

# THE WEST SOMERSET WOOLLEN TRADE, 1500–1714

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## INTRODUCTION

Although it is well known that Somerset had a woollen industry from at least the 13th century, the comparative importance of various parts of the county in this industry during the 16th and 17th centuries has not yet been fully studied. What is also relatively poorly researched so far is the pattern of wool imports into, and cloth exports from, Minehead and Bridgwater. Further, the links between various local imports and the woollen industry in West Somerset have yet to be fully explored. This paper puts together some of the known information. There is, however, still more work to be done in order adequately to understand the internal trade routes and the intricate workings of the woollen industry including the marketing of its cloth.

This research started with an analysis of primary records revealing over 1500 persons with woollen industry occupations in Somerset between 1500 and 1714.<sup>1</sup> Whilst this is a significant number of operatives to analyse, it is placed into context by reports to a House of Commons committee in 1702 that there were 1500 weavers and looms in Taunton alone and another 500 within a three-mile radius.<sup>2</sup> This investigation used the search engines on a number of internet archive sites using the following key words: broadweaver, card maker, cloth maker, cloth weaver, cloth worker, clothier, comb maker, comber, druggett maker, dyer, felt maker, fuller, serge maker, serge weaver, serge worker, shear grinder, shearman, scribbler, tucker, weaver, worsted comber, worsted weaver and yarn washer. The analysis also showed that the west of the county, defined here as being west of the Parrett but excluding West Sedgmoor, was the residential area of well over a third of all Somerset woollen industry operatives.

There were but a handful of operatives in the Somerset levels area – the natural hinterland of Bridgwater – so, arguably, Bridgwater's woollen trade was with the west of the county rather than with central Somerset. Thus, in terms of imports and exports for the woollen industry, Bridgwater served West Somerset as did Minehead. Figures 1 and 2 show the spread of persons with woollen industry occupations in west Somerset in the periods 1500–1640 and 1641–1714. The two periods chosen for the maps have the civil war dividing them, the first map representing earlier patterns which changed when the old monopolies were challenged during the English Revolution.

In addition to these operatives, many people who worked within the woollen industry do not appear on the maps because they were farmers who did some woollen industry work, or were general merchants who also traded in woollen cloth. For example, people with an agricultural interest but with no woollen industry designation include John Steyning of Bicknoller who had wether sheep and 'a pair of loomes' when making his will in 1572,<sup>3</sup> and Gregory Rawle of Selworthy, who had five sheep and also a pair of tucker's shears and a pair of racks, presumably tenter racks, when he drew up his will in 1624.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, in 1623 Nicholas Collard of Nettlecombe was classified as a weaver but had right of common for 20 sheep on Brendon.<sup>5</sup> He may therefore have also been a husbandman. Clearly agriculture and the woollen industry were closely linked. Also, general merchants were not included in the list of woollen industry operatives, but many would have dealt in woollen cloth as part of their business. It is known that Thomas Elsworthy of Dunster in about 1510<sup>6</sup> and Joan Quirke, widow of Robert Quirke of Minehead, in about 1545<sup>7</sup> were in

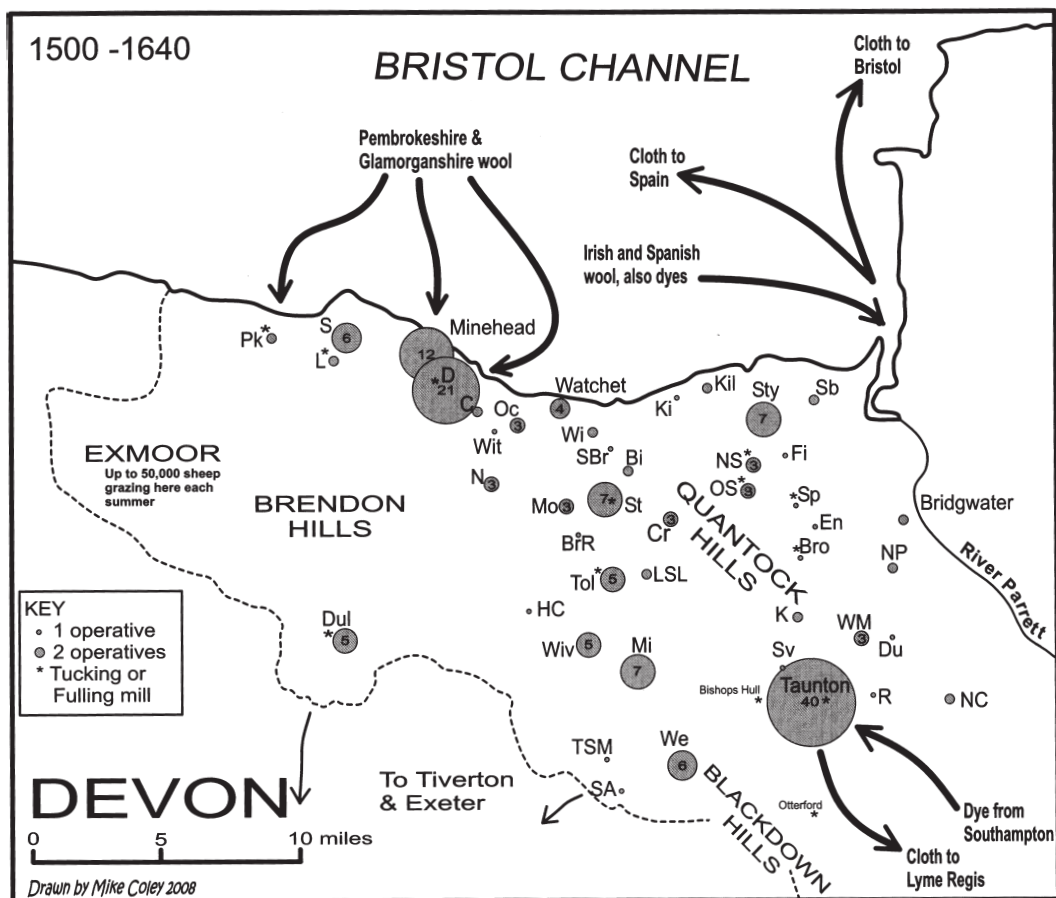


Fig. 1 Location of woollen industry occupations and trade routes, 1500–1640

this position. The Victoria County History of the Bridgwater area shows that many probate inventories of people in the district in the 17th century mention wool, looms, dyes and other woollen industry paraphernalia, but since they do not have a woollen industry designation do not appear in the lists mentioned above.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE WOOLLEN TRADE 1500–1640

##### Sheep numbers

In 1633 it was reckoned that each year over 30,000 sheep grazed in Exmoor forest<sup>9</sup> which is predominantly in Somerset, but this figure would exclude the numbers grazing in the fields and on the commons of the adjacent parishes of Cutcombe,

Exford, Winsford, Withypool, Oare, Stoke Pero, Wootton Courtney, Timberscombe, Luxborough, Treborough and Kingsbrompton. All these parishes, which, according to the maps, are notable for their lack of woollen industry operatives, contained many thousands of acres of grazing land and would easily have been able to support as many sheep as were grazing in the forest of Exmoor. In addition, other West Somerset parishes such as Porlock, Luccombe, Selworthy, Minehead and Dunster had large commons – for some parishes this was found on North Hill and Grabbist – so all together this would conservatively have meant that well over 100,000 sheep could have been grazing the West Somerset uplands in late Tudor and early Stuart times. One large flock owned by Mary Worth of Luccombe in the 1640s was likely to have been over 400 sheep. Her probate inventory also shows that a substantial

amount of wool, over £24 worth, was in store.<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding the considerable annual West Somerset fleece production, the local wool supply was not enough to furnish the needs of the local woollen industry which also required wool imports from late Tudor times and was further dependent on other supporting goods coming through the ports.

### Dye imports

Woad leaves were imported in some quantity. They were the source of a natural dye which coloured woollen yarn blue. Taunton merchants and dyers, including William Dyar and William Wynne, appear to have received at least 63 pipes (barrels of half a tun) of woad from Bordeaux and Bayonne in the first decade of the 16th century.<sup>11</sup> Alison Togwell of Taunton owned pipes of woad according to her will of 1509.<sup>12</sup> It appears that several merchants traded and sold on woad from Taunton to other parts of the country in the early years of the 16th century, and more than one had to face the legal consequences of not making a delivery.<sup>13</sup> In late 1527 Robert Horse (Horesse) of Taunton, a merchant, received 3 bales and 12 bales of woad overland from the port of Southampton.<sup>14</sup> Later, woad was imported into Bridgwater in the 1540s, possibly from Portugal since John Tyrell of Bridgwater, another merchant, was in dispute with a Portuguese merchant over a consignment.<sup>15</sup> Woad was also brought into Minehead, a considerable and valuable consignment arriving in Minehead on board a Portuguese ship possibly from the Azores in November 1541,<sup>16</sup> with another consignment arriving in the 1550s being connected in some way with John Webber, a local clothier.<sup>17</sup> A Taunton merchant, William Leonard, was importing woad into Bridgwater and other West Country ports in the 1580s chiefly from Lisbon and San Sebastian: he had a notable trade with Taunton dyers.<sup>18</sup> The Bridgwater water bailiff accounts also record woad being imported into the town at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries.<sup>19</sup>

In addition madder roots were imported. This was the raw material for a red dye – woollen cloth known as ‘Dunsters’ and ‘Bridgwaters’ were known on occasion to be dyed red during the early modern era.<sup>20</sup> William Leonard, mentioned above, also imported madder and the Bridgwater water bailiff accounts also record the roots being imported at the end of the 16th century.<sup>21</sup>

In the very late 16th or early 17th century the mordent alum (or copperas) which fixed loose dyes to wool fibres was discovered in England, and

Elizabeth I granted a patent for its production at some point during the last years of her reign. Henry VIII’s break with Rome had caused a ban on alum exports from the continent to England which meant that during Tudor times much English cloth had to be taken to Flanders for dyeing, and the remaining cloth when worn meant that the English dressed in duller clothes than in previous centuries. Much of the newly discovered alum came from the Yorkshire coast, though some was found in Hampshire.

Yorkshire production was 700 tons in 1616 and 1800 tons in 1635.<sup>22</sup> Alum certainly was being imported into Somerset in 1618,<sup>23</sup> precise details being unclear but, interestingly, in 1637 Sir Edmond Wyndham of Kentsford in St Decumans (Watchet) secured an authority with a partner to trade 1000 tons of copperas. Since there was such a developed woollen industry in West Somerset, including on Wyndham lands, it is probable that some of the copperas was brought into Watchet.<sup>24</sup>

### Wool imports

Very little Welsh wool arrived in Minehead or Bridgwater from any source in the first half of the 16th century and no record has been found of any arriving in Bridgwater after 1560 for the remainder of the century.<sup>25</sup> Only a few stone arrived in Bridgwater in the time of Henry VIII.<sup>26</sup> The amount imported through Minehead seems to have increased in the second half of the 16th century. It is possible that this was as a result of changes in agriculture rather than an increase in demand for wool by woollen industry operatives. Welsh wool was certainly brought into Minehead during the 1550s. A cargo of 60 stones arrived in Minehead from Tenby in October 1565 and in 1566/67 Pembrokeshire wool was brought to Dunster beach by three vessels (including Dunster’s *Michael*) for the town’s clothiers, including Sylvester Wood and Roger Worth.<sup>27</sup> In the late 16th century Minehead’s original landing place was almost silted up and only a few ships landed cargos each year (Table 1). In 1585, however, one of the few goods to be landed at Minehead was Welsh wool for William West and George Michael, clothiers of Dunster.<sup>28</sup> George Michael also received Welsh wool in 1586, 1587, 1602 and 1605.<sup>29</sup> In 1586 three cargoes of Welsh wool were brought in from Milford, Pembrokeshire.<sup>30</sup> During the period 1592–1603 three or four vessels a year brought wool to Minehead from Pembrokeshire for named Minehead and Dunster clothiers: from Minehead Henry Follantyn,

TABLE 1: WOOL FROM PEMBROKESHIRE ARRIVING IN MINEHEAD 1586–1603

Year	Sailings	Stones	Approx tonnage
1586	3	1408	9
1592	3	1600	10
1593	4	1850	11.5
1602/3	2	1200	7.5

Source: Lewis *Port Books*, note 1, 133–223. It has been estimated that each fleece weighed about 1.5lb in the 16th century (Ramsay *Woollen Industry*, note 40, 18). Thus, ten tons of wool might represent the clip from 15,000 sheep.

John Reynolds, Samuel Hayman, James Lampard and Robert Pierce; and from Dunster William Worthie, Richard Stevens, Jacob Lampard, Edward Skinner, Morice Haynes, Edward Worthe, Jasper Howe, Robert Poore and Symon Alford as well as George Michael.<sup>31</sup> The wool arrived in late May or June so it appeared to be fairly fresh from the backs of Welsh sheep, but further consignments came in October and November. A contemporary Welsh source written in 1603 stated that ‘Somerset men’ went to Pembrokeshire twice yearly to buy wool.<sup>32</sup> Which time of year it is not clear but, given the above information on wool transfer, it might have been early May and during the late summer. Some wool continued to be loaded at Tenby for Minehead in 1605 and 1607.<sup>33</sup> Five consignments of wool were also brought to Minehead in Aberthaw vessels from Cardiff’s port jurisdiction between September 1599 and August 1600 but mainly during the summer months.<sup>34</sup>

With regard to wool from sources other than Wales, two stone of Irish wool arrived in Combwich in 1529,<sup>35</sup> but no wool from overseas was imported into the port of Bridgwater customs zone between 1540 and 1542.<sup>36</sup> However, in 1544 another small consignment of ten stones, probably from Ireland, arrived in Minehead.<sup>37</sup> By 1560/61 Irish wool was being imported into Bridgwater in more substantial amounts.<sup>38</sup> It has been said that course wool from Ireland was imported when local supplies used for the kersey industry had run out,<sup>39</sup> and that in the 16th century Irish wool had ‘long been dribbling through the west coast ports’,<sup>40</sup> though evidence quoted shows that this statement may not apply entirely to Minehead and Bridgwater. Later, in the 1580s, the Taunton merchant William Leonard,

mentioned above, was importing Spanish wool through Bridgwater and other West Country ports. In 1582 he made significant sales to two Taunton clothiers but it is thought that the majority of Taunton clothiers did not use Spanish wool. In 1583 and 1584 he was selling Spanish wool to Sherborne clothiers in Dorset.<sup>41</sup> In 1603/04 the Bridgwater water bailiff’s accounts also record the importation of wool from Spain.<sup>42</sup> In the early 17th century Minehead’s link with Ireland would have ensured that Irish wool arrived in the port. For example, in 1636 the *Frances* of Minehead made monthly sailings to Youghal, Ireland’s principal wool exporting port in the 1630s, and back bringing wool. At the same time the *Lyon* of Youghal appeared to be involved in the same trade.<sup>43</sup>

Porlock was often linked by sea with Newton (Porthcawl) in the early 17th century. In 1615 the *Flower* and the *John* of Porlock were in Newton loading 40 stones of Welsh wool per vessel to bring back to the port of Minehead’s jurisdiction, possibly to Porlock as was the *Peter* of Porlock in 1616. The 1615 consignments were two of 18 arriving in Minehead’s jurisdiction, the majority travelling in Welsh vessels from Aberthaw and organised by Welsh merchants. At least two of the 1616 sailings, with a total of 110 stones of Welsh wool were either for John Davye an ‘English merchant’, Thomas Chilcott of Milverton, a clothier, or Peter Reynolds of Minehead, another clothier.<sup>44</sup> In 1630 Minehead was receiving wool from Aberthaw, Cardiff and Bristol.<sup>45</sup> In June 1635 Porlock’s *Nathaniel* was involved with mainly Welsh vessels bringing the wool over from Glamorganshire to Minehead – the *Nathaniel* had sailed from Newton.<sup>46</sup> Any wool arriving in West Somerset in Porlock vessels in the early 17th century could well have been destined for the tucking mill in Porlock which was present in Tudor times and appeared to be run by Richard Moggridge in 1604.<sup>47</sup> Table 2 shows the approximate amounts of Glamorganshire wool arriving in Minehead in the first half of the 17th century. Whether the significant increase between 1616 and 1634 was due to increased demand from the Somerset woollen industry, or whether there was a decline in wool brought from other sources such as Pembrokeshire is at present unknown.

### Woollen cloth exports

In terms of the transport, delivery, marketing and exportation of finished cloth from West Somerset it is clear that some was consumed in the country, other

TABLE 2: WOOL FROM GLAMORGANSHIRE ARRIVING IN MINEHEAD 1600–1640

Year	nos	cargos	stones	bags	packs	approx. tonnage
	(or part)					
1600	5		153	—	—	1
1615	18		1260	—	—	8
1616	18		750	—	—	5
1634	22	—	—	22	155	78
1635	18	—	—	37	106	56
1640	13	—	30+	—	108	70
			fardles*			

\*A fardle is simply a pack or a bundle. It is assumed to be the equivalent of a pack for the tonnage calculation. If a fardle was a bag then the 1640 tonnage would be 57 tons. The tonnage calculations derive from notes in TNA E190/1088/10 which variously state that a bag contained between 12 and 14 stone of wool and that two packs contained 20cwt of wool, i.e. one ton.

Sources. Lewis, 1927, 30–2. TNA, E190/1085/11, 1086/2, 1088/9, 1088/10 and 1089/7.

stocks left through West Somerset ports for Bristol or abroad, whilst further cloth was first transported overland and then exported through more distant regional ports. Even before its final sale, however, cloth was on the move, perhaps crossing the county boundary as it was taken to particular locations for certain processes to be performed upon it. For example, in 1578, John Barbor, a Minehead clothier, had trouble repossessing ten kerseys from Uffculme in Devon where they had been sent for finishing.<sup>48</sup>

In terms of local movements for sale of finished cloth, Taunton cloth was being bought by a Bristol merchant right at the end of the 15th, and possibly at the beginning of the 16th century.<sup>49</sup> In the 1530s there was an action between Bridgwater customs officials and some of the important citizens of Exeter, including the mayor, over trade in cloths known as ‘Dunsters’,<sup>50</sup> and in 1538 Richard Skinner, a Dulverton clothier, began a dispute with Robert Milton regarding cloth sold at St James’ Fair Bristol.<sup>51</sup> In 1551 a number of vessels cleared Bridgwater, including the *John* of Bridgwater and the *Trinity* and *Nicholas* of Bristol, with kerseys, ‘Bridgwaters’ and ‘Dunsters’ on board.<sup>52</sup> The immediate destination was Bristol. In 1571 it appears that a Taunton merchant, Thomas Pope, was selling woollen cloth and felt hats to a merchant in Aberthaw, Glamorganshire.<sup>53</sup> Cloths known as ‘Watchets’ were being traded by John Barbour, a Taunton merchant,

in about 1500,<sup>54</sup> and others were bought by the Poultney family of the West Midlands in the late 16th century.<sup>55</sup>

It is also clear that there was an international market for Somerset cloth in the 16th century. At some time between 1500 and 1515 John Adams, a Taunton cloth merchant, was sending cloth to Bordeaux with the intention that it would be transferred on to Spain,<sup>56</sup> and at some time between 1518 and 1529 ‘Bridgwaters’ and ‘Tauntons’ were delivered to Lisbon for sale.<sup>57</sup> Where exactly the above cloth was exported from and how frequent the delivery was, is uncertain, but the number of woollen cloths clearing the port of Bridgwater between 1500 and 1530, which at the time included Minehead and Watchet, is shown in Table 3 – figures less than the peak of nearly 5000 in 1490–1500. During the 1540s broadcloths and kerseys were the most valuable consignments of cloth leaving the port of Bridgwater for markets overseas, but in 1544/45, £157 worth of ‘Bridgwaters’ were the most significant type of cloth exported in the twelve month period.<sup>58</sup> During the same year, £53 worth of ‘Dunsters’ and £15 worth of ‘Tauntons’ were exported through the port.<sup>59</sup> The main destination for the kerseys was Ireland, with broadcloth mostly being exported to Spain and Portugal in ships from those nations, with San Sebastian in Spain being the most important destination.<sup>60</sup> The most likely destination for ‘Dunsters’, which left mainly through Bridgwater rather than the nearer Minehead, was Spain since the cloth often left in Spanish vessels.<sup>61</sup> Broadcloth was exported through Minehead in the early 1540s including in the *George* and the *Michael*. Robert Quirke was the merchant.<sup>62</sup> He traded mainly with southern Ireland. Cloth called ‘Moltons’, presumably from North Molton in Devon, also left through Minehead and Bridgwater during the early 1540s.<sup>63</sup> In 1547 serges, kerseys and 32 dozen ‘Tauntons’ were exported from Bridgwater on the *Mary* from San Sebastian in Spain. A further vessel left the port with ‘Bridgwaters’ forming part of the

TABLE 3: WOOLLEN CLOTHS EXPORTED FROM THE PORT OF BRIDGWATER 1500–1530

1500–10	4115
1510–20	2603
1520–30	2067

Source: R.W. Dunning, *Bridgwater* (Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1992), 24.



cargo a few months later.<sup>64</sup> Not all West Somerset cloth that arrived in Bristol by whatever means was consumed there; for example, about eight tons of 'Dunsters' were exported through the port in the 1540s.<sup>65</sup> It is not unlikely that it was cloth from West Somerset that left King Road, Bristol, in the *Lion* in May 1552 with John Kerry of Minehead, master, and John Wyndam of Somerset, captain and part owner of the vessel. The cloth was traded in Morocco and Tenerife.<sup>66</sup> In 1594/5 at least five small consignments of 'Bridgwater cottons' were dispatched to Rochelle via Barry.<sup>67</sup>

Whilst it appears that Taunton cloth left Bridgwater and its sub-ports in the 16th century, it is also plain that Taunton cloth merchants also looked to the English Channel coast for export routes, perhaps for the bulk of their exports. In late 1527 Robert Horse (Horesse) sent at least one and possibly two consignments of eight horse-loads of cloth to Southampton, probably for exportation.<sup>68</sup> Also, Taunton merchants were contributing to the upkeep of Lyme Regis harbour by bequests in 1501 and 1544 for example,<sup>69</sup> and this port was the origin of a vessel taken by French pirates in 1587 with a considerable amount of cloth belonging to Taunton merchants aboard.<sup>70</sup> In 1588 Taunton merchants began a trade on the Portuguese Guinea coast and Thomas Gregory, a Taunton clothier, obtained a patent from Elizabeth I in 1592 to develop the trade with some of the profits going to the Portuguese. In 1596 cloth belonging to Taunton merchants cleared Topsham in a Portuguese vessel and in 1597 Taunton cloth left through Lyme Regis for the Guinea coast. Thereafter this particular trade began to decline. In 1606 eleven Taunton merchants including Thomas Gregory and William Dare were exporting cloth to Spain and Portugal, and in 1611 a similar number were exporting to France from the south coast.<sup>71</sup>

### Location of woollen industry operatives

In relation to the distribution of the woollen industry in West Somerset from 1500–1640, it is clear that Taunton was the main wool-producing town with 40 workers found, comprising 19 clothiers, 13 weavers, 1 serge weaver, 3 dyers, 2 tuckers, 1 fuller and 1 cardmaker (Fig. 1). In addition, evidence from the wills of Taunton people from the 1530s to the 1560s, refer to shears, teasels and a loom.<sup>72</sup> The presence of the serge weaver is significant since it seems clear to some researchers that serge making was invented in Taunton in about 1583 by Benedict Webb who practised his trade there till he removed

to Gloucestershire in 1595.<sup>73</sup> How best to interpret the presence of serges leaving Bridgwater in 1547, mentioned above, is therefore uncertain. Even so, the relative importance of Bridgwater and even Taunton is thought to have declined, especially in the second quarter of the 16th century. In 1555 it was reported that the woollen trade was deserting the Somerset towns of Bridgwater, Taunton and Chard, and establishing itself in the villages, much to the chagrin of the town worthies who saw their ancient monopolies and influence diminishing along with the prosperity of some of their townspeople.<sup>74</sup> Such was the decline of Bridgwater that Leland commented on the loss of 200 tenements in 1543.<sup>75</sup> Many West Somerset villages thrived in the trade including Stogumber which appears as a significant location on the maps.

### The Wolcotts of Tolland and district 1550–1682

It is likely that at first the merchants and clothiers of Bridgwater and Taunton were the main organisers of the growing village industry and the suppliers of wool – their wool supply and cloth collection lines would just have been longer. However, as the 16th century went on it is possible that new clothiers were established in the villages where previously there had just been fullers and weavers. These people would have traded with the merchants in the main towns and ports. A case study which may well illustrate this point is the experience of the extended Wolcott family of Tolland (Table 4), who from humble beginnings in the mid 16th century built up an extensive business – many of the family members became significantly wealthy, two of whom had part ownership of at least one overseas trading vessel by the late 17th century.<sup>76</sup>

In 1551 John Wolcott of Tolland owed William Howe for 11 yards of raw cloth upon William's death in that year. John may well have been a close relative of Thomas Wolcott who was described as a tucker in his will of 1572. These Wolcotts probably had been buying cloth for processing in a tucking mill of which there was one in Tolland from at least 1520 leased in that year by John Selleck. In Thomas Wolcott's insubstantial will dated and proved in 1572, £10 was left to his son John, and a sheep each to his other son and two daughters. John became a successful clothier leaving substantial property and money to his son Henry as detailed in John's will of 1589.<sup>77</sup> Henry, whose dates are 1565–c. 1642, became a very prosperous Tolland clothier. A further John Wolcott, born in 1568 was also a Tolland

TABLE 4: THE DEVELOPING STATUS OF THE WOLCOTTS OF TOLLAND 1500–1700

Name	Dates	Occupation/Status
Thomas (the elder)	c. 1500–1555	Tucker
Thomas (the younger)	c. 1525–c. 1572	Tucker
John	c. 1545–c. 1589	Clothier
Henry	1575–c. 1642	Clothier of means
Henry	c. 1635–1670	Merchant and vessel owner
John	1640–1700	Gentleman and vessel owner <sup>83</sup>

Source: //wolcottfamily.com/somerset.html accessed December 2006

clothier until at least 1605. Henry Wolcott junior, c. 1595–1650, was in possession of a ‘dye house’ by Tonebridge in Tolland in 1630, but it was possibly run by Valentine Dale, a dyer, whose will is dated May 1646.<sup>78</sup>

Richard Wolcott of Tolland, c. 1575–c. 1652, one of Tolland’s tithingmen in the first third of the 17th century, was also described as a clothier when he moved in his mid 50s to live in Bishop’s Lydiard around the year 1635. Christopher Wolcott, c. 1583–1639, another Wolcott emigrant from Tolland, moved to Wellington in 1609. He was a mercer and dealer in textiles who became a significant citizen in the town. It is not unlikely that these family links provided a basis for wool and cloth trade around the west of the county.

Other local Wolcotts involved in the woollen industry were William Wolcott of Lydiard St Lawrence, described as a clothier in his will of 1646,<sup>79</sup> and Richard Wolcott, c. 1610–1658, a fuller of Stogumber.<sup>80</sup> Richard had been in possession of a tucking mill and two clothing racks in the village since before 1634 when the facilities had been described as ‘in decay’. Some other members of the Wolcott family emigrated to New England in the 1630s. Later, another Henry Wolcott, a merchant of Tolland, c. 1635–1670,<sup>81</sup> became extremely wealthy leaving sizeable estates in Tolland, ten sheep to a godson, ‘plantations beyond seas’, part of a ship, gifts to ‘ship servants’ and money valued in total at about £4000. The ship was left to his brother John, described as a gentleman, and in a deposition of 1682 it became evident that John was part owner of the vessel *Adventure* which had entered Minehead and had paid duty for salt it offloaded.<sup>82</sup> Apparently no duty had been paid for the wine, brandy and linen that 30 men had ‘distributed’ within two to three hours!<sup>83</sup> From evidence discussed below it seems likely that the *Adventure* would have left Minehead with local cloth for Ireland, Western France, or possibly both. It is also likely that Henry’s and John’s

wealth had derived from the woollen trade both on land and possibly overseas in their own vessel.

#### THE WOOLLEN TRADE 1640–1714

##### Changes in production locations

The importance of the West Somerset zone during this period is marked. Compared to the rest of Somerset the area had 40% of the locations of the woollen industry and 45% of the workforce, with Taunton being the most important location in the whole county by far (Fig. 2). Taunton’s relative importance may have been increasing since the town housed 33% of the West Somerset workforce between 1500 and 1640. This could be connected to the fact that the town began to concentrate on the production of serges in the 17th century.<sup>84</sup> Whilst it might be true that Taunton was the centre of serge production during this period, a detailed analysis of Somerset probate inventories has shown that between 1640 and the end of the 17th century the paraphernalia of serge making was to be found in the belongings of people, not only from Taunton but from Creech St Michael, North Petherton, Fiddington, Milverton, Monksilver, East Quantockshead, West Buckland, Holford and Stogumber, ie throughout much of West Somerset. It was also found that the poorest weavers tended to live in Taunton and the richest manufacturers in places such as Holford, Fiddington, North Petherton and Bridgwater.<sup>85</sup>

##### Wool imports

Wool imported into West Somerset continued to arrive in increasingly significant amounts. In 1647/48 only a small weight of wool was recorded as coming into Minehead from Wales and Ireland, but in 1666 about 3000 stone, over 18 tons, of wool

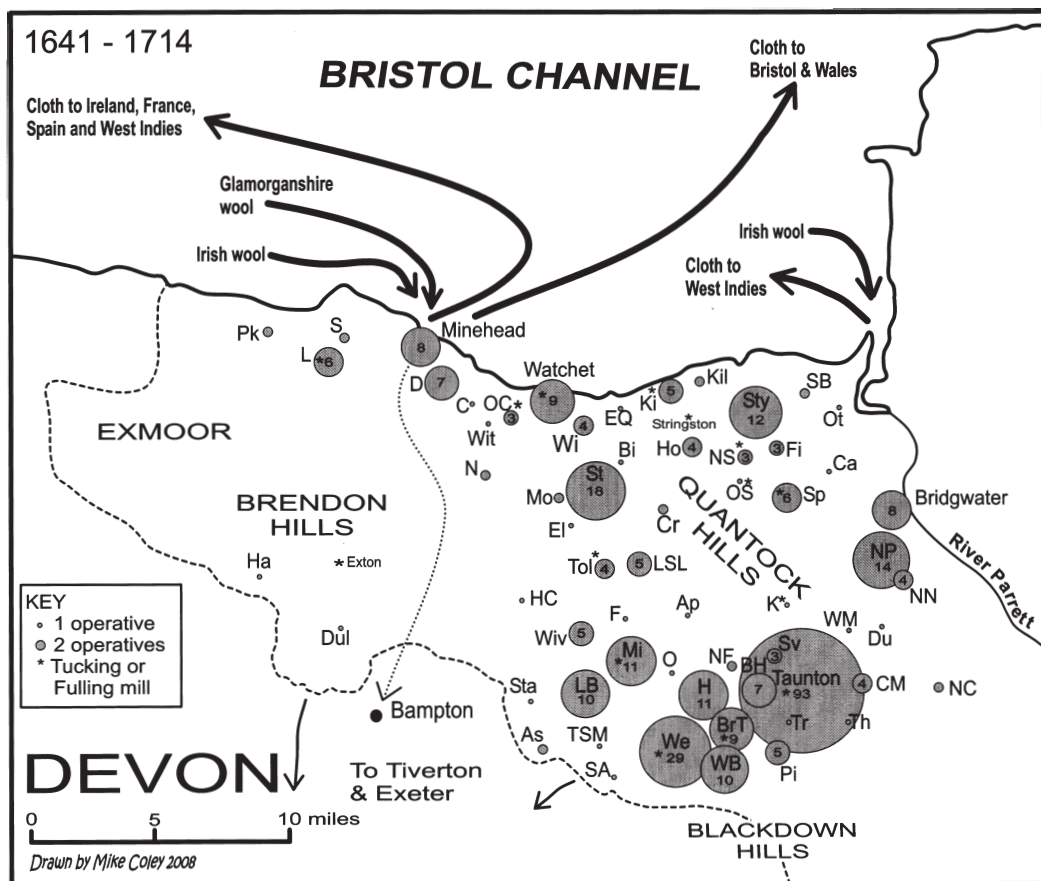


Fig. 2 Location of woollen industry occupations and trade routes, 1641–1714

was weighed in the town, having been brought in for various merchants.<sup>86</sup> Much of this wool seemed to come from Aberthaw with over 20 vessel loads per year arriving in Minehead in 1661, 1662, 1673, 1675 and 1676 for example.<sup>87</sup> It is not clear where all the Irish wool went once landed at Minehead, but in 1673 a letter from Colonel Richard Laurence to Captain George Matthew advised him that wool coming from Ireland should be sent through Minehead, since the serge weavers of Taunton offered the best prices for it compared to another option of sending it to Devon via Barnstaple.<sup>88</sup> Merchants, as always, were therefore making decisions based on sound economic judgements in order to achieve the greatest return.

It has been argued that the wool imports, including Irish wool, into Minehead, Watchet and Bridgwater in the second half of the 17th century helps explain

the rise of the Dunster ‘yarnmasters’ who served the district as far south as Wiveliscombe.<sup>89</sup>

There is an Irish/English Quaker link in Minehead’s wool importation trade in the 1680s. In 1679 a 19-year-old Cork Quaker, Joseph Pike, who had traded in wool in Cork the year before, came to Minehead for six months and traded at the Minehead end for his brother-in-law Henry Wheddon. He did this to Henry’s ‘satisfaction and then [I] made it my business to get full insight into wool, for I delighted in the trade’.<sup>90</sup> For ‘a while’ Pike formed a partnership with William Alloway, a notable Somerset Quaker, dealing in wool and English goods, i.e. mainly cloth-related products. This could well have been one of the steps in the creation of the Alloway mercantile empire discussed below. No doubt the Pikes of Cork and the Alloways of Minehead enjoyed this trade in the



1680s since they both became very prosperous because of it.

However, the link with Ireland had its disadvantages. Many Irish immigrants arrived in Somerset throughout the 17th century on Irish and English ships, often becoming a burden on the local parishes and a problem for the local justices,<sup>91</sup> such as the group which was landed clandestinely on Porlock beach in 1622.<sup>92</sup> According to Taunton woollen industry interests in 1692, many Irish immigrants had been employed 'in charity in the woollen manufacture' where they 'gained such experience therein, as before they never understood; and being returned home, can make and sell their commodities much cheaper than the English', thereby undermining English trade which then needed protecting. Indeed, the merchants, clothiers and fullers of Minehead said that during the reigns of Charles II and James II from 1660 to 1688, the trade in serge had become 'dead' due to undercutting from Ireland.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand Ireland was a destination for at least 50 Taunton and district woollen industry operatives and their families in about 1697 when the trade in Taunton was suffering.<sup>94</sup>

Whilst the amount of wool coming into Minehead varied from year to year, a recent study of the amount of wool weighed in Minehead town hall in 1666/67, 1668–1679 and 1701–1711, shows that the variations and annual amounts were not directly affected by the second and third Dutch wars.<sup>95</sup> It seems that from port book information in 1689, the amount of wool arriving at Bridgwater increased significantly for about ten years and then settled to a smaller amount up to 1714, but still much more than had been arriving in the port in the 1670s.<sup>96</sup>

In 1688 an Act of Parliament designed to 'better prevent' the exportation of wool, to Ireland for example, made Minehead a designated port for the importation of wool, whereas many other ports were denied that privilege. The Act was designed to encourage woollen manufacture in the kingdom and was reaffirmed in 1692 and 1696 and not repealed until 1753.<sup>97</sup> A beneficiary of this legislation was William Alloway of Minehead, a merchant, who was importing Irish wool into Minehead in the 1680s and into Bridgwater between 1695 and 1704.<sup>98</sup> He continued with the trade into Bridgwater until 1720 at least.<sup>99</sup> Bridgwater received the status of a staple port in 1696<sup>100</sup> so a question remains as to whether Alloway's 1695 importation into the town was strictly legal. In 1696 the 'trading men in the woollen manufactory' at Bampton in Devon,<sup>101</sup> perhaps

including Abraham Badcock and James Bryant, clothiers, and John Hagley, a merchant,<sup>102</sup> were very concerned about Bridgwater being made the staple port since from 'time out of mind' they had conveniently received their Irish wool from Minehead. Dublin was the origin of Irish wool arriving in Minehead and Bridgwater in the *Hope* in October 1698,<sup>103</sup> but in October 1707 a storm blew the vessel *William and Sarah* (which was Minehead bound) with a cargo of wool, also from Dublin, onto the Cornish coast. A considerable number of Cornish people helped themselves to the wool.<sup>104</sup>

### Internal trade

Insights into trade relationships within West Somerset exist from this period. John Michell, a mercer and a likely relation of the Michells of Dunster earlier in the 17th century, had a shop in Wiveliscombe from the mid 17th century from which he sold dye.<sup>105</sup> Further, in 1696 a case concerning the alleged theft of worsted yarn revealed that Henry Kingston, a serge weaver of Lydiard St Lawrence, put work out for combing to John Cox of the same village, to Nicholas Churchill, Valentine Trokewell and William Chilcott of Stogumber, and to Robert Webber of Taunton. Mr Mitchell and Mr Stucker of Wiveliscombe, and Alexander Maunder of Taunton provided Kingston with dyestuffs.<sup>106</sup> This shows how rural serge weavers employed local combers but relied on merchants from nearby towns, who no doubt had links with dye importers from Minehead or Bridgwater, for dyestuffs. An exception might have been William Westcott, a weaver of Selworthy, who on his death in 1683 was growing 'half an acre of woads'.<sup>107</sup> It is possible that dyestuffs could have been in shorter supply after 1702 due to renewed hostilities with France, which are known to have affected the dyestuff trade with the Bristol region.<sup>108</sup>

### Wool exports

Completed woollen cloth also left West Somerset through Minehead. In 1662 and 1672 woollen cloths (three 'Dunsters' and five 'Dunsters' respectively) were shipped from Minehead to Newton and Aberthaw.<sup>109</sup> Also in 1662, 1674, 1675 and 1682 a few completed kerseys, lockrams, serges and broadcloths were leaving Minehead for Wales in 1674,<sup>110</sup> being taken over by the *Five Brothers* of Newton.<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, in 1662, seven pieces of Barnstaple bays were taken from Minehead to Aberthaw – perhaps they had also arrived in

Minehead by sea. The size of this trade seems to have been limited and was likely to have been smaller than the woollen trade with Bristol. For example, in 1662 some cloth was taken to Bristol in a Porlock vessel,<sup>112</sup> the *John*, whilst in 1680/81 woollen cloth was on the list of goods leaving Minehead for Bristol.<sup>113</sup>

The woollen trade between Minehead and southern Ireland appears to have been much more extensive than the Welsh or Bristol trades. During the period from March to August 1661, for example, there were at least eleven sailings of mainly Minehead or Irish vessels from Minehead with woollen products aboard. They left for Cork, Waterford and Youghal along the southern Irish coast. The woollen products forming part of the cargoes included 20 or 52lb serges, short cloths, kerseys, ordinary kerseys, 'Dunsters', English fustian and English stuff made of wool. The pattern of trade continued in 1677/78 when William Alloway of Minehead figured as one of the merchants. In addition to the products mentioned above there were also lockrams, calicoes and worsted combs taken on board. The southern Irish port of Dungarvan was a further destination for one of the cargoes. Evidence of the same trade remains from 1680/81 when the port of Youghal was the destination of four sailings alone in April 1681.<sup>114</sup>

Additional evidence of the woollen trade with Ireland derives from the memorandum book of captain George Hayman of Minehead, master of the *Thomas* which shows he was transporting cloth from Minehead to Youghal on Ireland's southern coast between 1685 and 1687.<sup>115</sup> He also brought barrels of beef, butter, and flitches of bacon back to Minehead from Ireland. Hayman worked on his own behalf as well as for his uncle Robert, his grandfather, and his in-laws, the Crockford family. He had business relationships with merchants in Youghal, John Mitchel, a glover of Taunton, and James Crockford, probably of Minehead, from whom he bought broadcloth, as well as Mr Fisher of Bampton with whom he traded white and grey friezes and broadcloth. He bought eight yards of cloth druggat, at Dunster – druggat was a material which was becoming an increasingly popular cheaper cloth at the time.<sup>116</sup> He travelled widely around the county visiting Bristol, Bridgwater Fair where he bought a hat box, Milverton where he bought worsted stockings and Taunton where he purchased a new greatcoat. It is possible that he felt insecure at times in his travels since he bought a new sword in 1687. The fact that Hayman visited a number of the

important woollen cloth manufacturing towns in west Somerset seems to indicate that he might also have been striking deals with various clothiers regarding cloth he was to take to southern Ireland.

Cloth also left Minehead for other European destinations. In July 1661 three small French vessels at only about 'ten tons burthen' apiece were in Minehead loading 'bayes' and 'Dunsters'. The vessels were from, and were departing for, Le Croisic on the southern Brittany coast, and had probably arrived laden with salt for the herring fishery. Further, in June 1678, the *Mayflower* of Minehead, with Thomas Quirke master, loaded 24 chaldrons of coal, 15 single 'bayes', three short cloths and English fustian to take to Le Croisic. The merchant Samuel Crockford would have had great confidence in the vessel's master since he was undoubtedly a descendent of Robert Quirke who had made the same journey possibly on several occasions earlier in the century and who was responsible for the building of almshouses in Minehead. In early 1680 there were two sailings from Minehead to northern Spain with cloth aboard. In February, a cargo containing short 'bayes' and 'English stuff made of wool' left for Bilbao, and in March there was a departure for St Sebastian with nine packs of 'Dunsters' and single 'bayes' in the cargo.<sup>117</sup> It has been noted elsewhere that a market for English cloth in Spain had been re-established from the 1660s.<sup>118</sup>

There is evidence that Somerset cloth was reaching the New World in the mid 17th century. An inventory of goods belonging to Henry Landis, a Boston shopkeeper, in 1651 included Taunton serge.<sup>119</sup> In 1683 it appears that William Alloway was in business with a Quaker serge maker of Taunton, William Salway. They jointly owned the cargoes of two vessels, the *Society* and the *Samuel and Mary*, both of Bristol, which left the city and arrived in Pennsylvania in September 1683. Aboard were at least 180 pounds of serges, probably from Taunton. Salway accompanied the cargos and stayed in Pennsylvania, setting up a fulling mill there in 1684.<sup>120</sup> At the end of the 17th century ships were clearing Minehead and Bridgwater for the West Indies, mainly with herring. However, in 1697 the *Friendship* and the *Willing Mind* left Minehead for Barbados with serges as part of their cargoes.

Cloth was also aboard vessels leaving Minehead for Barbados in 1699 and 1700. Was the cloth aboard the *Taunton Merchant* clearing Minehead for Barbados in 1700 actually from Taunton? Further, serge and fustian was aboard the *Hope* leaving Bridgwater for Jamaica in 1699.<sup>121</sup> Clearly, not all

woollens left West Somerset for Exeter for finishing and exportation during this period, as one authority has suggested,<sup>122</sup> though there is evidence that between 1701 and 1703 William Sealey had serge brought from Exeter by carrier to export through Bridgwater.<sup>123</sup> It might therefore be a mistake to assume that all cloth leaving through Minehead and Bridgwater at this time came from West Somerset.

#### WOOLLEN INDUSTRY INSTALLATIONS 1500–1714

Sir George Luttrell provided Dunster with a yarn market in 1586<sup>124</sup> which, when in operation in 1614, drew clothiers from Carhampton, Old Cleeve, Withycombe, Selworthy and Stogursey.<sup>125</sup> Apart from Dunster's yarn market building which apparently dates from the early 17th century, the woollen industry had many other installations around which the West Somerset woollen and cloth trade was centred. In addition to the 'dye house' in Kingston St Mary in the 1530s,<sup>126</sup> in Tolland in 1630<sup>127</sup> and in Taunton by the 'bridewell' in 1702,<sup>128</sup> there was a 'spinning house' at Bradford-on-Tone in 1683<sup>129</sup> and in Stogursey at the end of the 17th century.<sup>130</sup> There were many tucking or fulling mills in the west of the county (Table 5). Also, one of the many enclosures with tenter racks was to be found at Dunster on the slopes of Grabbist in 1655 when apparently their number had increased from former times.<sup>131</sup>

#### WOMEN AND THE WOOLLEN TRADE AND INDUSTRY

There appears to be little or no evidence that women mastered or were crew on the coastal vessels that brought over the wool from Wales and Ireland between 1500 and 1714. Sadly, crew lists are extremely rare from this period but it is known that women and children were often passengers along these trade routes. However, it is clear from 16th-century wills that women were very involved in the woollen industry by the fact they were commonly left sheep and wool by their relatives, presumably so they could earn a living from spinning. In 1557, the sister-in-law of Marmaduke Wykes of Nynhead, and in 1565, Elinor Pime and Prudence Prole of Kilton, fell into this category.<sup>132</sup> Notwithstanding this, only six of the 500+ woollen industry operatives so far found (Figs 1 and 2) were women. In 1636 Joan Lawerens of Fiddington died in possession of

sheep, wool and a pair of looms,<sup>133</sup> and in 1647 Florence Whedon, spinster, of Stogursey had a probate inventory which also indicates her involvement in the industry – spinster was more than a title.<sup>134</sup> In 1673 Hannah Welch was left the woollen twine she had spun in North Petherton,<sup>135</sup> in 1676 Susannah Light of Hatch Beauchamp was trying to cause Andrew Groves, a Taunton serge maker, to pay her the 17 shillings he owed for spinning worsted yarn.<sup>136</sup> In 1690 Agnes Pollard of Holford was in possession of serge cloth<sup>137</sup> as was Jane Bond of Taunton St Mary in 1697.<sup>138</sup> Many West Somerset spinsters would have spun woollen yarn. It is not clear whether the two widows mentioned earlier in this article (Joan Quirke and Mary Worth) also took part in farming or trade, or whether in their widowhood they had servants or factors to trade on their behalf, nor is it clear whether Alison Togwell, a widow in 1509, who had 'Bridgwaters' and 'Tauntons' as well as pipes of woad when she made her will,<sup>139</sup> or Jane Lyffard, who was left Firepool tucking mill in Taunton in 1669 by her husband George,<sup>140</sup> ran businesses. This lack of information about women is of course a travesty of the real picture, since it is well known that women played a very active part in the woollen industry and yet their role is hardly ever acknowledged in the type of documents used for research. One remaining record of a woman in the cloth trade is, however, the case of Joan Daton of Minehead in 1527. It seems that Joan was involved in brewing and had used her earnings to trade in 'Dunsters' sent to the continent in the *Mary Walsingham* via Minehead.<sup>141</sup>

It is significant that only three spinners of yarn are recorded in the catalogued local and national documents studied for West Somerset during this period. Spinning was probably the main job completed by the women, whether they were single (spinsters), or the wives of husbandmen or weavers. Some of the men recorded in the documents were accused of theft of wool or yarn, or were called to the justices to give evidence, but many women also committed such crimes or witnessed them. Between 1612 and 1615 Joan and Barbara Hooper and Elinor Stook of Bishops Lydiard,<sup>142</sup> Mary Keme of Hawkridge,<sup>143</sup> Margaret Evans of Dunster,<sup>144</sup> and Elizabeth Gunne and Alice Duggen of Minehead were all questioned by the justices about the theft of wool.<sup>145</sup> At least some of these women would have wanted to spin the wool into yarn and sell it at the local market, including the newly opened Dunster yarn market. The case of the Minehead women is tantalising because Gunne's master was a fuller

TABLE 5: KNOWN DATES OF TUCKING AND FULLING MILLS IN WEST SOMERSET 1500–1714

Location	Date	Ref
Bishops Hull	1508	Weaver, <i>Wills</i> , 124
Bradford-on-Tone	1685, Hele Mill	SRO DD/DP 20/1
Broomfield	early 1500s	VCH 1992; online <sup>1</sup>
Doddington/ Stringston	1666, ‘decayed’	SRO DD/AH 12/12/1
Dulverton	1638	SRO A/AHT 1/1-10
Dunster	1529, 1589	Maxwell-Lyte, <i>Dunster</i> , 299–300
Exton	1676	SRO, DD/ARN/1/ 4
Kilve	1666	SRO DD/PM/3/2/23
Kingston St Mary	1752, ‘former tucking mill’	SRO DD/SP/319/59
Luccombe/Selworthy	1559, in Holnicote manor	Chadwyck Healey, <i>History</i> , 77
Luccombe	17th century? At Horner	Chadwyck-Healey <i>History</i> , 102
Milverton	1691	SRO DD/SF 2/67/26
Nether/OverStowey	1456	SRO DD/AH 65/4/15
	1685–1707	SRO DD/S WH/32
North Petherton	1641	SRO DD/PM 20/1/1
Old Cleeve	1668	SRO DD/WY 151
(Bye Farm)	1688	SRO, DD/X/RMN/9
Otterford	1504	TNA C1/161/8
	1657	SRO DD/X/VNL 1
Over Stowey	1547	Dunning <i>VCH</i>
	1510, 1614, Plainsfield	online <sup>1</sup>
	1614, Ramscombe	
	1640, Chapel Mill	
	1676, March Mill	
Porlock	late Tudor	Chadwyck-Healey, <i>History</i> , 274–6
	1604	SRO, DD/BR bn 10
Radlet	1691	SRO D/P/can 17/1/1
Spaxton	1558	SRO DD/S WH/3
	1691	SRO DD/S WH/296
Stringston	1666, ‘decayed’	SRO, DD/AH/12/12/1
Stogumber	1565, Northam	pers. comm. Duncan Taylor
	1634	online <sup>2</sup>
Taunton	early 16th century	TNA C1/131/29
	1558	Siraut, <i>Wills</i> , 3
	1619 Burching mill	SRO, DD/SP 18/6/1
	1669 Firepool mill	Siraut, <i>Wills</i> , 152
Tolland	1520	online <sup>2</sup>
	1666	Wilts and Swindon RO, 745/100
Watchet	1647	SRO DD/WY 64/7
Wellington	1698	East Kent Archive Centre
		EK/U1507/T29
Wiveliscombe	1540–1603	Farrington, S. <i>Wiveliscombe: A History</i> (Wiveliscombe, 2005), 117

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.asp?pubid=69><sup>2</sup> <http://wolcottfamily.com/somerset.html>

which raises the question whether she was employed in the woollen industry. Similarly, Duggan’s husband was a sailor – had he helped bring wool into Minehead which was then stolen? Later, between 1696 and 1702, Elizabeth Smith, a husbandman’s

wife from Minehead,<sup>146</sup> Mary Richards from Staplegrove<sup>147</sup> and Joan Webber from Taunton St James,<sup>148</sup> were questioned over separate thefts of worsted yarn. No doubt some were yarn spinners and were often in the local markets selling their yarn,

the perfect cover for passing on more yarn as their own and making more money.

It is possible that thefts of wool and yarn, by women or men, were initiated by poverty and distress – people were trying to cut costs when the market prices of their products were low. It is known that Taunton's woollen industry was depressed by 1622 when the town was 'greatly impoverished', and again in the 1680s and 1690s when the serge trade was suffering when some workers were 'facing the immediate prospect of starvation'.<sup>149</sup> This knowledge coincides somewhat with the investigations described above, but the conclusion is tentative since the Quarter Session records have not been systematically investigated for the whole of the 17th century.

It is clear that poverty-stricken or disadvantaged young women were involved in the woollen industry. Among remaining apprentice indentures for West Somerset is one for Margery Colston, whose father had died, who was apprenticed in 1592 to a Bridgwater weaver.<sup>150</sup> Also, in Taunton St Mary, Hannah Brierd was apprenticed to a serge weaver in 1687.<sup>151</sup> Further, poor unmarried mothers or their children could have used the two parish looms purchased by West Buckland in 1687 to secure the parish 'against the birth of a bastard child'.<sup>152</sup>

One woollen industry authority has stated that in 17th century Somerset the woollen industry was operated on a small scale by many operatives, with very little capital and thus the use of the local weekly markets was crucial for all participants. On one day wool was bought in small quantities and the following week the investment bore fruit in the form of sold yarn and the process could begin again. For others the money was made by buying the yarn and selling the cloth in the local market as soon as possible.<sup>153</sup> Women would have been involved in many of these small transactions.

Women also had a role in bigger business via the extended family which was the all-important unit in Tudor and Stuart times. Amongst mercantile groups, judicious marriages cemented alliances in order to further facilitate trade. To a lesser or greater extent, daughters were married off to develop the business of the wider family, and sons were expected to marry advantageously. In 1604 the general consensus in parliament seemed to be that it was 'the law of God and Nature ... that children should be brought up by their parents ... and by them be directed in their marriages'.<sup>154</sup> John Trowbridge born in Taunton in 1570, mayor of the town in 1629/30 and 1637/38, was a wool and cloth merchant who traded with

Bristol and London. He arranged commercially important marriages for his children. His son John married the daughter of a Lyme Regis merchant, whilst another son Thomas married the daughter of John Marshall, successively sheriff and mayor of Exeter. His daughters were married to other merchants of both Taunton and Exeter.<sup>155</sup> Such circumstances help to contextualise Taunton's woollen industry trading links with the south coast in the first half of the 17th century, no doubt reflecting practice both before and after these events.

At the very end of the Stuart period, two daughters of William Alloway, wool merchant of Minehead, were married to Bristol merchants. Sarah Alloway married Graffin Prankard the second in about 1714 who subsequently became a Bristol 'merchant venturer'. Between 1712 and 1718 Prankard was exporting duroys, a coarse cloth, to the West Indies,<sup>156</sup> a cloth that appears to have been made in the North Curry and Taunton area at the time.<sup>157</sup> The market utilised by Prankard was undoubtedly generating cloth production in West Somerset, which was served by Irish wool imports brought into Minehead and Bridgwater by Alloway as mentioned above. The marriage of Sarah Alloway to Graffin Prankard undoubtedly 'oiled the wheels' of these commercial transactions.

## CONCLUSIONS

At least one eminent historian has stated that in the later middle ages and possibly into the 16th century, the serge industry of south and west Somerset was based on the wool from local sheep.<sup>158</sup> This perception seems to be supported by the findings outlined here. However, from the late 16th century, Exmoor, the Quantocks and other local sheep walks did not provide enough wool for the industry; the imports of wool and exports of cloth through Minehead and Bridgwater were in fact the lifeblood of a dynamic enterprise in late Tudor and Stuart west Somerset.

However, the current study does change a spatial perception that has circulated for much of the 20th century. Maps in *A New Historical Geography of England* edited by H.C. Darby, versions of which are found in many other publications, depict the extent of Somerset's woollen industry in 1500 and 1720. These omit the whole of west Somerset west of Taunton and Milverton. This may be partly because the 1720 map was based on comments about places made by Daniel Defoe who did not visit



everywhere in Somerset in his travels.<sup>159</sup> Clearly these perceptions can now be amended, based on the evidence presented here and it should be recognised that west Somerset had a well developed woollen industry in late Tudor and Stuart times. Furthermore, the Somerset Bristol Channel ports were crucial to the development of that industry throughout the whole area and should not just be seen as locations for servicing Taunton or the Devon industry based around Tiverton and Exeter.

## References

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- <sup>3</sup> M. Siraut (ed.), *Somerset Wills* (Somerset Record Society Vol. 89 2003), 218.
- <sup>4</sup> E.J. Rawle, *The Records of the Rawle family* (Taunton, 1898).
- <sup>5</sup> SRO, DD/WO/12/2/8.
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- <sup>7</sup> TNA, C1/295/66.
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- <sup>10</sup> Worth inventory found at Harvard law school library, USA, deed 131.
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- <sup>13</sup> TNA, C1/158/1, C1/1212/87.
- <sup>14</sup> K.F. Stevens and T.E. Olding, *The brokerage books of Southampton 1477–8 and 1527–28* (Southampton Record Series) Vol 28, 123, 137.
- <sup>15</sup> TNA, C1/1226/22.
- <sup>16</sup> D. Taylor, *The Overseas Trade of Mid 16th Century Bridgwater* (unpub Univ Bristol MA thesis, 2006) 12.
- <sup>17</sup> TNA, C1/1482/35–39.
- <sup>18</sup> E. Kerridge, *Textile Manufacture in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 1985), 18 and 35.
- <sup>19</sup> SRO, D/B/bw 1480, 1493 and 1506/7.
- <sup>20</sup> E. Kerridge, note 18, *ibid*.
- <sup>21</sup> SRO, D/B/bw 1480, 1493 and 1506/7.
- <sup>22</sup> A. Hart-Davis, *What the Tudors and Stuarts did for us* (Boxtree, London, 2003), 198–200.
- <sup>23</sup> TNA, E 178/4465
- <sup>24</sup> TNA, E 214/976.
- <sup>25</sup> Duncan Taylor has studied 16th-century Bridgwater port books extensively and advises me of the paucity of wool imports.
- <sup>26</sup> An undated port book of the time of Henry VIII, TNA, E122/27/27.
- <sup>27</sup> G. Farr, *Somerset Harbours* (London, 1954), 142, partially quoting from Lewis *Port Books*, 70 and 84–7.
- <sup>28</sup> TNA, E190 1083/7
- <sup>29</sup> Lewis, *Port Books*, 133, 138 and 221. TNA, E190 1585/86 and 1084/4.
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- <sup>33</sup> Notes held at Tenby library derived from the port books.
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- <sup>41</sup> Kerridge, *Textile Manufacturing*, 35–6.
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- <sup>43</sup> H.F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633–1641: A study in Absolutism*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 153; quoting TNA E190 1088/12.
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- 50 TNA, C1/1053/30-34.
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- 52 TNA, E122/28/5. In 1601 a parliamentary enactment classified 'Dunsters, Bridgwaters and Tauntons' as cloth between 12 and 13 yards long and 1.75 yards wide. Its weight should have been 30 pounds when dry. H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, *A History of Dunster* (London, 1909), 300.
- 53 TNA, SP 46/29/fo95.
- 54 TNA, C1/187/79.
- 55 TNA, SP/46/60/fo136.
- 56 TNA, C1/253/46.
- 57 TNA, C1/561/83.
- 58 D. Taylor *Overseas Trade*, 19 and 61.
- 59 *ibid.*
- 60 D. Taylor *Overseas Trade*, 18.
- 61 I am grateful to Duncan Taylor for this information.
- 62 TNA, E 122/27/25.
- 63 I am grateful to Duncan Taylor for this information.
- 64 R. Dunning, *A History of Somerset* (Tiverton, 2003), 65.
- 65 E.T. Jones, *The Bristol shipping industry in the 16th century* (unpub D.Phil thesis Univ Edinburgh, 1998), 144.
- 66 R. Kerr, *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels* (W Blackwood, 1824), 217.
- 67 Lewis, *Port Books*, note 1, 20-1.
- 68 Stevens and Olding, *Brokage Books*, note 14, 130 and 147.
- 69 R. Bush, *The Book of Taunton: The History of a County Town* (Taunton, 1977), 57.
- 70 *ibid.*
- 71 *ibid.* 58.
- 72 Tudor wills mentioned in R. Dunning *Somerset*, 65, but extracts of the wills referred to are found in Siraut *Wills*, 77, 81, 111-12 and 161.
- 73 Kerridge, *Textile Manufacturing*, 37, 113-14.
- 74 A.H. Powell, *The Ancient Borough of Bridgwater* (Bridgwater, 1907), 200-1.
- 75 T. Scrase, *Somerset Towns: Changing Fortunes 800-1800* (Stroud, 2005), 77.
- 76 Wolcott family information all derived from research published on the internet at <http://wolcottfamily.com/somerset.html>, accessed 20.12.06. Some of the quotations from the website have been verified from other sources as shown by footnotes 77-82 below.
- 77 TNA, PROB 11/73.
- 78 TNA, PROB 11/196.
- 79 TNA, PROB 11/200.
- 80 TNA, PROB 11/279.
- 81 TNA, PROB 11/335.
- 82 Chadwyck-Healey, *History*, 34, where it also states that the *Industry* entered Watchet in December 1681 also carrying salt, brandy and wine for a similar scam.
- 83 TNA, PROB11/457.
- 84 Ponting, *Woollen Industry*, 22.
- 85 Kerridge, *Textile Manufacturing*, 113-114 and 197.
- 86 F. Hancock, *Minehead in the County of Somerset* (Taunton, 1903), 311-13.
- 87 Williams 'Aspects', 38.
- 88 L.M. Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade 1660-1800* (Manchester University Press, 1968), 43-4.
- 89 Kerridge, *Textile Manufacturing*, 157.
- 90 R.S. Harrison, *Cork City Quakers: A Brief History 1665-1939* (Cork, privately published by the author, 1991), 16. The author quotes from Pike's own autobiography, a photocopy of which is held in Cork City Library.
- 91 A.J. Webb, *An Index to Somerset Settlement and Removal Cases in Quarter Sessions 1607-1700* (Taunton, 1997) viii-xiii.
- 92 E.H. Bates Harbin (ed.), *Quarter Sessions Records for the County of Somerset 1607-1625* (Somerset Record Society Vol. 23 1907), 318.
- 93 <http://www.britisj-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=29185#s9>, accessed 9.4.2006.
- 94 D. Douglas, G.M. Young and W.D. Handcock, *English Historical Documents* (Routledge, 1996), 453.
- 95 A.J. Webb, *The Royal Navy and the effects of the Second and Third Dutch Wars: a study of Somerset and Bristol 1660-1680* (unpub Univ Exeter MA Thesis, 2005), 75 and 85. Original documents quoted are SRO DD/L 1/58/17 part 3 and 4.
- 96 This information derives from the work of D. Hussey of the University of Wolverhampton and will be found in tabular form associated with chapter on the port of Bridgwater in a forthcoming book on the Maritime History of Somerset.
- 97 E. Green, *Bibliotheca Somersetensis* (Taunton, 1902), 14.
- 98 SRO, DD/DN/461-463.
- 99 TNA, E190/1112/1.
- 100 Kerridge, *Textile Manufacturing*, 146.
- 101 Opinion of Bampton trades people at <http://www.britisj-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=39248&strquery=minehead#s5>, accessed 10.4.06.
- 102 The three named Bampton men were operating in the town in 1690: SRO DD/X/HRG/1/2.
- 103 Cullen, *Anglo-Irish Trade*, 134.
- 104 Cornwall RO, AR/15/75.
- 105 John Michell information gratefully received from Mr William Hancock, 2005, of London, a descendant of F. Hancock who wrote the book on Minehead quoted above.
- 106 SRO, Q/SR/201/13
- 107 SRO, DD/SP/1683/23.
- 108 D. Hussey, *Coastal and River Trade in Pre-industrial England: Bristol and its Region 1680-1730* (Exeter University Press, 2000), 41.

- <sup>109</sup> TNA, E190 1090/1 and 1090/10.
- <sup>110</sup> M.I. Williams, 'A further contribution to the commercial history of Glamorgan', *National library of Wales Journal* Vol. XII/1 (1961), 66–81.
- <sup>111</sup> J.G. Jenkins, *The Welsh Woollen Industry* (National Museum of Wales, 1969), 314.
- <sup>112</sup> TNA, E190 1090/1
- <sup>113</sup> Willan, *Coasting trade*, 178.
- <sup>114</sup> TNA, E190/1090/3, 1091/12 and 1092/12.
- <sup>115</sup> SRO, DD/X/HYN/1.
- <sup>116</sup> Ramsay, *Woollen Industry*, 17.
- <sup>117</sup> TNA, E190/1090/3, 1091/12 and 1092/12.
- <sup>118</sup> Ramsay, *Woollen Industry*, 37.
- <sup>119</sup> G.F. Dow, *Everyday life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Courier Dover Publications, 1988), 83.
- <sup>120</sup> M. Balderston, 'Pennsylvania's 1683 ships and some of their passengers' *The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* Vol. XXIV No. 2 (1965), 105–7.
- <sup>121</sup> N. Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade: Comprising the log of the 'Daniel and Henry' of 1700 and accounts of the slave trade from the minor ports of England* (Pimlico, London, 1991), Appendix nine.
- <sup>122</sup> Ponting, *Woollen Industry*, 32.
- <sup>123</sup> Hussey, *Coastal and river trade*, 92, 234 n.119 where John Prickman is noted as the carrier.
- <sup>124</sup> H. Riley and R. Wilson-North, *The Field Archaeology of Exmoor* (Swindon, 2001), 120; Scrase, *Somerset Towns*, 85.
- <sup>125</sup> SRO DD/L/ P15/7/2. I am indebted to Mary Siraut for this reference.
- <sup>126</sup> R. Dunning *Somerset*, 65.
- <sup>127</sup> <http://wolcottfamily.co.uk/somerset.html>, accessed December 2006.
- <sup>128</sup> Siraut, *Wills*, 113.
- <sup>129</sup> T. Mayberry, *The Vale of Taunton Past* (Chichester, 1998) 57.
- <sup>130</sup> SRO DD/X/WHI/1a.
- <sup>131</sup> Maxwell-Lyte, *Dunster*, 301.
- <sup>132</sup> Siraut, *Wills*, 256–7 and 262.
- <sup>133</sup> SRO, DD/SP/1636/41.
- <sup>134</sup> SRO, DD/SP/1647/13.
- <sup>135</sup> Siraut, *Wills*, 280.
- <sup>136</sup> Mayberry, *Vale of Taunton*, 57.
- <sup>137</sup> SRO, DD/SP/1690/68.
- <sup>138</sup> SRO, DD/SP/1697/8.
- <sup>139</sup> Weaver, *Wills*, 137–8.
- <sup>140</sup> SRO, DD/SAS RF 3/3/2.
- <sup>141</sup> M.K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society 1300–1620* (Cambridge, 2005), 150.
- <sup>142</sup> SRO, Q/SR/18/9.
- <sup>143</sup> SRO, Q/SR/15/22 and 23/31–4.
- <sup>144</sup> SRO, Q/SR/23/31–4.
- <sup>145</sup> SRO, Q/SR/21/11–12.
- <sup>146</sup> SRO, Q/SR/224/1–2.
- <sup>147</sup> SRO, Q/SR/212/18.
- <sup>148</sup> SRO, Q/SR/201/12.
- <sup>149</sup> Mayberry, *Vale of Taunton*, 58.
- <sup>150</sup> SRO, D\B\bw/1975b.
- <sup>151</sup> SRO, D\P\tau.m 23/34
- <sup>152</sup> SRO, D\P\w.bu/13/5/4.
- <sup>153</sup> E. Lipson, *The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industry* (London, 1921), 39.
- <sup>154</sup> Words spoken by Sir Edwin Sandys and quoted in B. Coward, *The Stuart Age* (London, 1980), 121.
- <sup>155</sup> <http://members.tripod.com/Silvie.Trowl.html>, accessed in May 2007. The information quoted from the website is found originally in, R.J.E. Bush 'The Tudor Tavern, Fore street, Taunton', *SANH* 119, 15–21.
- <sup>156</sup> Hussey, *Coastal and river trade*, 195. Papers of Graffin Prankard 1712–1757 found at [www.microform.co.uk/guidesR96831.pdf](http://www.microform.co.uk/guidesR96831.pdf), accessed 1 July 2007.
- <sup>157</sup> SRO DD/DN 423, Q/SR/277/3 and Q/SR/271/7.
- <sup>158</sup> A.R.H. Baker, 'Changes in the Later Middle Ages' in H.C. Darby (ed.), *A New Historical Geography of England. Vol 1 before 1600* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), 225.
- <sup>159</sup> *ibid.*, 224; H.C. Darby 'The age of the improver', in Darby, *New Geography*, Vol 2, 59.