Directory of Glos.* (1879), 741; (1939), 113; *Kelly's Directory of Printers* (1904), 92.

¹⁹³ *Kelly's Directory of Glos.* (1923), 118.

¹⁹⁴ *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, nos. 97–100.

¹⁹⁵ GA, DA33/100/12, p. 298; *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, nos. 61, 198–200.

¹⁹⁶ *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, No. 24.

¹⁹⁷ GA, C/CP/P/3/75, 13; C/CP/R/1/3, 26; Northavon District Council, *Yate and Chipping Sodbury Local Plan* (1988).

¹⁹⁸ Wallis, *Yate*. 57.

¹⁹⁹ South Glos. Council, *Yate and Chipping Sodbury Local Plan: Written Statement* (2006).

²⁰⁰ *Census*, 2011.

²⁰¹ *Yate & Sodbury Gazette*, 7 Oct. 2013.

²⁰² *Yate & Sodbury Gazette*, 28 July 2016 & 7 Dec. 2017.

remained open in 2019. In 2019 the town centre was characterised by the coffee shops, hairdressers' salons, and independent shops, as well as seven public houses, and companies offering professional services.

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