

THE CLOTH TRADE ALONG THE PAINSWICK STREAM
FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO 1700

The Painswick stream or Wycke stream, as it was called in earlier times, rises on the hilly land above Cranham and after flowing through that village, it is joined by the Sheepscombe brook before continuing through the main part of Painswick to Kings Mill, where the Washbrook flows into it. Continuing through Pitchcombe, where the Pitchcombe brook joins it, it passes through Rockmill, Salmon's Springs, Stratford Park and joins the river Frome (sometimes called Stroudwater) near the Stroud-Cainscross road (A419).

From the Domesday Book until the late 19th century, the area covered by the manorial and parish records was much larger than this, as Painswick manor included Sheepscombe tithing, Edge tithing, Spoon bed tithing and Stroudend tithing. Stroudend included the land along the Slad brook and all that part of Wickridge Hill, now called Uplands and Beeches Green, which lies between the Slad brook and the Painswick brook and is no longer part of Painswick today.

In doing this research work, I have tried to leave out the Slad brook area and its mills, but it is often not possible to tell in the records the exact locations. Where it is obvious from local names quoted, that a record refers to the Slad area it has been omitted.

At the time of the Doomsday Book in 1086, Painswick was a large and important Manor held by the De Laci family. (It was called Wycke at that time) There is no evidence in the Domesday Book of sheep being kept or cloth being made, but there were four mills in the manor. There is nothing to indicate where the mills were situated and it is generally believed that they were corn mills, (1) but it is interesting that the power of water was already being used, which was to gain so much in importance during the following centuries. During the Middle Ages, when the wool trade of the Cotswolds was at its apex, there is no evidence of it in Painswick.

A document of 1429 mentions a building called New Hall at the corner of the present Bisley Street, (formerly High Street) and New Street, which Baddeley thinks was probably a Cloth-makers' Hall. (2) As this building is on the ancient pack-horse route which went through Bull's Cross over Steanbridge (3) on the Slad brook and continued through Bisley to Cirencester, it is possible that it could have been used for this purpose.

A document of 7 December 1440 (4) gives a list of purchases made by the Steward of the manor, which include some interesting items:

- "ij steykys of wollen cloth" the price xd.
- "Woollen cloth as commeth iijs and jd to be paid by Mydsomer."
- "a scherte and an apryn clothe the price xvjd."
- "half a decen of Wyke yeyrne the price xvd."
- "ij shurtes price ijs iiijd."
- "ij yardes di quarter of Redde cloth price the yard vs."
- "j li of blewe threed xiiijd."
- "ij stykkes j quarter of Blakke fustyan."
- "iij yardis di grene cloth, price the yerd vis viiijd."
- "Item to Study's wife in lynyn cloth."
- "Item to Thomas Wynor for wollen cloth."
- "Item to Walter Berowe iij quarters saten."
- "Item for ii brode yardes blanket xxd."
- "Item to Henry Dudbrygge on Ester Evyng for Tesylls iis."

In this list we can see that the steward bought, not only woollen cloth dyed red and green, but black fustian, linen cloth, satin, and blanket cloth. In addition there is mentioned Wyke yarn, blue thread, hemp and teasels. We know that during the 15th century the cloth trade in England was expanding rapidly, as the export of wool was declining (5) so it seems reasonable to assume from the above list, that cloth was being made in the Painswick area in 1440. We know of course that in the Middle Ages and for centuries afterwards most women did spinning, so Wyke yarn and blue thread would not be unusual. Hemp seed oil was at one time used in the process of greasing wool, after scouring with stale urine had taken place (6) and teasels were used for raising the nap on cloth after fulling. (in early days in hand frames, but later in gig-mills).

What type of cloth was made is not known, but it seems reasonable to assume that at this period it was largely for local usage and was nothing like the fine broadcloth which was to be produced later in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.

The first mention of a clothier in the area is nearly a century later, in 1512, when Henry Loveday is recorded as a clothmaker. (7) In a 1548 manorial roll, a Thomas Loveday is recorded as a miller, but there is nothing to indicate the type of mill. In the same roll I found that William Pounce and John Jakes were recorded as woolcarders, which is interesting because carding was usually done by women, before spinning. It is possible that they may have been makers of hand cards which were wooden frames to which were fixed pieces of leather, with nails inserted in them, which had replaced the short-spiked teasels of earlier days. (8)

There is little information about the 16th century cloth trade which I have been able to discover, but one other man is mentioned as a clothier. In the north aisle of Painswick church you can still see recorded "Here rest the body of James Tocknell, the son of Walter Tocknell, clothier, d. 9th September 1602." No age is stated, but even if the son died very young the father must have been trading in the latter years of the 16th century.

Once we reach the 17th century much more information is available. In 1608 John Smith of Nibley collected the names of men in each parish fit for military service. The list for Painswick shows that by this date the cloth trade was well established. The following names are those taken from his list which relate to this trade. (9)

Clothiers

Edmand Fletcher	clothier	
Thomas Fletcher	clothier	
William Blisse	sonne of Thomas Blisse	clothier
Walter Merrett	clothier	
Total = 4		

Under other inhabitants not included in the able-bodied, but charged with finding armour is: Thomas Blisse, clothier, unable in body.

Total 4 + 1 = 5

Weavers

Richard Fletcher	wever	Arthur Hillman	wever
Will'm Westripp	"	Richard Willshire	"
Arthur Kinge	"	Gyles Beard	"
Anthony Norton	"	Richard Watson	"
John Derny	"	Thomas Ellice	"
Richard Aldridge	"	Thomas Whitinge	"
Gyles Carter	"	Thomas Pyffe	"
Henry Aldridge	"	Willm Twyninge	"
Will'm Gybbins	"	Thomas Vaughan	"
Richard Myll	"	John Mylle	"
Thomas Clissold	"	John Scott	"
John Bardle	"	Thomas Knowles	"
John Treherne	"	Will'm Niblet	"
John Mason	"	Court Hooper	"
Walter Peirce	"	Gyles Knowles	"
Richard Bankeknett	"	Robert Harris	"
George Carter	"	Total Weavers = 33	

Tuckers (fullers)

Gyles Wheeler	tucker	John Dier	tucker
John Hamons	"	John Russell, junr	"
Thomas Wood	"	Richard Garbett	"
Samuel Hobson	"	Thomas Wight	"
Robert Nicholls	"	Edward Rickets	"

Total Tuckers = 10

The total number of men quoted by Smith as fit for military service is 160 and of these 47 are engaged in the cloth trade, almost 30%; which indicates that by 1608 the manufacture of cloth had become very important. No women are, of course, mentioned on such a list, but it must be remembered that they would have been engaged in the industry doing the carding and spinning. There were probably also a number of younger boys working as apprentices who are not included. The weavers are not labelled "broadweavers" as occurs at a later date, so we cannot tell on what type of cloth they were working, but the presence of 10 tuckers (fullers) indicates that it was felted cloth and not worsted. It is possible that it was broadcloth but that it was sold in an undyed and unfinished state; the various processes being fully described in the general histories of the West Country cloth industry.

The next item of interest in the Painswick cloth trade concerns Thomas Webb in 1634-5. In December 1634, Henry Ackenbach of London, gentleman, sent in an Affidavit that "Thomas Webb, the elder, of Painswick co. Gloucester on the 27th of November last past, being at Blackwell Hall, in the Cloth Market, offered for sale two Stroudwater reds, not having the mark of the clothier woven in either of them, but contrary to the statute between the forrels, and that Anthony Wither, his Majesty's commissioner for clothing, caused Laomedon Bliss to seize the same cloths as forfeited to his Majesty's use. Bliss having one of the said cloths in his arms to carry away to the King's storehouse, the said Thomas Webb violently took the same away, saying to Wither, in a railing manner that he hoped the curses of the poor would one day root him out and that the marks on the said cloths stood where they ought to stand, where they should stand, and where he would have them stand, neither would he make it otherwise while he lived" (10). Later it seems that the case against Thomas Webb was discontinued and no further answer was ordered. (11) This Thomas Webb is probably the one who is recorded in Painswick church registers as being baptised on 4 June 1598 (son of Walter Webe) (12) His name is also recorded in the subsidy rolls:

- 116/505 1626. Thomas Webb is assessed at 13s. 4d on £5
- 116/522 1641. It is 26s. 8d on £5
- 116/526 1641. It is £1. 12s. on £6 and he is rated higher than any other customary tenants on the list (13)

He made a will in 1642 in which he left considerable charities to Stroud (14) which is understandable as he lived on "de Hill" which is the area on the tip of Wickridge Hill, above Merrywalks in Stroud, where he built or rebuilt a house in 1634 which was occupied by the Webb family until 1816 (15)

You can still see the porch of this house today (1978) but it is very much decayed. You can see the 16-- but not the

34 and only the W of the Webb initials. I have been unable to trace any children of Thomas Webb and I note that Fisher uses the words "his successor" in describing the next Webb to occupy his house so he may not have had any direct descendants, but the family, described as "Webb de Hill" continue to be recorded in Painswick church records until the late 18th century.

During the middle years of the 17th century, there seems to be very little evidence about the cloth trade along the Wycke stream, but the names of clothiers recorded by Bigland from monuments in the Painswick church and churchyard show that the trade was expanding. The following list gives names of clothiers quoted by Bigland who according to the date of death and age given would have been following their trade during the 17th century. I have not recorded those who were working along the Slad brook, where this can be ascertained.

Thomas Winn	(70)	d. 1708
Henry Townsend	(61)	d. 1714
John Webb	(66)	d. 1712
Thomas Webb	(53)	d. 1713
Edmund Webb	(77)	d. 1697
Richard Packer	(80)	d. 1719
Thomas Packer	(30)	d. 1705
Daniel Packer	(67)	d. 1739
Richard Gardiner de Damsells	(73)	d. 1690
Richardus Gardiner de Damsells	(71)	d. 1728
Daniel Gardner		d. 1662
Daniel Gardner	(60)	d. 1712
John Palling	(84)	d. 1726
Edward Palling		d. 1685
Edward Palling	(17)	d. 1698
William Palling	(80)	d. 1757
Edward Palling	(81)	d. 1758
Henry Webb		d. 1689
Edmund Clement		d. 1684
Robert Kent	(45)	d. 1704
Jeremiah Caudwell	(51)	d. 1701-2 (16)

In addition to this list from Bigland some more names of clothiers are given in the Painswick churchyard "Tomb Trail," but no ages are quoted, only the date of death. The following were probably working in the latter part of the 17th century.

John Webb	d. 1736
William Palling	d. 1752
John Edwards	d. 1751
John Harris	d. 1738
Jeremiah Caudwell	d. 1747
Edwin Winchcombe	d. 1739
John Wight	d. 1731
John Packer	d. 1753
Samuel Hopton	d. 1677 (17)

In addition to these names, there are other families who were concerned in the cloth trade such as the Blissess and Lovedays, but as they are not named as clothiers they have not been included. It is however obvious from the lists given that there was great expansion in cloth trading since the time of John Smith's list of 1608.

Another interesting source of names of men concerned in the cloth trade in the Painswick area during the 17th century is the Gloucestershire marriage allegations 1637-1700 (18). These allegations were statements made in applications for marriage licences, so that marriages could take place without the publication of banns.

Names of Persons in Painswick Cloth Trade
Recorded in Gloucester Marriage Allegations
1637 - 1700

(All come from Painswick, unless otherwise stated)

1662	June 3	Richard Morgan, weaver, 20 and Deborah Moore, 20. Bdm. William Wattkins, weaver
1662	Nov 29	Thomas Twynning, broadweaver, 30 and Rebecca Greene, w.
1663	Aug 17	Daniell Gardiner, clothworker, 27 and Margery Wood, 27.
1666	Nov 20	Richard Gaye, clothworker, 21 and Mary Payne, St. Mary Load, Gloucester City, 22
1668	Dec 15	John Mynce, clothier, 20 and Beata Partridge, 19, Bdm. Thomas Partridge, clothier
1670/1	Feb 27	Richard Crumpe, clothier, 28 and Mary Derrett, North Nibley, 24.
1671	June 29	Richard Packer, clothier, 30 and Elizabeth Clissold, Pitchcombe, 20.
1672	Dec 19	John Dodwell, clothier, 40 and Anne Chadwell, Stroude, 30.
1676	Apr 20	Will. Loveday, clothier, 25 and Ursula Webb, W.
1676	n.d.	Henry Townsend, clothier, 24 and Anne Jayne, Salperton, 30.
1677	Apr 10	John Webb, clothier, 22 and Mary Iles, Minchinhampton, 21.
1678	May 11	Daniel Packer, clothier, 24 and Mary Clissold, Pitchcombe.

1678/9 Feb. 26 Edward Okey, clothier, 30 and Margaret Clements.

1679 May 3 Edward Palling, clothier, 40 and Grace Gardner, 24.

1679/80 Feb. 7 Walter Lawrence, clothier, 23 and Anne Webb, 21.

1680 May 5 Josiah Dorwood, clothier, 28 and Francis Smith, 29.

1680/1 Jan. 1 Robert Cooke, clothier, 27 and Joane Viner, Stroude, 24.

1680/1 Jan. 28 Daniel Foord, clothier, 23 and Martha Gardiner, 22. Bdm. Joseph Foord, (signs Ford), clothier.

1681 Aug. 6 Richard x Gardner, clothier, 28 and Deborah Franklyn, 22.

1681 Nov. 5 Jeremiah Cawdle (signs Codewell), clothier 26 and Dorothy Loveday, 24.

1682 Apr. 4 William Simmonds, clothier, 25, and Margaret Theyer, Brockworth, 24.

1682 May 9 John Cooke, clothier, 23, and Mary Howes, W.

1682 Dec. 12 John Flight, clothworker, 23 and Elizabeth Gardiner, Kings Stahly, 26.

1682/3 Jan. 22 Giles x Harding, clothworker, 24 and Ann Wesbury, W.

1683 Oct. 11 James Fryer, broadweaver, 28 and Elizabeth Brookes, 30.

W = widow x = the person signs with a mark.

Although the marriage allegations cover the period 1637-1700, the earliest Painswick man mentioned who was engaged in the cloth trade was in 1662 and the last mentioned was in 1683. There were other Painswick marriage allegations after this date, but in most cases no occupation was given. In the list above the totals of occupations are:

Clothiers	20
Clothworkers	4
Weavers	4

Marriage by licence rather than banns, was not limited by law to any special social class, but as it was usually more expensive, it was natural that it should be more fashionable and popular among the "higher classes," and this would seem to account for the totals given here. The number of men quoted as clothiers also confirms, as did the burials, how greatly the cloth trade was increasing during the 17th century.

With regard to the weavers who must have been increasing greatly in numbers as the cloth trade expanded, there is not much evidence, but the apprentices' indentures among the church records

are very interesting. Although the law which gave the overseers of the poor, in every parish the right to bind any poor boys or girls in apprenticeship dates back to 1601, (19) the earliest indentures I found were dated 1668. These indentures were documents whereby the churchwardens and overseers of the poor bound a poor child as apprentice to the age of 24 for boys and 21 for girls, to an employer. The master had to provide the child with living accommodation, meat, drink and all other necessities and teach him a trade; "the art or mystery of a broadweaver" was the commonest in the documents I have seen. At the end of the apprenticeship the master had to provide him with two suits of clothing, one for "holy Days" and another for working days. The apprentices had to serve his master in all lawful business and behave faithfully and obediently towards him. The indentures surviving from 1668 to 1700 totalled 72 and of these 65 were concerned with the cloth trade. Of the employers mentioned in the documents there were:

Broadweavers	59
Gents	2
Clothiers	3
Clothworkers	2
Serge Weaver	1
Husbandman	1
Butcher	1
Not described	3

(1 broadweaver was also described as a serge-weaver)

Of the broadweavers mentioned 41 were in Painswick. The clothiers, cloth workers and serge weaver were also resident in Painswick. Eighteen of the apprentices to broadweavers went to employers outside Painswick and one who was apprenticed to a clothworker. The places outside Painswick were:

Randwick	Whitminster	Horsley	Rodborough
Miserden	Stroud	Pitchcombe	

It is interesting to note that during the years covered, 1668-1700 (inclusive) a period of 33 years, there were 14 years when no indentures were made. The numbers of years and indentures are as follows:

14 years with	0	indentures
1 year with	1	"
5 years with	2	"
6 years with	3	"
3 years with	5	"
1 year with	16	"

This last year with 16 indentures was 1688: the list of names of all the employers concerned would be too long to quote here but the name of one clothier, Edward Gardner 1677, is of particular interest as will be seen later when dealing with the mills. (20)

There is a little information about occupations in Painswick in the register of baptisms in 1698 and 1699, but as not all the parents have the occupations quoted, it is not possible to form any conclusions upon the evidence. In 1698 there are 53 baptisms recorded and 11 fathers are quoted as being in the cloth trade;

3 Weavers	2 Rugweavers	1 Clothworker
3 Tuckers	1 Broadweaver	1 Clothier

There are also 15 labelled "poor". In 1699, there are 51 baptisms; but only 3 clothiers and 3 weavers are named among the parents but 25 are labelled "poor". In 1700 the parents' trades are not quoted but out of 53 baptisms recorded 27 parents are labelled "poor". It must have been a very bad time for the workers in the cloth trade at the end of the 17th century. (21). It is interesting to note that not all the weavers were making broadcloth as 2 rug-weavers are quoted above, and I found another mentioned in 1688 in the churchwardens' book and also a woolcomber (22).

As wool for broadcloth was carded, not combed, perhaps the woolcomber was providing the yarn for the rug-weavers. One other small point of interest written by the churchwardens in 1689 was that the "Land Tax did the Parish great damage", (23) so Land Taxes may have had some share in the depression which seemed to be going on in Painswick in 1688.

The factor which was probably most important in the expanding cloth trade in the 17th century along the Wycke stream has not yet been mentioned - that is the stream itself - and the power provided by the water for the mills. It has been possible to identify 14 mills along the Wycke stream plus one on its tributary, the Washbrook, as existing before 1700, but that does not prove that others were not in existence; neither is it possible to say that the 15 mentioned were in existence all the time from the first date mentioned to 1700, as in mediaeval times mills were probably built of wood and very small and may have fallen into disuse or been rebuilt several times.

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