

BASINGSTOKE RETAIL: SHOPS AND MARKETS 1700 - 2014

At the beginning of the 18th century, Basingstoke's economy depended mainly on its position as the most important market town serving a wide hinterland of smaller towns and villages. Unlike Odiham, Kingsclere and Overton, Basingstoke was a great thoroughfare situated on the junction of the Great Western Road from London to the cities of Salisbury and Exeter and beyond; the main road from Oxford to Portsmouth via Newbury and Alton; and spur roads to Reading and Aldermaston, the latter gaining importance following the opening of the Kennet Navigation from Newbury to Reading in 1723 (later the Kennet and Avon Canal) where goods could be transported by road between Basingstoke and Aldermaston Wharf. Subsequently, the town's market economy was transformed by the coming of the railways in the later 19th century, and by the growing use of lorries and cars in the 20th century.

An additional advantage was Basingstoke's situation on the margin of chalk downland and clay lowland, each with its own characteristic agriculture, thus providing a centre for mutual profitable exchange. Initially, marketing occurred in three different places: the annual fairs; the weekly market; and the permanent shops.

Fairs

Fairs were held in the town in Whit Week for 'pedlary' and on 16 October for cattle and hiring servants, and on Basingstoke Down, Kempshott, on Easter Tuesday and 16 September for cheese and cattle.¹ In 1774 the date of the September fair was changed to 23 September, being the day before Wherwell, otherwise Horrell Fair.² In 1777, to encourage farmers to attend the fair, the Corporation announced that the tollman would give, 'a Silver-laced Hat, of One Guinea Value, to that Shepherd who shall bring to the said Fair, and sell, 40 of the best Weather Sheep'. There

¹ *The Traveller's Pocket-Book, or Ogilby and Morgan's Book of the Roads*, 1770 edn. p. 259.

² *General Evening Post*, September 13, 1774.

were similar prizes for the shepherd with the best ewes and the best lambs. The Corporation also announced that no toll would be taken for cheese sold at the fair.³

The Corporation leased the tolls of the Down Fairs and the market tolls of Basingstoke to a tollman who was to be responsible for the shambles, boards, bins and other stores belonging to the Corporation.⁴ In 1712 Richard Worrall of Basingstoke, a glazier, leased the tolls of the Down Fairs for three years at £20 a year, and those of grain, fruit and other commodities of the markets and the profits of the sheep coops and butchers' stalls for £70 a year.⁵ In 1728 David Budd, victualler, leased the tolls of the Down Fairs and the market tolls for three years by paying £100 a year.⁶ However, following an auction in the *Feathers Inn* in 1779, William Jeffrey, a victualler, managed to lease the tolls of the fairs and markets for three years by paying only £38 a year.⁷



Toll booths on Basingstoke Down, 1763

³ *St James's Chronicle*, August 14, 1777.

⁴ HRO, 148M71/4/7/11.

⁵ HRO, 148M71/4/7/4 and 5.

⁶ HRO, 148M71/4/7/7.

⁷ HRO, 148M71/4/7/11 and 12.

In 1787 as a consequence of Basingstoke Down being enclosed, the ‘Basingstoke Down Fair for Sheep and other Cattle, Cheese, and all other Kinds of Merchandise’ was moved to ‘a very convenient spot not 200 yards from the Market-place’.⁸ This became known as Fairfields. However, as the site comprised just 2 a., the September Sheep Fair fell into desuetude until it was moved to the Common in 1840.⁹ The fair moved back to Fairfields in 1870 and the date changed to July, as September, ‘was very late in the season, and farmers had by this time disposed of a large portion of their stock, the fair gradually declined and ultimately disappeared’. At the first July fair, held on 13 July 1870, some 10,000 sheep were penned and dealers came from Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Sussex and Surrey.¹⁰ However, only 990 sheep were penned at the July 1888 fair, following a continuing decline in the numbers attending the fair each year. The *Reading Mercury* remarked that there was ‘no doubt the Fair will soon die a natural death’.¹¹

The first of a series of half-yearly cheese fairs was held at the canal wharf on 28 May 1840, where upwards of 300 tons of cheese was pitched and, ‘very little remained unsold’.¹² Thereafter the fair was held on the first Thursdays after 21 May and 21 November.¹³ The cheese fair moved to the Railway Station Yard in 1842.¹⁴ At the fair held in November 1845, some 250 tons of cheese were pitched, mainly from Somerset and Gloucestershire, and most were sold.¹⁵ However, by November 1850, the fair had declined to the extent that there was only, ‘a very small quantity pitched, and short attendance of buyers. A dull trade ... a considerable quantity left over’.¹⁶ It is possible that the November 1850 fair was the last. In 1852 the Council proposed

⁸ *Hampshire Chronicle*, September 17, 1787.

⁹ *Reading Mercury*, September 16, 1840.

¹⁰ *Reading Mercury*, July 16, 1870.

¹¹ *Reading Mercury*, July 14, 1888.

¹² *Reading Mercury*, May 30, 1840.

¹³ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, November 23, 1840.

¹⁴ *Reading Mercury*, November 26, 1842.

¹⁵ *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*, December 4, 1845.

¹⁶ *Berkshire Chronicle*, November 30, 1850.

to hold a Hop, Cattle and Cheese Fair, ‘at about the time of Old Michaelmas’, but that proposal does not seem to have been taken any further.¹⁷

The Michaelmas Hiring and Pleasure Fair attracted a large influx of country visitors and showmen. The important annual hiring of labourers was supplemented by, ‘a great number of shows, booths, and stalls in the Market Place and streets adjacent’.¹⁸ Entertainments included Punch and Judy and fire-eaters, and in 1855, ‘the two dwarfs, the performing pony and Billy the learned pig’, who, ‘manifested extraordinary powers in discovering the particular characteristics of his visitors’.¹⁹ The Corporation issued a notice in 1869 that the Michaelmas Fair would no longer be kept.²⁰ This was due to the effect the ‘Fair’s demoralising character had on the good people of Basingstoke’.²¹ However, the fair was reinstated the following year, and held in the meadow behind the *Wheatsheaf*.²² But by the 1880s, most hiring was done by advertising in the local newspaper, and the fair was essentially a pleasure fair. In the 20th century the fair moved to a 3 a. site behind Essex Road and Mortimer Lane, where it continued until the mid 1950s.²³

Markets

The importance of Basingstoke’s market is evidenced by the number of London newspapers that quoted the prices of wheat, barley, oats, beans and peas at Basingstoke market, and reflected the importance of the area for grain production.²⁴ Buyers and sellers attended the weekly market from outside the immediate vicinity from quite an early period. In 1726 a farm house was

¹⁷ *Reading Mercury*, November 13, 1852 and February 5, 1853.

¹⁸ *Reading Mercury*, October 15, 1864

¹⁹ *Reading Mercury*, October 19, 1839, October 13, 1849 and October 15, 1855.

²⁰ *Reading Mercury*, September 25, 1869.

²¹ Stephen Pugh (c.2002), *Fairs and Markets of Basingstoke*, 13.

²² Notice in the *Berkshire Chronicle*, September 24, 1870.

²³ Stephen Pugh (c.2002), 15.

²⁴ For example, *Grub-street Journal* and *London Evening-Post* in the 1730s, *Lloyd’s Evening Post* and *Owen’s Weekly Chronicle* in the 1750s and *Whitehall Evening Post* in the 1780s.

burgled near Sutton Scotney while the farmer was attending Basingstoke market.²⁵ By 1837 the market was ‘well attended, being resorted to by persons from Andover, Winchester, Newbury and Reading’.²⁶

The 1829 Act for enlarging the Market Place in the Town of Basingstoke authorised the compulsory purchase of 13 houses, inns and shops in Church Street and Wote Street to increase the area of the Market Square for the sale of corn, grain and other agricultural produce, malt, meal and flour. The act also set up a separate market for cattle, as it was considered advantageous for the cattle and swine markets to be separate from the existing corn market.²⁷

The new cattle and swine market was established for the sale of ‘Cattle, Horses, Beasts and Sheep ... on a certain piece of land, called the FAIR CLOSE’, behind what is now the *Bounty* public house in the space between Jubilee Road and the cricket field.²⁸ The act also provided for a Lesser Market in an area north of the Town Hall, for the sale of ‘Flesh and other Raw Victuals, Poultry, Pigeons, Eggs and Butter on Wednesdays and Saturdays’, and ‘Fish, Herbs, Roots, Fruits, Garden Stuffs and other Marketable Commodities’ daily, except Sundays. The Cattle Market and the Lesser Market were opened for business on Wednesday, 7 October 1829.²⁹

The Lesser Market proved to be popular with traders and customers alike. In the run up to its first Christmas, it had an, ‘abundance of turkeys and all sorts of poultry for sale, the whole of which found ready purchasers’.³⁰ Reports indicate that the Lesser Market continued to be well supplied and enjoyed high sales.³¹ Following the building of the new Town Hall, improvements

²⁵ *London Journal*, October 1, 1726.

²⁶ Parl. Paper, 1837(238): *Municipal Corporation Boundaries (England and Wales)*.

²⁷ 10 Geo. IV. cap xlii. 14.5.1829.

²⁸ Notice dated August 21, 1829 in *Reading Mercury*, September 14, 1829.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Berkshire Chronicle*, January 2, 1830.

³¹ For example, *Berkshire Chronicle*, March 13, 1830 and June 11, 1831.

to the Lesser Market were carried out.³² According to the diarist, Samuel Attwood, the Lesser Market re-opened on 1 April 1835.³³



Design for improving the Lesser Market, 1851

In 1884 work began to convert the front of the Lesser Market to five shops at an estimated cost of £200.³⁴ Tenancy agreements in August 1885 show that the shops were occupied by greengrocers and fishmongers.³⁵ Subsequent tenants included butchers and, in one shop in 1904, a newspaper journalist.³⁶ In 1887, rents from the Lesser Market shops totalled £67 16s.³⁷ In the 1980s the Lesser Market shops were demolished to enable the extension of the Haymarket

³² HRO, 148M71/1/5/17/3 and 4.

³³ HRO, 8M62/27.

³⁴ *Reading Mercury*, October 11 and November 8, 1884.

³⁵ HRO, 148M71/4/21/11 to 15.

³⁶ HRO, 148M71/4/21/16, 17 and 24.

³⁷ Parl. Paper, 1889 (C.5550) *Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls. Minutes of Evidence, Vol.III*, p. 386.

Theatre, leaving just the façade. The last tenants: a fishmonger, a florist, a tobacconist and a model shop, moved out in 1981.³⁸



Lesser Market shops in 1980

In 1851, the Corporation tried to levy tolls on the corn market in accordance with the 1829 Act, on the grounds that the facilities provided for the farmers were paid for by the town's ratepayers, but the farmers boycotted the market and set up an alternative market in Old Basing.³⁹ Following representation from the town's tradesmen, the Corporation decided to rescind their intention of levying tolls as it was estimated that Basingstoke gained some £2,500 a year from the market.⁴⁰

The Committee appointed by the Corporation to erect a Corn Exchange in Basingstoke noted that the returns for the half-year ending December 1863 showed that Basingstoke had the biggest corn market in the region, with sales totalling £61,028, compared with £56,142 at Newbury, and

³⁸ *Basingstoke Gazette*, November 9, 1981.

³⁹ *Hampshire Chronicle*, February 15 to April 12, 1851.

⁴⁰ *Hampshire Chronicle*, March 22, 1851.

£49,084 at Reading.⁴¹ The Corn Exchange (now the Haymarket Theatre) was built in Wote Street. It opened in 1865 and contained 150 stands.⁴² The number of stands was later reduced to 50 to allow for a stage and proscenium for theatrical entertainments and public meetings.⁴³ Income from the users of the Corn Exchange totalled £237 1s. 10d. in 1887.⁴⁴

In 1886, 20,153 quarters of wheat, 2,554 quarters of barley, and 8,055 quarters of oats were sold at Basingstoke. This compared with 17,821 quarters of wheat, 10,207 quarters of barley and 968 quarters of oats sold at Reading in the same year.⁴⁵ Because Basingstoke was close to a large area of corn production, but generated low consumption, many dealers who bought corn at Basingstoke, paid for it to be carried to Reading, where it was turned into Huntley and Palmer's biscuits.⁴⁶

In 1900, 32,203 quarters of wheat, 9,236 quarters of barley, and 16,742 quarters of oats were sold at Basingstoke.⁴⁷ The corresponding figures for 1910 were 20,106, 6,446, and 12,288.⁴⁸ In both years, Basingstoke was the biggest market in Hampshire.

The first annual wool market was held at the Town Hall on 25 June 1851, at which over 30,000 fleeces were offered. In the afternoon, 'upwards of 60 wool growers, dealers, the Mayor and some members of the Corporation, and principal inhabitants dined together at the *Angel* to celebrate the occasion'.⁴⁹ Thereafter annual wool markets were held at the Town Hall until at least 1858.⁵⁰

⁴¹ *Reading Mercury*, February 27, 1864.

⁴² HRO, 148M71/1/5/21; *Post Office Dir. Hants* (1875). p. 28.

⁴³ *Kelly's Dir. Hants* (1911), 56.

⁴⁴ Parl. Paper, 1889 (C.5550), p. 386.

⁴⁵ Parl. Paper, 1888 (312) *Select Committee on Corn Averages*, pps. 176-90.

⁴⁶ Parl. Paper, 1888 (312), pps. 76-7.

⁴⁷ Parl. Paper, 1901 (Cd.576) *Agricultural Returns for Great Britain, 190*, p. 108.

⁴⁸ Parl. Paper, 1911 (Cd.5585) *Agricultural Statistics, 1910*, p. 229.

⁴⁹ *Reading Mercury*, June 28, 1851.

⁵⁰ *Berkshire Chronicle*, June 28, 1856 and June 26, 1858.

About 1876, Raynbird and Sons set up an auction mart for the sale of cattle and pigs at the top of Station Hill. This took advantage of its proximity to the railway, which was a more convenient means of transporting livestock, but diverted trade away from the existing Fairfields cattle market, which was discontinued in the late 1870s, and in 1885 the Corporation offered part of the Fairfields site for the erection of a board school.⁵¹ Basingstoke markets offered for sale 2,239 dairy cows, 3,501 calves, 10,289 cattle, 31,274 sheep, and 14,327 pigs in 1910.⁵² Corresponding figures for 1917 were 1,745 dairy cows, 2,531 calves, 9,962 cattle, 29,346 sheep, and 10,031 pigs.⁵³

In 1903 the Great Western Railway carried 710 wagons of livestock that were either loaded or unloaded at Basingstoke. The figures for the London and South Western Railway were undoubtedly higher. It is likely that a high proportion of that livestock was bought and sold at Station Hill cattle market. The GWR's carriage of livestock seems to have peaked in 1913, with 883 wagons, and then fell to 660 wagons in 1923, 194 in 1933, and 138 in 1938,⁵⁴ indicating that trade was decreasing as the century progressed. During 1949, British Railways (the former Great Western Railway and the Southern Railway combined) unloaded 104 livestock wagons at Basingstoke, and dispatched 94 wagons.⁵⁵ The Station Hill cattle market closed in May 1966 to allow demolition for the town development.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Parl. Paper, 1889 (C.5550) 389-90; HRO, 22M88/1.

⁵² Parl. Paper, 1914 (Cd.7325) *Agricultural Statistics, 1913*, pps. 268-71.

⁵³ Parl. Paper, 1918 (Cd.9006) *Agricultural Statistics, 1917*, pps. 87-90.

⁵⁴ National Railway Museum, G2/116/1 *GWR Traffic Dealt with at Stations and Goods Depots 1903 – 38*, pps. 48-9.

⁵⁵ TNA, AN82/93 *British Railways Traffic Return for 1949*.

⁵⁶ *Basingstoke Gazette*, April 27, 2006.



Station Hill Cattle Market shortly before demolition

A general market continued on Wednesdays and Saturdays in the Market Place. It lost trade following the opening of the New Market Square as part of the Town Development in the late 1960s. The demolition of the New Market Square to make way for Festival Place at the beginning of the 21st century, did not cause a revitalisation of the old market. In 2014 the Wednesday and Saturday markets comprised no more than five or six stalls.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Personal observation.



Top of Town Market, 2012

Retail trades 1700 to 1855

The main shopping area centred on the Market Place and the four roads that met there: London Street; Winchester Street; Church Street; and Wote Street. Already before 1700, Basingstoke's shopkeepers served both the town and the rural population of the surrounding villages. Probate records show that the shopkeepers in Basingstoke in the 17th century included butchers, bakers, grocers, drapers, apothecaries, shoemakers and a haberdasher.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See, for example, HRO, 1606B/02, 1610A/006, 1633B/02, 1636B/49, 1638A/041, 1670A/036, 1678A/087; TNA, PROB 11/299/711.



Extract from 1762 map showing the Market Place.

In some cases the shops stayed in the same family for generations, such as the Reve family, who were grocers in Basingstoke from at least the early 17th century, and their relatives, the Hernes.⁵⁹

In 1672 Barnard Reve conveyed the lease of his grocer's shop adjoining the Market Place to William Herne.⁶⁰ He in turn in 1725 left that shop to his son, George.⁶¹ George Herne continued the grocery business and also bought a shop on the north side of London Street for £140 from Barnard Reve's daughter, Thomasin Wareham, in 1729.⁶² His brother, Oliver, inherited the

⁵⁹ HRO, 1619AD/086; 79A04/3; TNA, PROB 11/165/412.

⁶⁰ HRO, 20M51/31.

⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/608/50.

⁶² HRO, 20M51/69.

business in or around 1732.⁶³ Under Oliver's will in 1745, his wife, Hannah, received £100, and the rest of his estate was divided between his sons, George, Richard, John and William.⁶⁴ George and Richard were grocers.⁶⁵ John was a jeweller, and William was an apothecary.⁶⁶ When George died, his widow, Ann, took over the grocer's shop.⁶⁷ On her death in 1806, her estate was shared equally between her five daughters, who leased the shop to Thomas Caston, an ironmonger.⁶⁸

Oliver Herne's inventory, dated 1747, lists the items in his shop. The list runs for several pages, and covers a very wide range of goods, including candles, tapers, soap, wash balls, salt, vinegar, sugar, ginger, rice, tobacco, 13½ pounds of snuff at 1s.4d. per pound, glassware, cups and saucers, bowls and dishes, chamber pots (12 small at 3d. each and 16 large at 5d. each), hour glasses, quills, writing paper, bibles, prayer books, horn books, slate pencils, thread, silk, cotton, Holland tape, laces, pins, dust brushes, paint brushes, mops, hand baskets, fish hooks, spectacle cases, and violin strings.⁶⁹

Shopkeepers, such as Herne, were some of the most prosperous residents in the town. Henry Barfoot, who owned an apothecary's shop, left an estate valued at £1,394 10s. 4d. in 1704.⁷⁰ The estate of Edmund Butler, a woollen draper, in 1715, included lands in 'White Chappell' in London.⁷¹ In 1723, the legacies of Richard Fletcher, a butcher, included three houses in Potter's Lane, Basingstoke.⁷² The will of William Spier, a butcher, in 1728 included, 'all that messuage, tenement and inn known as Skippetts Inn in the Parish of Basingstoke', and several other

⁶³ TNA, PROB 11/651/277.

⁶⁴ TNA, PROB 11/739/252.

⁶⁵ HRO, 20M51/80; *Sadler's Hampshire Dir.* (1784), 60.

⁶⁶ TNA, PROB 11/1034/200; *Reading Mercury*, November 23, 1784.

⁶⁷ TNA, PROB 11/1117/138; *Universal British Dir.* (1792), 317.

⁶⁸ TNA, PROB 11/1443/11; HRO, 20M51/89.

⁶⁹ TNA, PROB 31/291/1039.

⁷⁰ TNA, PROB 5/4858.

⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/546/263.

⁷² HRO, 1732A/036.

properties in the town, some of which were referred to as, ‘lately purchased’.⁷³ In 1735 John Abbott, a butcher, leased ‘four messuages, with one barn, orchard and backside in Back Lane’, 15.5 a. in the common fields and 2 a. of ‘inclosed ground’ in Hackwood Field.⁷⁴ William Paice, a grocer, leased the same in 1759.⁷⁵ The legacies of Lawrence Tailor, a baker, in 1736 included his own house and a freehold messuage, etc. in Basingstoke that he rented out, and an estate in Heckfield.⁷⁶ The legacies of John White, an apothecary, in 1736 included his freehold messuages and lands in Basingstoke, Ellisfield and St Mary Bourne.⁷⁷ In 1744, Daniel Jackson, a draper and shopkeeper, left legacies totalling £1,300.⁷⁸

Richard Davies, a draper, was a wealthy man with wide-ranging commercial and agricultural interests. His legacies in 1756 included four messuages in Wote Street, a messuage with a garden in Norn Hill, several other premises in Basingstoke, over 60 a. of land, a rent charge of £13 6s. 8d. issuing from Roke Farm in Odiham, and mortgages of a malthouse in Silchester and a glover’s shop in Winchester.⁷⁹

Some of these men, who were the financial élite of the town, were also involved in local government. The woollen draper, Edmund Butler, was Mayor of Basingstoke in 1707-8, as was the butcher, John Abbott in 1738-9.⁸⁰ In 1784 William Ring, a grocer and tallow Chandler, was Mayor of Basingstoke, and of the seven Aldermen, who, along with the Mayor, made up the town’s Corporation that year, one was an apothecary, another was an upholsterer and auctioneer, and the third was described as a ‘Bookseller, Haberdasher, Milliner and Hatter’.⁸¹

⁷³ HRO, 1728B/106.

⁷⁴ HRO, 44M69/D1/1/15.

⁷⁵ HRO, 44M69/D1/1/18.

⁷⁶ HRO, 1736A/100.

⁷⁷ TNA, PROB 11/680/204.

⁷⁸ TNA, PROB 11/732/159.

⁷⁹ HRO, 1756A/037.

⁸⁰ Baigent and Millard (1889) *A History of the Ancient Town and Manor of Basingstoke*, 467, 470.

⁸¹ Sadler’s *Hampshire Dir.* (1784), 59-63.

The Ring family provide an example of the varied activities of these rich Basingstoke retailers at the end of the 18th century. Apart from being a grocer and tallow chandler, William Ring was also the Basingstoke agent for both the *Reading Mercury* and the newly-founded *Hampshire Chronicle* from 1772 until his death in 1791. This required him to receive the weekly copies of the papers from the papers' newsman, arrange for the delivery of the papers, take in the texts of local advertisements and pass them to the printer, and act as agent for the sale of books and patent medicines supplied by the printer, including Pike's Grand Antidote for the Itch, Dr Henry's Chemical Nervous Medicine, Dr Hooper's Female Pills, and Dr Beckett's Antivenereal Diuretic Essence.⁸²

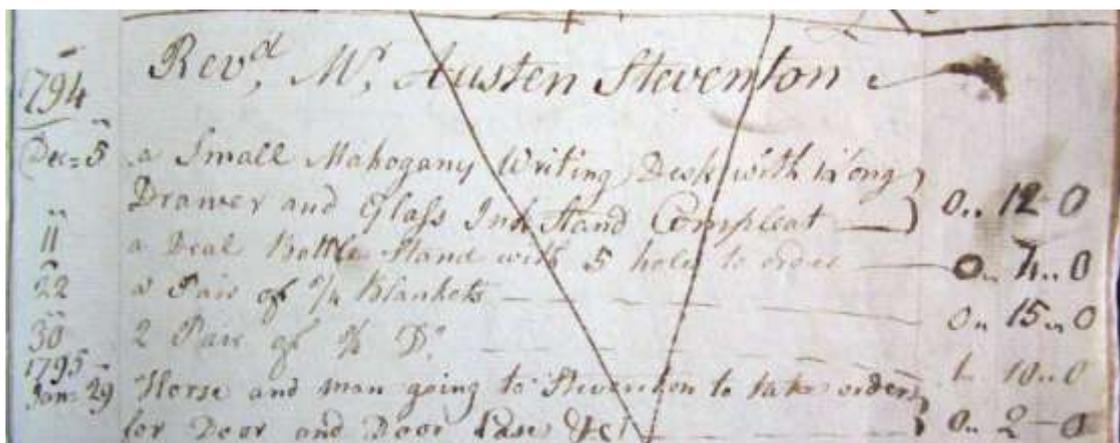
John Ring, possibly William's brother, was also engaged in the retail trade, selling furniture, furnishings and acting as an auctioneer.⁸³ He left a set of detailed accounts from 1785 to 1792.⁸⁴ His customers ranged from the local county grandees such as the Duke of Bolton, William Chute of the Vyne, and Bigg-Wither of Manydown, to the publicans and tradesmen of Basingstoke and district. They also included many local clergy, including Jane Austen's father, who bought a single bed each for Jane and Cassandra from Mr Ring. He also bought Jane's little writing desk from there as well.⁸⁵

⁸² *Hampshire Chronicle*, September 27, 1773 and February 27, 1775.

⁸³ *Universal British Dir.* (1792), p. 318.

⁸⁴ HRO, 8M62/14 and 15.

⁸⁵ HRO, 8M62/15.



Jane Austen's writing desk in John Ring's Account Book

In addition to supplying everything that was needed to furnish a house, down to the wallpaper, nails and glue, Ring also supplied coffins to the Basingstoke Corporation for paupers' funerals. He charged the Corporation 3s. for children's coffins, and 8s. for adults' coffins. However, when Mr Jarvis, Master of the Blue Coat School, needed to bury his daughter, a coffin 'laced all round, name date and age, three pairs of handles with a neat frill', cost him £1 5s.⁸⁶

Newspaper advertisements give a sense of the respectability with which these retailers sought to be associated. In 1789 J. Bickham from London opened a shop in the Market Place selling 'Teas and every article in the Grocery Line of Best Quality'.⁸⁷ In 1791 Samuel Toovey, also from London, took over Bickham's shop, selling 'teas, groceries, confectionery, perfumery, oils, pickles, hams, tongues, cheese, butter, patent medicines, etc'.⁸⁸ Shopkeepers in 1792 included six bakers, four butchers, four drapers, three peruke makers, two grocers, two hatters and an ironmonger. There were also 10 businesses simply described as shopkeepers.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ HRO, 8M62/14.

⁸⁷ *Reading Mercury*, August 10, 1789.

⁸⁸ *Reading Mercury*, December 5, 1791.

⁸⁹ *Universal British Dir.* (1792), 317-8.

John Chambers was a woollen and linen draper selling ‘pocket books, atlases, and all other types of books and almanacs, likewise millinery, perfumery, and a variety of patent medicines’.⁹⁰ He also employed two men ‘constantly employed making hats’.⁹¹ Nathaniel Jackson was another draper at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.⁹² In 1801 his stock included ‘Gentlemen’s Liveries’ and ‘a large and elegant assortment of Hats of the finest manufacturies’.⁹³ This demonstrates that Basingstoke customers had a choice between locally-made articles and imported goods ‘of the finest manufacturies’. Jackson’s Winchester Street shop was successively taken over by William Castleman (fl. 1830-44), John Loader (fl. 1852-56), and by Thomas Burberry in 1856.⁹⁴

In 1799 the ‘Ladies of Basingstoke, and its Neighbourhood’ were advised that every branch of Mantua-making and fancy dress making was executed by Maria Somers at Mrs Cooper’s in Winchester Street, where there was a constant supply of ‘every new fashion from London and Bath’.⁹⁵ The same year Miss Bishop of London Street announced that she had just returned from London with ‘a new and elegant assortment of millinery, flowers, rich alamode for cloaks, and gloves’.⁹⁶ After Miss Bishop became Mrs Rogers, she moved her business from London Street to the Market Place.⁹⁷ However, Jane Austen had severe reservations about the quality of tailoring in Basingstoke in the early 19th century. She wrote, ‘I do not believe that Southampton is famous for its tailoring but I hope it will prove itself better than Basingstoke.’⁹⁸

⁹⁰ *Reading Mercury*, November 26, 1792.

⁹¹ *Reading Mercury*, April 27, 1789.

⁹² *Universal British Dir.* (1792), p. 317.

⁹³ *Reading Mercury*, May 11, 1801.

⁹⁴ *Pigot’s Lond. & Prov. Dir.* (1830), p. 409; *Pigot’s Nat. Comm. Dir.* (1844), p. 11; *Slater’s Dir. Hants* (1852), p. 13; *Post Office Dir. Hants* (1855), p. 17; HRO, 42M66/128.

⁹⁵ *Reading Mercury*, August 12, 1799.

⁹⁶ *Reading Mercury*, May 13, 1799.

⁹⁷ *Reading Mercury*, March 9, 1801

⁹⁸ Deirdre Le Faye (ed.), *Jane Austen’s Letters*, 3rd edn, Oxford 1995), p. 150 .

Although people from the surrounding areas travelled to Basingstoke to visit the shops, there is evidence of retailers travelling to the villages. Thomas Butterton, chapman, of Basingstoke (d.1750) had a considerable business with stock worth over £76, which was a very conservative valuation by the appraisers as it included 15 dozen pairs of men's stockings, 60 pairs of gloves, a parcel of ribbons, and 190 yards of lace and edgings. His stock also included five dozen silk handkerchiefs, which indicated the wealth of some of his customers. It is likely that he was employing others to take his goods to the villages as he had four horses, two pads, and two carts in his stable.⁹⁹

The Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834, which transferred the administration of poor law matters from individual parishes to poor law unions, provided opportunities for retailers to secure centralised contracts. The Basingstoke Poor Law Union comprised 39 parishes. The Union workhouse opened in Basing Road in 1836 and had room for about 420 inmates.¹⁰⁰ The workhouse required bulk supplies of food and other goods, much of which was supplied by Basingstoke retailers.¹⁰¹ William Miles, a London Street grocer, supplied the workhouse in 1838 and 1839 with various provisions, including bacon, cheese, butter, soap, starch, sugar, teas, candles, oatmeal, brooms and mops.¹⁰² Other suppliers included Richard Stone, a Winchester Street grocer in 1845, Joseph Bird, grocer and provision merchant in London Street in 1855, William Forder Smith, grocer and provision merchant in Wote Street in 1858, and Alfred Tyrell, wholesale and retail grocer, tea dealer and artificial manure merchant, in the Market Place in 1870.¹⁰³ Some retailers provided specific, rather than general, supplies. John Gilkes, a Wote Street baker, supplied the workhouse with bread and flour at various dates between 1838 and

⁹⁹ HRO, 1750AD/12.

¹⁰⁰ *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), p. 485.

¹⁰¹ HRO, PL3/5/2 to 13.

¹⁰² *Pigot's Dir.* (1844), 11; HRO, PL3/5/2 and 4.

¹⁰³ *Pigot's Dir.* (1844), 11; *Post Office Dir.* (1855), 16; *Post Office Dir.* (1867), 484; HRO, PL3/5/5, 10 and 13.

1870.¹⁰⁴ John Barton, a London Street butcher, provided meat and milk between 1838 and 1850; and William Tredgold, boot and shoe maker, of London Street, supplied the workhouse with shoes from 1838 to 1850.¹⁰⁵ Frederick Blunden, of the Wine and Spirit Vaults in the Market Place, supplied the workhouse with brandy and gin.¹⁰⁶

**THE GENUINE OLD-ESTABLISHED
WINE AND SPIRIT VAULTS,
MARKET PLACE, BASINGSTOKE.**

F BLUNDEN invites the attention of the Public to the following LIST OF PRICES, for the year 1855:—
LIGHT SUMMER WINES.

<i>Per Doz.</i>		<i>Per Doz.</i>	
Genuine Bordeaux Claret, full of body, bouquet, and flavour	30s	Champagne	54s
Moselle	30s	Fine Pale Sherry.. .. .	30s
		Old Madeira.. .. .	36s
		Best Marsala	20s
<i>Per Dozen.</i>			
Good Sound Port	30s.		
Old Crusted Port	30s. to 42s.		
Choice 1842 Port	48s. to 54s.		
Good Sherry, pale and brown	30s. to 36s.		
Choice Old ditto, ditto.. .. .	40s. to 42s.		
East India Madeira	50s.		
Excellent Claret.. .. .	48s.		
British Wines	14s. and 15s.		
British Champagne	24s.		
<i>Per Gallon.</i>			
Fine Gin	10s 0d		
Best Cream Gin	11s 6d		
Strongest unsweetened Gin as from the still	11s 6d		
Old Jamaica Rum.. .. .	14s 0d		
Best French Brandy	26s 0d		
Pale Champagne Brandy	28s 0d		
Patent Brandy	16s 0d		
British Brandy	14s 0d		
Royal Lochnagar Whiskey	20s 0d		

Gentlemen wishing to lay in a Stock of Genuine 1851 Ports, shipped by the celebrated Oporto Houses—Croft and Co., Cockburn, Sylva, Martinez, Taylor, or Offley—can be supplied at 38s. per Dozen, £95 per Pipe, or at £60 per Pipe in bond.

Reading Mercury, August 4, 1855

¹⁰⁴ *Post Office Dir.* (1855), 16; HRO, PL3/5/2 to 13.

¹⁰⁵ *Pigot's Dir.* (1844), 10; HRO, PL3/5/2 to 8.

¹⁰⁶ HRO, PL3/5/13.

Retail trades 1855 to 1914

In the early 1850s, when the town's population was about 4,300, the main shopping area included 12 bakers, 12 drapers/tailors, nine grocers, eight boot and shoe makers, eight ironmongers/whitesmiths, seven butchers, seven tailors and six general shopkeepers. Other businesses in the shopping area included saddlers, watch and clock makers, milliners, cabinet makers, wine and spirit merchants, three straw bonnet makers, a hatter and a breeches maker.¹⁰⁷

This indicates that some of the premises were both workshops and retail premises. There was no evidence of any significant retail activity outside the main shopping area.

Subsequently, the coming of the railways helped to transform the retailing business in the town, enabling goods manufactured elsewhere to be brought in bulk relatively cheaply to the town. At the same time the population had increased. In 1903, when the town's population was approaching 10,000, the main shopping area included 15 drapers, 13 grocers, 11 butchers, and five boot and shoe shops. As in the early 1850s other businesses included ironmongers, saddlers, watchmakers, cabinet makers/furniture shops and wine and spirit merchants. Unlike the 1850s, the shopping area included bicycle dealers. Another difference was that there were some 30 shops outside the main shopping area, mainly general shopkeepers and grocers, serving the streets in what became known as Brookvale, and the other residential areas that had been built to house the increasing population.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, a number of large firms had emerged.

Thomas Burberry

One shopkeeper who rose to exceptional importance in these new circumstances was Thomas Burberry. He set up shop in Basingstoke in 1856 as a wholesale and retail draper and clothing manufacturer by taking over John Loader's drapery business on the North side of Winchester

¹⁰⁷ *Census 1851; Slater's Dir. Hants (1852)*, pps. 12-14.

¹⁰⁸ *Kelly's Dir. Hants (1903)*, p. 51-4.

Street.¹⁰⁹ By 1858 he was supplying drapery items to the Basingstoke Union Workhouse.¹¹⁰ In 1859 he took out a mortgage of £500 to buy the Winchester Street premises, which he had paid off by 1872.¹¹¹ By 1861 he was employing seven men, seven women and three boys.¹¹² His interests went wider than the sale of drapery. He was the local agent for Epps's Homeopathic Cocoa and the Singer Manufacturing Company, and the Y and N Patent Diagonal Corset.¹¹³ In 1861 he bought a messuage, yard and garden in London Street and lands on the east side of, and near to, New Street, formerly occupied by William Glover, by taking out a mortgage of £700.¹¹⁴ In 1868 he started a clothing factory behind the Winchester Street shop, facing New Street, and was involved in the later setting up of two further factories in the town.¹¹⁵ By 1871 he was employing 80 hands.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ *Daily News*, April 7, 1926; *White's Dir. Hants* (1859), p. 493; HRO, 42M66/128.

¹¹⁰ HRO, Pl/3/5/10.

¹¹¹ HRO, 42M66/129.

¹¹² *Census*, 1861. RG09/708/27/9.

¹¹³ *Hampshire Advertiser*, August 11, 1860; *Alnwick Mercury*, October 28, 1865; *Hants and Berks Gazette*, August 2, 1884.

¹¹⁴ HRO, 42M66/131 and 132 read with 42M66/122.

¹¹⁵ On Burberry and clothing manufacturing see above Manufacturing 1850 to 1960.

¹¹⁶ *Census*, 1871. RG10/1234/4/1.

Agent.-- T. BURBERRY,
 THE Y. and N. PATENT
DIAGONAL SEAM CORSETS
 PATENTED IN ENGLAND AND ON THE CONTINENT.
 NEWEST INVENTION, GREATEST NOVELTY.

Will not
 split in the
 seams nor
 tear in the
 fabric,
 gives the
 utmost com-
 fort in wear
 and is free
 from all con-
 plications.



Is the most
 exquisite
 model,
 unique
 design, of
 guaranteed
 wear, and
 universal
 adaptability

A NOVEL INVENTION IN CORSETS admirably calculated to prevent the very disagreeable occurrence of split seams. The material being cut ON THE DIAS, and the component parts of the stays being also arranged DIAGONALLY, the seams are relieved of all undue strain, while the arrangement of the bones and steel, being in the ordinary position, therefore causing THE DIAGONAL SEAMS, quite prevents any stretching which would alter the shape. The natural result of this method is a corset perfectly easy in wear, keeping the figure in shape without any stiffness or pressure.
 EVERY CORSET TO PREVENT IMITATION BEARS THE STAMP.

B A S I N G S T O K E .

Hants and Berks Gazette, August 2, 1884

Although Burberry was best known as a manufacturer, he started as a shopkeeper and he remained interested in this part of his business. In 1891 Burberry expanded his business beyond the town by opening his flagship store in London's Haymarket. He later opened branches in New York, Buenos Aires, Paris and Montevideo.¹¹⁷ In the town itself, he opened a shop in London Street in 1892. He turned his Winchester Street shop into a departmental store, renaming it 'The

¹¹⁷ *Reading Evening Post*, July 23, 1975.

Emporium'. He advertised this on the front pages of the *Hants and Berks Gazette* most weeks, for example in 1897 to announce that he had taken over the stock of G. F. Dunn, and to announce that those who spent over a certain amount in the shop (20s. in 1895; 10s. in 1899) during the two days of the Michaelmas Fair would be entitled to a 'Good old English Dinner, Free'.¹¹⁸ Further expansion occurred in 1898 when Burberry took over a large shop at numbers 15 and 17 (later, 19 and 21) on the South side of Winchester Street.¹¹⁹ He opened a showroom at 1 Winchester Street, next to the Old Angel Café, in 1904 for the sale of antique furniture, curios, bric-a-brac, pianos, dinner services, glassware, etc.¹²⁰ He also had a shop in Church Street for the sale of furniture, carpets, floor cloths and linoleum.¹²¹ On 7 April 1905, the Winchester Street Emporium burnt down. Burberry quickly purchased new stock, which he sold from his other shops.¹²² He rebuilt the Emporium, which opened for business on 29 August 1906.¹²³



Burberry's Emporium before the 1905 fire

¹¹⁸ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, January 9, 1897; October 5, 1895; and October 7, 1899.

¹¹⁹ HRO, 42M66/162.

¹²⁰ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, August 20, 1904.

¹²¹ Mary Felgate and Barbara Applin (1998), *Going Down Church Street to the Felgate Bookshop*, p. 32.

¹²² *Hants and Berks Gazette*, April 29, 1905 and May 6, 1905.

¹²³ *Hants and Berks Gazette*, September 1, 1906.

In 1911 Burberry's Winchester Street business was described as 'general drapers, outfitters, tailors, house furnishers, china and glass dealers and undertakers'.¹²⁴ He advertised that T. Burberry and Sons Ltd were 'the leading Drapers, Clothiers and Home Furnishers in Basingstoke', and that the Emporium was 'spacious, conveniently arranged, well ventilated, and during the cold weather heated throughout with hot water'.¹²⁵ On the night of the 1911 census, 39 shop workers were sleeping in the dormitories above the shop, supported by a housekeeper and four domestic servants.¹²⁶ In December 1913 Edgar Lanham, a draper from Mitcham in Surrey, leased the Winchester Street Emporium from Burberry, and bought the property in October 1922.¹²⁷ In August 1915 Burberry conveyed the shop at 15 and 17 Winchester Street to Lanham.¹²⁸



Lanham's Departmental Store (formerly Burberry's Emporium) c. 1920

¹²⁴ Kelly's *Dir. Hants* (1911), p. 61.

¹²⁵ *Basingstoke, the Official Publication, 1911-12.*

¹²⁶ *Census, 1911.* RG14PN6275.

¹²⁷ HRO, 42M66/177 and 187.

¹²⁸ HRO, 42M66/180.

Alfred Milward

Another large-scale business that developed in the later 19th century was that of Alfred Milward who came from Henley on Thames and started his boot and shoe business in Basingstoke in 1857 by selling from a handcart boots he had brought from wholesalers.¹²⁹ He opened a shoe shop in Winchester Street, and by 1881 he was employing 12 men and two boys in his retail and manufacturing business.¹³⁰ He opened a warehouse in Cross Street in 1896.¹³¹ In 1898 Milwards became a limited company. Milward and Sons advertised that their shop at 9 Winchester Street held ‘a large and varied stock of the Leading Productions of Footware in sizes and half-sizes, in numerous fittings and shapes’, and that in the Bespoke Department, hand-sown work was a speciality, ‘and prompt attention to all repairs’.¹³² Milwards opened a branch in Reading in 1890 and later established a chain of shoe shops across the United Kingdom.¹³³ The business was sold to Clark’s in 1994.



Winchester Street in the early 1960s showing Milwards' shop

¹²⁹ Anon., *The Milward Story*, c. 1957.

¹³⁰ *Census*, 1881. RG11/1254/20/34.

¹³¹ HRO, 46M97/11; Kelly's *Dir. Hants* (1899), p. 55.

¹³² *Basingstoke, the Official Publication*, 1911-12.

¹³³ *The Milward Story*.

Basingstoke Co-operative Society

There was a short-lived Basingstoke Co-operative Society that lasted from 1866 to 1870, and a shop calling itself the Basingstoke Co-operative Clothing Stores in Winchester Street during the 1880s until it was sold in 1889.¹³⁴ However, 1892 is officially acknowledged as the year the Basingstoke Co-operative Society started.¹³⁵ Its original shop was in Brook Street. In 1899 the Co-op moved into a purpose-built store in Essex Road, which was extended in 1905. Further improvements to the Essex Road premises included enlarging the grocery and the bakery departments in 1912, providing a new shop front for the butchery department in 1931, and a new dairy and warehouse in 1933.¹³⁶ By 1920, the Basingstoke Co-operative Society had a turnover of £125,000 and had 2,600 members. It opened a branch in New Street in 1927. This led to the development of a string of Co-op shops down the west side of New Street from the Winchester Road junction: butchery and confectionery stores in 1935; a chemist's shop in 1947; and a drapery store in 1950. In 1961 those small Co-op shops were demolished, and part of the Essex Road stores was vacated, to make way for Co-operative House, a large departmental store on the corner of Winchester Street and stretching down New Street.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ HRO. 10M57/SP213.

¹³⁵ B.Applin (ed.) (2012), *The Co-op and Basingstoke*, 8, 10-11.

¹³⁶ B.Applin (2012), 15, 17, 23-4, 56-7.

¹³⁷ B.Applin (2012), 43, 48, 60, 77-8, 91.



Co-operative House

Following the building, and further development, of the shopping centre, New Street became increasingly isolated from the other shops in the town. In 1993 the Co-op announced that Co-operative House would be closing down.¹³⁸ In 2013 the Co-op had a number of convenience stores and mini-supermarkets in the estates on the outskirts of town.

Other significant retailers

For a short period in the early 1850s, John Lodwidge was in partnership with Arthur Wallis in an ironmonger's shop in Market Place.¹³⁹ By 1855 Lodwidge had taken over the shop after Wallis left to start what later became the manufacturing firm of Wallis and Steevens. From around 1865 Lodwidge was in partnership with Thomas Maton Kingdon.¹⁴⁰ In 1881 Lodwidge and Kingdon

¹³⁸ B.Applin (2012), 116.

¹³⁹ Slater's *Dir. Hants* (1852), 13.

¹⁴⁰ PO *Dir. Hants* (1855), p. 17; Harrod's *Dir.* (1865), 607.

employed eight men and six boys.¹⁴¹ When Lodwidge retired in the 1880s, Kingdon took sole control of the shop.¹⁴² By 1915 T. M. Kingdon & Co. had opened branches in Winchester and Alton.

Frederick Temple (fl. 1865-1881+) was an ironmonger in Church Street employing 10 men and two boys in 1881. His business was later taken over by Henry Julian whose firm continued into the 1930s.¹⁴³ Nathan and, later, George, Dunn, were drapers in London Street (fl. 1841-1896).¹⁴⁴ Alfred and, later, William, Tyrell, were grocers in Winchester Street, then the Market Place (fl. 1865-1915), employing ten men in 1881.¹⁴⁵ Walter Wadmore was a grocer in Winchester Street (fl. 1875-1903) employing nine hands in 1881.¹⁴⁶ James Moody and Sons, cabinet makers and upholsterers in London Street, were founded c.1800, and went into liquidation in 1936.¹⁴⁷

In 1892 Henry Julian (late Temple & Co.) advertised that he was a wholesale furnishing and general ironmonger, a gas and cold water engineer, dealer in oils, paints, breech loading guns and ammunition and was a maker of kitchen ranges, stable fittings, entrance gates, etc.¹⁴⁸ In the 20th century Julian and Sons described themselves as ironmongers and motor engineers.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴¹ *Census*, 1881. RG11/1254/16/25.

¹⁴² *Kelly's Dir. Hants* (1889), 46.

¹⁴³ *Harrod's Dir.* (1865), p. 608; *Census*, 1881. RG11/1254/61/23; *Kelly's Dir. Hants* (1931), p. 60.

¹⁴⁴ *Census*, 1841. HO107/385/2/15; *Hants and Berks Gazette*, January 9, 1897.

¹⁴⁵ *Harrod's Dir.* (1865), 608; *Kelly's Dir. Hants* (1915), 62; *Census*, 1881. RG11/1254/36/15

¹⁴⁶ *PO Dir. Hants* (1875), 32; *Kelly's Dir. Hants* (1903), 54; *Census*, 1881. RG11/1254/34/11.

¹⁴⁷ www.jamesmoodyandsons.co.uk

¹⁴⁸ *St Michael's Parish Magazine*, January 1892.

¹⁴⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Hants* (1915), 60.

Retail trades 1914 to 2014



Market Place in the 1920s

Already before 1914, a number of national chains had opened branches in the Market Place. By 1911, the Home and Colonial, International Stores, Liptons and Timothy Whites were all based there.¹⁵⁰ The inter-war years saw the further growth of nationally-based department stores. Woolworths opened its 'Bazaar' in London Street in 1921.¹⁵¹ In 1934 Marks and Spencer moved into 19 and 21 Winchester Street after Lanhams conveyed that property to the Masters, Fellows and Scholars of Clare College, Cambridge.¹⁵² Also in 1934, W.H. Smith moved into Buckland's fancy goods shop at the top of Wote Street.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Kelly's *Dir. Hants* (1911), 62-4.

¹⁵¹ *Basingstoke Gazette*, July 10, 2008; Kelly's *Dir. Hants* (1923), 67.

¹⁵² HRO, 42M66/207 and 208.

¹⁵³ *Basingstoke Gazette*, January 7, 2002. As above

MARKS & SPENCER'S

MESSAGE TO BASINGSTOKE.

We are frequently asked how we are able to offer such astonishing values in our Stores. Our reply is quite a simple one - these values are the direct result of the Marks & Spencer Merchandising Policy.

The distributing or retailing system in our Stores is based upon principles which enable the Producer to manufacture more methodically and economically. By placing large orders with our manufacturers for cash, we are able to offer our customers perfect and well-finished goods at the lowest possible prices. Moreover, through intimate contact with the public demand in our 190 Stores throughout the country, we are able to pass on to the manufacturer useful information that makes it possible for them to produce more cheaply.

It is our continued policy to see that the highest possible proportion of our goods is produced in this country; and this at the present amounts to over 90 per cent.

All merchandise sold in Marks & Spencer's Stores is guaranteed to be perfect.

Ladies' and Children's DRAPERY
Men's and Boys' WEAR
HOSIERY = FOOTWEAR
FANCY GOODS
HOUSEHOLD REQUISITES
LIGHTING = = TOILET
CONFECTIONERY = TOYS
HABERDASHERY
ALUMINIUM WARE
CHINA and EARTHENWARE
Etc., Etc.

Over 90% British Goods



nothing
over **5/-**

MARKS & SPENCER
New Super Store,
OPENING on FRIDAY,
AUGUST 10th. At 10 a.m.
19-21, WINCHESTER STREET, BASINGSTOKE.

Hants and Berks Gazette, August 3, 1934

By 1960, the shopping area comprised a mixture of local shops that supported other local businesses such as solicitors and accountants; and national chains.¹⁵⁴ Those shops did no more

¹⁵⁴ Kelly's *Dir. Basingstoke* (1960), 16-20, 50-1, 97-9, 104-8.

than to cater for the town, with its population of some 26,000, and the immediate hinterland.¹⁵⁵

Radical changes were needed when it was decided to expand the town, as a result of the Town Development Agreement with London County Council, to cater for the shopping demands of an additional population of some 50 – 60,000. Accordingly, the town plan defined some 144 a. for the central area to provide mainly for the creation of a new shopping centre including 500,000 sq. ft. of retail floor space and 6,000 car parking spaces.¹⁵⁶

Most of the shops in the old shopping area had become small uneconomic units. Many were subject to planning blight during the period from 1961 until the new shopping centre was built in the late 1960s. Potters Lane, much of Church Street and Wote Street were demolished for redevelopment. Between 1960 and 1974, many long-established local shops ceased trading.¹⁵⁷ These included Lanhams; G. W. Willis and Sons, jewellers and watchmakers, which was established by 1880; Loveridge and Sons, butchers, and G. H. Webber, drapers, both of which were established by 1899; H. C. Ody, grocers, which was established by 1907; Wilfred Edney and Son, house furnishers, and W. J. Hankin, tobacconist, both established by 1911, and S. Nutt and Son, greengrocers, which was established by 1927.¹⁵⁸

By 31 March 1970, 84 new shops were trading in the new centre.¹⁵⁹ Marks and Spencer opened a new store in the centre in May 1970, as did Woolworths in October 1970.¹⁶⁰ The shops in the new centre were predominantly branches of national chains. A few local retailers who were displaced by the redevelopment did, however, continue trading by moving to the new centre.¹⁶¹

Kingdon's shop moved to the new shopping centre, but closed due to competition from the large out-of-town retail warehouses of Homebase and B&Q.

¹⁵⁵ 1961 census quoted in *Basingstoke The Official Guide* (1963).

¹⁵⁶ Brendan Butler (ed.) (1980) *The Dream Fulfilled: Basingstoke Town Development, 1961-1976*.

¹⁵⁷ Kelly's *Dir. Basingstoke* (1960), 16-20, 50-1, 97-9, 104-8; Kelly's *Dir. Basingstoke* (1974), 434-55.

¹⁵⁸ Kelly's *Dir. Hants* (1880), 38; (1899), 55-6; (1907), 58; (1911), 61-2; (1927), 64.

¹⁵⁹ Basingstoke Town Development Joint Committee, *Ninth Annual Report for the period ended 31st March 1970*.

¹⁶⁰ Basingstoke Town Development Joint Committee, *Tenth Annual Report for the period ended 31st March 1971*.

¹⁶¹ Kelly's *Dir. Basingstoke* (1974), 341-2.



Part of the new shopping centre in 1971

During the 1970s and early 1980s there was a further retail development, known as The Malls, linking the shopping centre with the railway station. However, by the mid-1980s retailers were complaining that the shopping centre was too small to cater for the area, and that the units were too small and therefore could not stock the variety of new lines that could be found in Guildford or Reading. Representatives from the town's only department store, Owen Owen, said they would welcome competition from another department store, as another store 'would encourage people to come off the motorway to shop in Basingstoke'.¹⁶² Owen Owen occupied a 55,000 square metre unit in the Malls. The department store, Alders, took over the site when Owen

¹⁶² *Basingstoke Gazette*, October 10, 1986.

Owen closed in 1996. Alders left in 2005.¹⁶³ The site remained empty until it was taken by Primark, the cut-price clothes retailer, in 2008.¹⁶⁴

A further complaint was that there was a lack of upmarket shops: 'People from here will travel to Winchester to go to them'.¹⁶⁵ This was supported by a report in 1991 which found that the working population of Basingstoke and the surrounding areas contained a greater proportion of professional, managerial and associated occupational groups compared with the national average, yet the retail bias of the town centre was to average and below average income groups. It said that comparative retail studies confirmed Basingstoke's image as a basic convenience shopping centre.¹⁶⁶

At the beginning of the 21st century the 1960s shopping centre was extended and rebranded as Festival Place, which was opened in October 2002 with 165 stores, mainly national chains, 28 restaurants, bars and cafés, a sports centre, library, and a multi-screen cinema.¹⁶⁷ The total footfall in Festival Place during the first six months of 2004 reached nearly 10 million. Visitors stayed for an average of 1 hour 49 minutes, during which time the average spend was £51.50, compared with £47.30 in 2003. In 2004 a firm of researchers found that 73 per cent of people living in Andover considered Festival Place as their main shopping destination.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ *Basingstoke Gazette*, March 25, 2005.

¹⁶⁴ *Basingstoke Gazette*, March 20, 2008.

¹⁶⁵ *Basingstoke Gazette*, October 10, 1986.

¹⁶⁶ *Basingstoke: A New Start for the Town Centre, Final Report, May 1991*.

¹⁶⁷ www.basingstoke.gov.uk

¹⁶⁸ *Basingstoke Gazette*, September 10, 2004.



Festival Place, 2008

By 2014, Basingstoke was also being served by out-of-town stores, including those in retail parks at Chineham and Brighton Hill, grocery superstores on Worting Road and at Hatch Warren, and convenience shops on the housing estates. But the old shopping area at what became known as ‘The Top of the Town’ (London Street, Market Place, Winchester Street) was mainly taken up by bars, betting shops, charity shops, payday lenders, restaurants and offices. There were very few retailers left in those streets.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Personal observation.