

THE CLOTH TRADE ALONG THE PAINSWICK STREAM

from 1700 to 1800

by Colleen Haine

The 18th century was a period of great changes for Britain. There were wars with European countries for most of the century and a great expansion of the British Empire in Canada, India and Australia, but the loss of the American States. The Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions were taking place, with improvement in transport facilities by the turnpike roads and the building of new canals and a considerable increase in population. Against such a background the cloth trade would be expected to show considerable changes. There was a great expansion of the export of cloth during the century, but also periods of depression as the following figures show.(1)

Annual Average per decade (in pieces) of cloth exported

1701-10 = 68,130	1751-60 = 79,935
1711-20 = 66,866	1761-70 = 82,572
1721-30 = 54,644	1771-80 = 82,834
1731-40 = 59,476	1781-90 = 114,739
1741-50 = 53,922	1791-1800 = 196,154

The great increase in exports in the second half of the century refers, of course, to the whole country and it is likely that much more of it was in Yorkshire than in this area.

Atkyns, writing about 1710 says of Gloucestershire that the "Clothing Trade is so prominent that no other manufacturer deserves a mention". He estimated its value as £500,000 a year, and valued the wool provided in Gloucestershire at £30,000, but imported wool as £220,000.(2) He said that Stroud was famous for the "Trade of Clothing" and particularly for dyeing in scarlet. (3) He did not mention the cloth trade nor the mills in Painswick. Rudder, writing in the latter part of the century in 1779, said the manufacture of cloth had been gradually advancing but by very unequal steps. He classified the cloth trade under four sections:

1. The Country or Inland Trade = £250,000 per annum
2. Trade with drapers in London
(or Army Trade) = £100,000 per annum
but varies
3. Turkey Trade - "much
declined as French have
gained a lot of it" = £50,000 per annum
4. East India Co. Trade - "most considerable of
foreign trade, but present method of conducting it
is not advantageous to the clothier."

He said many Blackwell Hall factors acted as bankers and lent money to clothiers and as the clothiers could not get adequate prices for the cloth they produced, it led to bankruptcies. He also pointed out the importance of the power of water for driving the fulling mills and scouring wool and said that the cloth trade "has long since seated itself principally on the borders of little rivers and brooks in the parishes of Bisley, Hampton, Stroud, Painswick, Woodchester, Horsley, Stonehouse, Stanley, Uley, Dursley, Wootton-under-Edge and neighbouring places of less note".(4) About Painswick itself, Rudder said that the clothing manufacture had been long established and that large fortunes had been made, and it was still considered as a "lucrative and genteel employment". He also said that it provided work for both sexes and all ages of the poor. The population of Painswick was estimated at about 3,300.(5)

The Clothiers

In the early years of the 18th century the Painswick church registers give some information about occupations. These are included in the register of baptisms 1701-1716, in the register of marriages 1702-1705, and in the register of burials 1706-1713.

In these registers the names of 43 men are given as clothiers. The true total for clothiers in these years is probably much higher, as the registers do not include bachelors, clothiers whose marriages took place away from Painswick, nor clothiers who did not belong to the Church of England. There were Lovedays, quoted as clothiers who were Quakers. Painswick had a Quaker burial ground as early as 1658 which can still be seen at Dell Farm.(6)

At the beginning of the previous century, in 1608, out of a list of 160 able men in Painswick 4 were named as clothiers, plus 1 "unable in body", (7) so it would appear that in the early 18th century the number of clothiers was about ten times as many as in the early 17th century, and an enormous expansion of the cloth trade must have taken place.

Some of the old clothier families mentioned in the 17th century still (8) continued in the cloth trade until 1800. Cooks, Lovedays, Packers, Pallings and Webbs are all mentioned throughout the period, but in the later years of the century some new names appear: Cox, Jarruthers, Horlick, Stanley, Baylis, Knight and Wight are some of the most important of these new names.(9)

Some of the 18th century clothiers must have had considerable success in the trade and were held to be in 'genteel employment', as Rudder states. A number of them who were clothiers are described on their tombs as "Gents" and also in their wills.(10) There is not one mill-house along the Painswick stream which was built in the 18th century. The clothiers seem to have preferred country residences on the hillsides, some distance away from the mills, and to have built or rebuilt pleasant 18th century residences.

List of Men described as Clothiers in the Painswick
Church Registers of Baptisms (1701-1716) Marriages
(1701-1705) Burials (1706-1713)

Occupations are not given in other years except for an occasional one which would not be useful in making an analysis.

b= name of parent quoted in baptisms
m= marriages
d= burials (deaths)

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Aldridge Thomas b.1702 | 24. Parker Richard |
| 2. Arrowsmith John b.1705 | (or Parker?) d.1712 |
| 3. Capel Richard b.1712 b.1713 | 25. Partridge Henry |
| 4. Clissold Daniel b.1710 | b.1704 |
| 5. Cook Richard b.1701 | 26. Pegler Richard b.1710 |
| 6. Fletcher George b.1708 | 27. Poole Richard b.1702 |
| b.1710 b.1713 | 28. Short William b.1705 |
| 7. Gardner John d.1708 | b.1707 b.1710 |
| 8. Gardner Thomas b.1714 | b.1712 b.1713 |
| 9. Harris John b.1711 b.1715 | 29. Smart Thomas m.1705 |
| 10. Hart William b.1703 | b.1706 |
| 11. Hudson Thomas b.1703 | 30. Smith George d.1706 |
| 12. Jones George b.1701 | 31. Sparrow Joseph |
| 13. Kent Robert b.1704 b.1705 | b.1708 b.1710 |
| b.1708 d.1708 | 32. Sparrow William b.1705 |
| 14. Lawrence Anthony b.1703 | 33. Stephens Thomas |
| 15. Lawrence William b.1701 | b.1702 d.1706 |
| b.1704 | 34. Stephens Thomas b.1704 |
| 16. Lediard William b.1716 | b.1706 d.1707 |
| 17. Lyddiard William b.1706 | 35. Stone (?) b.1712 |
| b.1708 b.1710 b.1713 | 36. Townsend Henry b.1709 |
| 18. Merrett Thomas b.1711 | 37. Turner John b.1701 |
| b.1712 b.1713 b.1715 | b.1704 b.1705 |
| 19. Packer John b.1715 | 38. Webb Edward b.1712 |
| 20. Packer Thomas b.1702 | b.1715 |
| b.1704 | 39. Webb de Hill Thomas |
| 21. Palling William b.1701 | b.1705 b.1709 b.1713 |
| b.1705 d.1706 | 40. Wight Edward b.1704 |
| 22. Palling William b.1706 | b.1708 d.1708 |
| b.1709 b.1712 b.1715 | 41. Winchcombe Edward |
| 23. Parker John b.1712 b.1713 | b.1701 b.1702 |
| | 42. Winn Thomas d.1708 |
| | 43. (?) Richard b.1704 |
| | (Name illegible) |
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Some of the examples of these 18th century residences can be seen today at Brownhill Court, Sheephouse, Brookhouse, Castle Godwin and others. The only large 18th century residence on the outskirts of Painswick which has no connection with the cloth trade is Painswick House built by the Hyett family on the site of a farmhouse formerly called "Herrings".(11)

In addition to the "Gentlemen clothiers" there must have been many in the trade in a much smaller way, as many names of clothiers are not connected with any mills or important properties, and some only appear in church rates for a few years. The periods of trade depression which appeared during the century probably affected the small producers seriously. I have found several bankrupts who were clothiers of Painswick; William Lediard in 1734 (12) James Woodfield in 1777(13) and John Hill in 1780(14). Another clothier Samuel Haines shot himself in 1768 because he was in debt.(15) There were probably many more who suffered similarly or simply abandoned the trade.

Another trouble experienced by Painswick clothiers was the stealing or deliberate destruction of cloth, which was drying on tenters in the rack fields by the mills and an advertisement appeared in 1725 from Stroud district clothiers offering rewards for information that would convict the thieves. It is signed by a large number of clothiers recorded in the list I have quoted from the church registers. There are six others on the list who may have been Painswick clothiers (16).

Painswick seems to have had plenty of this trouble. In 1723 while long broadcloth had been stolen from the tenters at Mr. William Lediard's Mill (17). This was the same Mr. Lediard who went bankrupt in 1734. In 1729 white broadcloth was stolen from John Packer's rack at Cap Mill (18). In 1771 from the racks at Smalls Mill was stolen 36 yards of Spanish Stripe list cloth marked "Edward Palling - best superfine" (19). In 1776 two thefts are recorded from the tenter hooks at Rook Mill, 7 or 8 ells of scoured say-cloth and on another night 14 yards of blue and white feathered stripe-list Worcester cloth, the property of Zachariah Horlick.(20) In 1787, Smalls Mill again had trouble as a piece of scarlet cloth worth 9s a yard was cut from the tenters and from a drying house in the tenter ground 29 yards of white cloth was stolen. A reward of 10 guineas was offered for information to convict the thief.(21)

These advertisements tell us a little about the types of cloth being produced in the area, but not much information has been found on this subject. William Palling, in 1718-22 was selling about 230 cloths a year to London factors for export to India and Levant (22) and was being supplied with yarn from yarn-makers in Devizes and Cirencester (23). Many years later in 1763, Daniel Parker was also selling cloth to factors in London; Sir Thomas Fludyer, Messrs. Marsh and Hudson, and Mr. Thos. Misenor. His cloth was sold to the East India Company and to the Levant. Types of cloth mentioned are Salisburys, Worcesters, livery whites, scarlets and blues. He mentioned dyeing cloth scarlet himself for the East India Company, but he also sent undyed cloth to be dyed in London. Unlike William Palling, he was having the spinning done locally as in the depression of that year he feared he would have to part with his spinners and said there would be no

other work for them to do. In January 1769 he was complaining that his Worcesters had been sold for £11 per cloth when they were really worth £29. 10s.(24) In 1789 William Carruthers (who had married Mary Palling) was selling cloth to his London factors at 7s. 6d. to 15s. a yard. A few of the cloths at 15s. were described as "Superfine", but most were "super", "fine", "ladies' cloth" and one was "uniform cloth".(25)

Many of the wills of Painswick clothiers do not give much detail about estates, as they simply left their property to the main heir, but there are a few which show that not all the clothiers were in that position. Robert Kent, described as a clothier of Painswick, 1708, left only a quantity of domestic goods and some farming items including 1 dung cart, 6 score bushels of barley, 20 bushels of malt, 2 ricks of hay, 2 store pigs, 2 cows, 1 cider mill, 200 cheeses and at "John Webb's a pair of shears." His total goods were valued at £166. 9s. Od., so he was not poor, but in a very different position financially from the "Gentleman Clothier".(26) He was evidently using part of Webb's mill for shearing, but if he really was a "Clothier" as described, it must have been a very small business.

In 1768 Job Gardner, described as a clothier, died intestate and there is a document whereby his widow agreed that all his goods, chattels and credits be granted to his creditor Thomas White, woolstapler of Kings Stanley.(27) This poor man had evidently suffered from the depression about which Daniel Packer complained in 1768, but was in a very different financial situation from the Packer family, and his widow must have been left destitute. There are a number of other interesting wills of clothiers, but there is not space to quote any more, as the employees in the cloth trade are also of considerable interest.

The Broadweavers

In the church registers already quoted the occupations of other men are also given. The Painswick registers of baptisms give the occupations of parents, 1701-1716. The following table is an analysis of these occupations concerned with the cloth trade. Other occupations are not included. The occupations are not given after 1716, but the table seems to indicate that 1703 was a good year for the trade, as out of 60 baptisms, 21 parents were employed as broadweavers and only 5 were labelled "poor", but 1705 seems to have been a bad year as out of 75 baptisms, 49 parents are labelled "poor", and no broadweavers are recorded.

From the totals it appears that out of 943 children who were baptised during these years, 293 were children of parents engaged in the cloth trade i.e. 32% and of these 154 were broadweavers, i.e. 53%.

Year	Total Bapt.	Cloth -iers	Broad- weavers	Tuckers	Cloth- workers	Scrib -lers	Wool- combers	Poor
1701	50	6	4	1	-	-	-	18
1702	72	5	6	-	2	-	-	30
1703	60	4	21	6	-	-	-	5
1704	71	8	3	2	2	-	-	29
1705	75	7	-	-	1	-	-	49
1706	43	5	10	6	2	-	-	not
1707	62	1	12	7	-	1	-	given
1708	42	5	13	5	-	-	1	after
1709	42	4	11	3	-	-	1	this
1710	61	7	11	3	3	-	-	date
1711	45	2	8	4	-	-	-	
1712	59	7	7	2	-	-	-	
1713	66	8	19	4	1	-	-	
1714	64	1	12	1	-	-	-	
1715	75	4	10	2	-	-	-	
1716	56	1	7	4	-	-	-	
Total	943	75	154	50	11	1	2	

The Painswick marriage registers only give the occupations of husbands for the years 1702-1705 as below:

Year	Totals	Clothiers	Broad- weavers	Serge- weavers	Tuckers
1702	16	-	11	1	-
1703	4	-	-	-	-
1704	17	-	6	-	2
1705	12	1	7	-	2
Totals	49	1	24	1	4

Out of a total of 49 marriages, 30 husbands are in the cloth trade, i.e. 61%, but as the occupations are given for such a small number of years it is not reasonable to deduce much from them. Of the 30 men in the cloth trade, 24 are broadweavers i.e. 80%.

The Painswick burial registers give occupations 1706-1713. The following table is an analysis of these occupations concerned with the cloth trade.

Year	Totals	Clothiers	Broadweavers	Tuckers	Clothworkers
1706	34	3	3	2	-
1707	59	1	15	3	-
1708	42	4	10	1	-

Year	Totals	Clothiers	Broadweavers	Tuckers	Clothworkers
1709	35	-	9	1	-
1710	46	-	11	2	-
1711	45	-	9	1	1
1712	77	1	7	-	2
1713	(only 4 occupations given this year, so no use)				
Totals	338	9	64	10	3

The above table shows that out of 338 burials, 86 were concerned in the Trade - about 25% of these 64 are broadweavers, i.e. 74% (28).

In the three registers together, the total of occupations given in the cloth trade is 409 and of these 242 are broadweavers i.e. 59%, and this shows that broadweaving was the commonest occupation among men in those years. Of course women are not mentioned, but it is known that they did the spinning and that it took about 4 - 6 spinners to provide yarn for 1 broadweaver (29). Some other interesting information available in the parish records comes from the indentures of apprentices, which cover the whole century. The total number of pauper apprenticeships I found was 167 and out of these 151 were in the cloth trade. Most of the employers were broadweavers, but a few others in the trade were given as follows:-

Broadweavers	135	Clothworkers	3	Rugg-maker	1
Weavers	3	Clothiers	2	Narrow-weaver	1
Serge-weavers	3	Scribblers	2	Stuff(?)weaver	1

Most of the apprenticeships were served in Painswick, but some were in other local areas and 1 not local. Out of the total of 151 there were:-

- 94 in Painswick
- 14 in Stroud
- 12 in Bisley
- 10 in Miserden
- 3 each in Pitchcombe and Rodborough
- 2 each in Sheepcombe, Minshinhampton and Harescombe
- 1 each in Randwick, Wotton-under-Edge, Arlingham, Whadlon, Stonehouse, Upton St.Leonards, Frocester, and the only
- 1 not local, in Worcester.

The yearly totals of pauper apprenticeships in the cloth trade are shown below. It will be seen from the table that there were more apprenticeships in the first half of the century, 118 to 1750 and only 33 after 1750 to 1800.(30) It is possible that this was due to the unwillingness of broadweavers and clothiers to accept pauper apprentices. More workers were managing to take up weaving without serving a legal apprenticeship. Even as

early as 1727 weavers in the Stroud area had been complaining about clothiers who employed weavers who had not served apprenticeships. (31)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No.</u>
1701	4	1721	-	1741	1	1761	-	1781	1
1702	-	1722	1	1742	2	1762	-	1782	1
1703	4	1723	3	1743	-	1763	-	1783	2
1704	2	1724	-	1744	1	1764	-	1784	-
1705	-	1725	6	1745	1	1765	-	1785	1
1706	2	1726	-	1746	5	1766	-	1786	1
1707	1	1727	3	1747	4	1767	1	1787	3
1708	-	1728	5	1748	4	1768	1	1788	1
1709	2	1729	-	1749	4	1769	-	1789	-
1710	1	1730	1	1750	2	1770	-	1790	-
1711	2	1731	2	1751	-	1771	-	1791	2
1712	7	1732	1	1752	3	1772	-	1792	3
1713	3	1733	4	1753	2	1773	-	1793	-
1714	2	1734	-	1754	1	1774	-	1794	1
1715	6	1735	1	1755	-	1775	-	1795	1
1716	3	1736	4	1756	-	1776	-	1796	-
1717	6	1737	2	1757	-	1777	1	1797	-
1718	2	1738	1	1758	-	1778	1	1798	-
1719	3	1739	5	1759	1	1779	3	1799	1
1720	3	1740	2	1760	-	1780	-	1800	-

Among the wills of weavers we can see much diversity, as in the wills of clothiers. John Cardner, broadweaver, of Lovedays, 1715, could afford to leave £10 to his wife, plus a large amount of household goods, including pewter and brass, £20 each to a son and daughter, with large quantities of household goods and he named a clothier and a schoolmaster as his executors (32). John Cooke, weaver, in his will of 1708, left a long list of household goods, but also 2 broadlooms. His goods were valued at £19 18s. Od. which seems to put him in the medium class (33). In contrast with these two in 1737 the churchwardens offered for sale the goods of Samuel Dark, a broadweaver, for £5. 0s. Od.:-

- 2 beds with appurtenances
- 1 broadloom with all appurtenances
- 1 iron bolt
- 1 pail
- 2 half barrels
- 1 quarter barrel
- 1 long table
- 1 pewter plate
- 2 coffers
- 1 frying pan
- 1 pr. of andirons (probably hand-irons?)
- 1 little brass kettle
- 3 chairs
- 1 skimmer with appurtenances (34)

A William Cooke, described as a clothworker, 1713 left goods valued at £9 14s. Od. (35) Samuel Merrett, a Scribbler,

in 1768 left goods valued at £6 Os. Od. which included a scribbling horse and scales (36). There is a very interesting inventory of 1715, that of John Gardner, of Lovedays, a slaymaker. I had never found such an occupation quoted in any other book, but I found from the Oxford Dictionary that his "stock of slayes" were instruments made from reeds, used in weaving to beat up the weft. His craft must have been providing him with reasonable wages as his goods were valued at £197 14s. Od. (37) In 1722 William Merrett (no occupation stated) left goods valued at £95 6s. 5d. His stock included a malt mill, a cider mill, 33 sheep, 4 cows, bushels of barley and wheat also "2 loads of Wool and Yarn" and "Goods at the mill where he worked". The wool and yarn were valued at £16 12s. Od., the largest item on the list. It is hardly surprising that no occupation is quoted for him! (38)

The information which has been recorded here shows that there were enormous differences between the various classes of people. The poor were certainly very poor and life for them must have been very hard indeed. Smallpox did not help matters and outbreaks were recorded in 1741, 1745, 1752, 1756-9, 1770-72, 1785 and 1790 when Dr. Jenner was employed for vaccination.(39) In 1796 a decision was made on the advice of Mr. Bartlett, that all women and children paupers should be employed in the pin trade.(40) Perhaps Mr. Bartlett had an intuition of what was to happen to the cloth trade in the near future.

Twenty-two mills along the Painswick stream and its tributaries were recorded in the 18th century and of these 13 were working in the cloth trade for all or part of the century. Two of the latter, however, only entered the trade in 1799.

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