

Provisions for the people: the food supply of
Loughborough, 1851-1897

Dave Fogg Postles

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Two inspirations have lain behind the conduct of this research. The first extends back to an article by the late Janet Blackman which to a large extent initiated the interest in the food supply of urban places in the nineteenth century, and progresses forward to the late Roger Scola's *Feeding the Victorian City*.^{*} Both were pioneering research which has stimulated more recent examination of the issue. Since both relate to urban places considerably larger than Loughborough, there is little point in making constant comparisons with the scale of provisioning in those places. Readers would be better advised to consult the original works. Where my research differs substantially from Scola's is that I have examined the decennial census enumerators' returns for the occupational information. The second is the cumulative work of Jon Stobart on the spectacle of consumerism in the eighteenth century and Patrick Joyce's evocation of the urban spectacle, motifs which I hope to combine.[†]

^{*} Blackman, 'The food supply of an industrial town: a study of Sheffield's public markets, 1780-1900', *Business History* 5 (1963), pp.83-97; Scola, *Feeding the Victorian City: The Food Supply of Manchester 1770-1870* (Manchester: Manchester University Press [MUP], 1992).

[†] Stobart, *Sugar & Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press [OUP], 2013), esp. pp. 112-38; Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003), esp. pp. 200-1.

Front cover: Ordnance Survey Sheet Leicestershire XVII.8 (1:500. surveyed 1883; Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

Abbreviations

LG London Gazette

LH Loughborough Herald

LM Loughborough Monitor

NPC The National Probate Calendar

ROLLR Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

TNA The National Archives, London

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1 INTRODUCTION

On the demise of John Tyler, of Thorpe Villa, Derby Road, in 1882, the editor of the *Loughborough Herald* commented that: 'His death seems to connect the Loughborough of the present day with the less progressive Loughborough of the past.' Initially a butcher but advancing to a cattle dealer, Tyler had served on the Local Board of Health from 1859 to his death, from 1878 on the School Board, at his death was Vice Chairman of the Board of Guardians, and a director of the Loughborough Gas Company.¹ The son of a publican, Tyler married in the parish in 1838, when he was occupied as a butcher in Swan Street.²

Tyler witnessed the first phase of the transformation of Loughborough, not only as an industrial centre and its physical expansion, but also in its commercial development in the centre of the town. These changes produced an urban spectacle.

Urban historical research has predominantly been concerned with the development of the large boroughs and cities.³ By contrast, this study relates to a small town which was industrializing with the transition from domestic industry to substantially factory-based textile production. The chronological parameters are 1850 to 1897. The rationale for the date of commencement is associated with the formation of a Local Board of Health for the unincorporated town in 1850 under the Health of Towns Act 1848.⁴

The end date is partially connected to the promulgation of the

¹LH 15 June 1882, p. 4.

²ROLLR DE667/17 p. 20 (no. 40)

³Earlier studies include Roy Church, *Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham, 1815-1900* (London: Routledge, 2006 edn; Martin Daunt, *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977); Richard Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) includes information on some of the smaller industrial towns like Oldham.

⁴LG 1850, pp. 390-391 (Order in Council).

Loughborough Corporation Act 1897 which regulated the operation of the local market. The Local Board had been empowered to do so under the Loughborough Local Board Act 1868, but the Corporation, established in 1888, now confirmed the arrangement.⁵ The other rationale for the end date is the general introduction of stores which were emporia towards the end of the nineteenth century which resulted in the ‘fight for survival’ of small shopkeepers after 1890. In fact, emporia did not really become established in Loughborough apart from Clemerson’s which was specifically a furniture store with departments.⁶ Apart from the Co-op, multiple stores made little impact in Loughborough.⁷ Perhaps the town was still too small to attract the larger multiples and emporia. In Castle Donington, however, ‘London House’ (M. Attwood & Co.) certainly appeared to be an emporium with departments for dress, millinery, carpets, bedsteads, provisions, sugars, teas, fruits, medicines, mangling and wringing machines and sewing machines.⁸

During the late nineteenth century, the population of Loughborough exploded, through immigration and natural increase. By 1891, the population of the parish (mostly concentrated in the urban area) exceed 18,000. Adjacent Shepshed contained almost four

⁵LG 1896 Part IV, pp. 6619-6621.

⁶Michael Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper’s World 1830-1914* (Manchester: MUP, 1983), pp. 51-62 (‘The fight for survival 1890-1914’); Ian Mitchell, ‘The Victorian provincial department store: a category too many?’, *History of Retailing and Consumption* 1 (2015), pp. 149-63; Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp. 278-89.

⁷James Jefferys, *Retailing in Britain 1850-1950: A Study of Trends in Retailing with Special Reference to the Development of Co-operative, Multiple and Department Store Methods of Trading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [CUP], 1954), pp. 16-17 (Co-operative).

⁸LH 24 June 1880, p. 1; for this place, Pamela Fisher & J. M. Lee, *Castle Donington* (London: University of London, 2016), p. 63..

and half thousand inhabitants. In the surrounding hinterland, the demographic statistics at that time consisted of over 1,100 in Hathern almost a thousand in Sutton Bonington, 863 in Wymeswold, over 800 in East Leake, more than 600 in Long Whatton, towards 600 in Belton, exceeding 400 in Willoughby on the Wolds, more than 300 in each of Burton on the Wolds, Rempstone and Normanton on Soar, and lesser numbers in Cotes, Dishley, Hoton, West Leake, Prestwold, Stanford on Soar, and Wysall. The population in all these rural villages, with few exceptions, was stagnant by comparison with the upward trend in the town. As important, however, for the development of retail trade was the physical expansion of the town, particularly with building development for the working classes on the Paget Estate and then along Leicester Road and Moor Lane around the new factories.⁹

The sources

In the conduct of this research, much reliance has been placed on local newspapers. Although much of the content concerned national and international events, certain regular pages carried information about auctions and advertisements by local retailers. Whether or not this information imparted a local ethos, the material is highly informative about the local distributive trades and the feeding of the town.¹⁰ The *Loughborough Monitor* was established shortly after the removal of the Stamp Duty on newspapers.

⁹Richard Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), pp. 136-40.

¹⁰Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018), pp. 17 ('...it [the local press] built upon, and built, local and regional identities'), 21, 23; Alan Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1976); Martin Hewitt, *The Dawn of the Cheap Press in Victorian Britain: The End of the 'Taxes on Knowledge', 1849-1869* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: OUP, 1985).

The initiator was John Henry Gray, printer and stationer in the Market Place. Born in Loughborough in 1833, Gray was still in his twenties when he started the newspaper. Of Baptist genealogy, he was born in 1833.¹¹ As also Secretary to the Town Hall and Corn Exchange Company, he had easy access to information about current affairs in the town, not least because his own offices were adjacent to the Town Hall in the Market Place. Indeed, he also produced the *Loughborough Almanac* from his print shop. He also recruited a network of informants in the surrounding parishes.¹² Although he relinquished the editing of the newspaper to Thomas William Rollings Lee, he maintained his interest in printing and stationery. When he died at an early age in 1873, his estate was valued at under £1,000 which he bequeathed to his sole executrix, his wife, Sarah.¹³ His successor, Thomas Lee, was also a nonconformist, but three years older than Gray. He was the son of a printer and stationer, Samuel, of Church Gate.¹⁴ Lee maintained the paper until 1867, but then migrated to Brighton.¹⁵

The contents of the local newspapers also help to define the region around the town. The list of early informants for the editor is one indicator. More pertinent is the material in the advertisements and notices of auction with the frequency of information about Sutton Bonington, Normanton on Soar, Stanford on Soar, Rempstone, Costock, Kingston upon Soar, East and West Leake (all in Nottinghamshire) and Kegworth, Hathern, Long Whatton, Hoton, Cotes, Wymeswold and Walton on the Wolds (all in Leicestershire).

The *Loughborough Herald* has been examined between 1880, its inception, and 1893. Initially, the paper was owned by Francis He-

¹¹TNA RG4/27, fo. 85.

¹²LM 1 Nov. 1860, p. 1.

¹³NPC 1873 Faber-Gynn p. 333; ROLLR DE462/16, p. 360 (will, 1872; probate 1873).

¹⁴TNA RG5/156, fo. 134 (1830).

¹⁵TNA RG10/1088, fo. 39 (1871).

witt, with offices in Leicester and at 42, Baxtergate in Loughborough. By the end, however, it was produced entirely from Leicester by Hewitt and his son. The elder Francis, a borough councillor as well as newspaper proprietor, died in his mid sixties in 1897 at his second home in Hunstanton when his estate was valued at £28,197 11s 7d.¹⁶

The newspapers consulted thoroughly are the *Loughborough Monitor* between its inception in 1859 and 1867 and then the *Loughborough Herald* between 1880 and 1893. Both were weeklies issued on Thursdays. The first extant issue of the *Monitor* is no. 69 for 20 January 1859 and the final edition no. 530 at 26 December 1867. The price throughout was 1d per issue. In 1867, the editor contended that the print run was 4,000. The *Herald* commenced with volume 1 number 1 on 20 May 1880 and extended to volume 12 number 716 for 28 December 1893. Again, the constant price was 1d per issue.

The composition of the readers of these newspapers is difficult to decipher. Many of the block advertisements on the front page derived from the provision merchants in the central part of the town, so it might be assumed that the readership was bourgeois. On the other hand, some of the notices from the other retailers suggested a wider customer base. ‘The people’s boot provider’ proclaimed the advertisement by Hilton of the Market Place in 1889, addressing himself as ‘the practical man’.¹⁷ Before then, Walter Freeman of Church Gate declared his business: ‘The people’s boot and shoe warehouse’.¹⁸ Claypole & Son in the same commercial street advertised their concern as: ‘The workman’s clothing mart’.¹⁹ Inside pages included notices for the hiring of servants and the letting of houses.²⁰ Utilising the advertisements in the local newspapers is

¹⁶TNA RG11/3126, fo. 69; NPC 1898 Haage-Juuruspolvi p. 117.

¹⁷LH 4 July 1889, p. 1.

¹⁸LH 20 Jan. 1881, p. 1; 1 June 1882, p. 1.

¹⁹LH 20 Jan. 1881, p. 1.

²⁰Hobbs, *A Fleet Street*, pp. 58-64.

fairly uncontroversial, despite their rhetorical or superlative comments about the products. Even large block advertisements in the local press were simply text without images until Clemerson introduced an engraving of its new premises. There was little symbolic value in the advertisement; they did not conform to a wider connection between advertising and the spectacle.²¹

To some extent, the trades directories have been examined between 1846 and 1888, but always as supplementary material.²² The defects of the directories are well rehearsed, although considerable reliance has been placed on them for commercial activities in urban places.²³ Instead, although they are only decennial, more dependence has been placed on the census enumerations between 1851 and 1891 for discerning numbers engaged in distributive trades.²⁴

²¹Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (London: Verso, 1991 edn), pp. esp pp. 73-118; Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* translated by James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996, pp. 164-66, 172-96. Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture & Postmodernism* (London: Sage, 1991), pp. 13-27 ('Theories of consumer culture').

²²*History, Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire* (Sheffield: William White & Co., 1846) [White 1846]; *Melville & Co.'s Directory & Gazetteer of Leicestershire ...* (Worcester: J. Stanley for F. R. Melville & Co., 1853) [Melville 1853]; *Buchanan & Co.'s Postal and Commercial Directory of Leicester...* (London and Manchester: Buchanan & Co., 1867) [Buchanan 1867]; *S. Barker & Co. Directory for the Counties of Leicestershire, Rutland, & ...* (Leicester: Barker & Co., 1875) [Barker 1875]; *Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* (London: Kelly & Co., 1888) [Kelly 1888].

²³G. Shaw and M. T. Weld, 'Retail patterns in the Victorian city', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 4 (1979), pp. 278-91; Shaw, 'Changes in consumer demand and food supply in nineteenth-century British cities', *Journal of Historical Geography* 11 (1985), pp. 250-96.

²⁴TNA HO107/2085; RG9/2273-2275; RG10/3254-3257; RG11/3144-3146; RG12/2514-2516.

Additional information has been extracted from the marriage registers of All Saints parish in Loughborough between 1837 and 1897, particularly for the occupations of grooms living in Loughborough at the time of their espousal.²⁵ For the downside of retail trading, an examination has been conducted of the *London Gazette* through the *Gazette's* own website. For more information about the fortunes of retailers, the *London Gazette* (LG) is useful for bankruptcies and the formation and dissolution of partnerships. Understanding the downside of retailing is important, not least for those marginally involved in distribution.

Success in the various occupations can be glimpsed through the National Probate Calendar (NPC). From 1858, the probate of wills was transferred to civil registration either at the central probate registry or in one of the local probate registries. Up to the middle of 1881, the valuation of the estates of deceased persons was expressed as under a certain amount, in defined increments (for example under £20, under £50, under £80, under £100, under £200, under £300, under £450, under £600 and so on). From the middle of 1881, an actual and specific number was provided, to pennies. Before 1897, the valuation consisted only of personal estate. After 1897, some real estate was included (some valuations after 1897 are cited below).²⁶

Although the NPC furnishes only abstracts of the registration (testator's details, names of executors, and valuation), the local registry at Leicester actually made copies of the wills in registers. This information is useful for confirming the identity of retailers and also for more detailed information about estates.²⁷

Transformation of the town centre

As noted, Tyler served on the Local Board of Health which was

²⁵ROLLR DE667/17-20, DE1619/3.

²⁶W. D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution* (2 edn London: The Social Affairs Unit, 2006), pp. 18-23

²⁷ROLLR DE462 series.

instituted in 1850 under the Health of Towns Act of 1848. Although its progress in ameliorating the conditions of the town was inhibited, the establishment of the Local Board symbolized the beginnings of the transformation of the town. Significantly, the establishment of the Local Board required a (semi-)public building which was erected in 1854 in the Market Place and thus stimulating the polite reconstruction of that central precinct. Completed in 1854, the Town Hall and Corn Exchange cost about £8,000; donations accounted for about £2,500; the distribution of 650 shares at £5 produced more; the remainder of the building cost was placed at mortgage.²⁸

The old traditional shops were improved elevating the central precinct. The change allowed the editor of the local newspaper, J. H. Gray, to opine: ‘the town can now boast of as handsome shops as any town of the same or double the size’.²⁹ Miss Callis (and her sister) in High Street completely changed her shop front.³⁰ In the Market Place, Brunt, the clothier, replaced his shop front as well.³¹ Clemerson, the auctioneer, tried to resell the old shop fronts as suitable for small shops.³² Additionally, he attempted to recycle ‘first-class grocer’s fittings’, including counters, one of which was 24’ with a mahogany surface, two nests of forty-eight drawers, another ‘good modern shop front’, 18’ by 12’, which ‘may be used for 2 country shops’.³³ The contrast between new urban fittings and old country-style furniture is instructive. Harding, the joiner and builder of Mill Street, speculatively placed for sale ‘a modern and

²⁸LH 4 April 1889, p. 5 (when the new Borough Corporation purchased the Town Hall).

²⁹LM 16 Aug. 1860, p. 2; Daniel Miller, Peter Jackson, Nigel Thrift, Beverley Holbrook and Michael Rowlands, *Shopping, Place and Identity* (London: Routledge), p. 9..

³⁰LM 28 June 1860, p. 1.

³¹LM 6 Sept. 1860, p. 1.

³²LM 23 Oct. 1862, p. 1.

³³LM 18 June 1863, p. 1.

well-made shop front', measuring 18' by 12'.³⁴ Shortly afterwards he produced three more shop fronts for sale.³⁵ The joiner Tailby later had speculatively for sale a large shop front with shutters, mahogany doors, and a 'massive' cornice.³⁶ The lowest standard had become two front windows.³⁷ 'A very good and elegant shop' with Spanish mahogany counters and plate-glass front with a large house in the High Street required a rent of £19 10s 0d per annum as early as 1864.³⁸ An auction in 1867 consisted of three newly-built shops and houses in Baxter Gate next to the Dispensary with plate-glass shop fronts and in the occupation of 'respectable tenants' who contributed a rent each of £21 per annum.³⁹ In contrast with the village store (and the shops which sprang up later in the town's suburbs), the urban retail outlet necessarily dispensed a plate-glass front and large mahogany counters. Plate-glass windows became *de rigueur* for serious shops in the centre of town. When a house and shop in Mill Street were offered for let, the emphasis was on the 'plate-glass frontage'.⁴⁰ Again, when four shops in Church Gate came on the market, it was clarified that they all had plate-glass windows.⁴¹ Premises were continuously improved. The building formerly housing the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Banking Company in the Market Place was acquired and improved by Johnson for the Consumers' Tea Company. It was purchased by private treaty having failed to achieve the reserve price of £2,800 at auction. The frontage consisted of 50' on High Street and 28' 6" to the Market Place.⁴² The premises were a fitting addition to the provision of groceries in the centre. In 1887. Clemerson,

³⁴LM 21 May 1863, p. 1.

³⁵LM 21 April 1864, p. 1.

³⁶LH 5 March 1885, p. 1.

³⁷LM 30 June 1864, p. 1.

³⁸LM 20 Oct. 1864, p. 1.

³⁹LM 24 Oct. 1867, p. 1.

⁴⁰LH 3 June 1886, p. 1.

⁴¹LH 26 March 1891, p. 1.

⁴²LH 30 June 1887, p. 4.

perhaps the first emporium store in the town, opened its new additional showroom in Mill Street which the firm had purchased for £1,200.⁴³ Almost a year had been expended on the refurbishment. The following year, Barradell completed his new auction mart in Baxtergate, erected in the Gothic style over three storeys, with a frontage of 40' to the street.⁴⁴ Another year on and Thomas Mayo accepted a tender from the builder Needham for the construction of a completely new grocery shop and warehouse in Mill Street, at a price of £1,368.⁴⁵ Mayo had earlier bought the grocery concern of Nightingale in the Market Place.⁴⁶ As has been suggested for other small urban places, the 'urban renaissance' was deferred into the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Some small market towns then experienced a transformation in their centres.⁴⁷ In Loughborough, urban improvement of the commercial area occurred even later because there was no unitary authority before the formation of the Local Board of Health in 1850.

Urban spectacle

A second aspect of the urban spectacle in the 1860s in which Tyler himself was involved was the 'Christmas Meat Show'. Reliance here has to be placed on the commentary of J. H. Gray, the editor of the local newspaper. There are obvious issues about personal interpretation and the possibility of hyperbole. When, moreover, the Christmas season was described by the subsequent editor of the succeeding newspaper in the 1880s, he is quite dismissive of the exhibition of meat. These relations are, however, the only sources for this event.

⁴³LH 6 May 1886, p. 4; 22 Dec. 1887, p. 4.

⁴⁴LH 26 Jan. 1888, p. 5.

⁴⁵LH 9 May 1889, p. 5.

⁴⁶LH 4 Aug. 1881, p. 1.

⁴⁷Cathy Smith, 'Urban improvement in the Nottinghamshire market towns, 1770-1840', *Midland History* 25 (2000), pp. 98-114; Smith, *The Renaissance of the Nottinghamshire Market Town, 1680-1840* (London: Merton Priory Press, 2007).

Possibly, the Christmas Meat Show originated just before 1860. In the issue of 20 December 1860 of the *Loughborough Monitor*, the editor referred to it as an annual event, but it appears to have been in its infancy. In 1859, only six butchers were mentioned by the newspaper, including John Tyler in the Market Place. The report was at great pains, however, to elucidate the provenance of the carcasses: from Herrick of Beaumanor; Lord St Maur of Burton on the Wolds; Sir John Crewe of Calke Abbey; C. W. Packe, M.P.; and a long list of other named producers in Sutton Bonington; Shepshed; Hathern; Stanford on Soar; Burton on the Wolds; Quorndon; and East Leake. The variety of livestock included Scot-spayed heifers; South Downs, Portland and Leicester sheep; and Durham oxen.⁴⁸ What the editor intimated here was the contribution of the landed elite to the welfare of the town and the symbolic value of their produce provided to the townspeople. He portrayed a sort of benevolence, even though the product was purchased. The newspaper enthusiastically recounted the occasion and its participants in minute detail.

The number of participating butchers increased at Christmas-tide 1860. The editor described the populace ‘parading the streets, and stopping at every butcher’s shop to examine and admire the excellent and numerous carcasses...’⁴⁹ A large proportion of the livestock had been despatched to the town by Lord St Maur of Burton on the Wolds. Among the nine butchers was, indeed, John Tyler of the Market Place, who had the carcasses of ewes from Barrow upon Soar. In the following year, the number of butcher’s shops had increased by just one, to ten. The editor waxed lyrical about the ‘two remarkably fine Shropshire Downs, bred and fed by Mr William Lee, of Barrow-on-Soar (none finer having been seen in Loughborough for a long time)’ at the premises of Tyler and Taylor.⁵⁰ Livestock had been received from Normanton on Soar,

⁴⁸LM 22 Dec. 1859, p. 4.

⁴⁹LM 20 Dec. 1860, p. 2.

⁵⁰LM 19 Dec. 1861, p. 5.

Hathern, Hoton, Rempstone, Stanford on Soar, Dishley, Woodhouse, Charley and Zouch. Again, the editor elaborated, ‘... during the whole evening it was almost impossible to pass by the shops through the crowds...’

The participants stabilized as nine butchers were also involved in 1861. The editor remarked upon the ‘very excellent and numerous carcasses which had been slaughtered by them for this annual exhibition’.⁵¹ As previously, the newspaper highlighted the producers and the origins of the beasts. The following year witnessed the considerable expansion of the event as sixteen butchers were involved. ‘Our annual meat show’, the newspaper commented, ‘was held between six and ten p.m. and ‘the respective shops were crowded’.⁵² Of Mr Bishop’s premises, the report concluded: ‘The display was perfectly decorated with berried holly, which gave the whole a very charming appearance, and all who visited his establishment expressed themselves very pleased with it.’ Although the report had previously mentioned the two game and poultry concerns of Brumby and Henson, there was now further congratulation for Brumby whose ‘Display extended across the front of two buildings, arranged in a very attractive form...’⁵³ Subsequent reports in the local press continued in the same vein. In 1863, fifteen butchers were enumerated with Brumby and Henson as poulterers, but now with an additional note about the giant pork pie weighing nearly fifty pounds constructed by Mr Henshaw for his employer, the Misses Callis, at their confectionery shop in High Street.⁵⁴

So throughout the 1860s the reports of the annual Christmas Meat Show continued. In 1864, it was presented by fourteen butchers, Brumby and Henson, with another monumental pork pie created by Henshaw for the Misses Callis, and now also mention of Henry Prout, fruiterer. The following year, the butchers expanded

⁵¹LM 19 Dec. 1861, p. 5.

⁵²LM 18 Dec. 1862, p. 5.

⁵³LM 18 Dec. 1862, p. 5.

⁵⁴LM 17 Dec. 1863, p. 8.

to twenty, with Brumby, the pork pie made for the Misses Callis by their assistant, Mr Tillson, Prout and now Grundy, fruiterers, Cramp, the greengrocer, and Briley, pork butcher.⁵⁵ The celebration in 1865 might have been the apogee as the number of butchers diminished slightly thereafter.⁵⁶

The Christmas Meat Show seems then to have become eclipsed by the other traders. In 1880, the *Loughborough Herald*, complained that: 'What is known as the Meat Show which during late years has so much dwindled in importance that the name is almost a misnomer, was made on Wednesday evening. It is not the custom of the town to make any particular display of meat for the season, and, beyond the usual supply, there was hardly anything worth the special mention'. The newspaper comment on the absence of a meat show in 1881 was almost verbatim and the comment continued '...for the more substantial Christmas delicacies we must look to the grocers', itemising Mayo of the Market Place, Moss of High and Swan Streets, Chester Bros in Church Gate, the Globe Tea Company and the Leicestershire Provision Company.⁵⁷

Of course, it had precisely been the custom of the town, according to the earlier newspapers, to indulge in this perennial, repetitive event for at least a decade not too far into the past. It consequently seems like this conclusion was a purposeful act of forgetting an occasion, even if a transient one. The event, nevertheless, does not seem to conform to the idea of an 'invented tradition'.⁵⁸ Although it arose in the nineteenth century like those 'invented traditions', there was no intent to inculcate any values, although the action seemingly contained a 'communitarian' aspect. Nor is it possible to discover whether it was instigated from above or had organic ori-

⁵⁵LM 28 Dec. 1865, p. 5.

⁵⁶LM 19 Dec. 1867, p. 5 (fifteen butchers).

⁵⁷LM 22 Dec. 1881, p. 4.

⁵⁸Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions' in Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp. 1-2.

gins below. Since without the butchers' involvement it could not have occurred, then some initial leadership must be posited. From the newspaper reports, the occasion then seems to have taken on the aspects of the 'heteroglossia' of the crowd, rushing and jostling, something of the carnivalesque at a time of revelry.⁵⁹ Order was dissolved, but without violence or the grotesque. The traces of memory persisted with the editor of the newspaper but the event itself collapsed into oblivion.⁶⁰

Another aspect of the earlier show should be considered. The event occurred in the evening in the middle of winter. Undoubtedly, the shops were illuminated by gas lighting, so the melodrama was elevated. Most of the visitors would not have experienced gas lighting except in the centre of town. The lit spectacle of the shops was an extravagance for these crowds.⁶¹ This occasion, moreover, was probably the only time when the majority of the crowd could act like the (collective) flâneur, meandering about the town at leisure.⁶²

The downside

So far the profitable aspect of the distributive trades has been considered. Much of the previous research has, indeed, referred to the upside of retail trade, doubtless because of the sources. The

⁵⁹Susan Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: MUP, 1997), pp. 20-25, 149-59.

⁶⁰Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 427-43.

⁶¹Matthew Beaumont, *Night Walking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London: Verso, 2016), pp. 339-44.

⁶²Walter Benjamin, 'On some motifs in Baudelaire' in his *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, edited by Michael Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 2006), p. 188, analogous, perhaps, to Benjamin's experience of the Paris Arcades in miniature; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), pp. pp. 91-110.

downside was, nonetheless, ever present. Many of those engaged in retail trading were constantly in a precarious position. Apart from the large grocers in the central precinct catering for the middle class, many of the retail traders had slim resources and were not resilient. Between 1850 and 1897 at least eighteen individuals engaged in some way in the provision of groceries succumbed to bankruptcy in Loughborough.⁶³ Some of the most vulnerable operated in provisioning in combination with another activity, perhaps sometimes supplying groceries as a sideline. More detail is provided in the chapter on the grocery trade, but a couple of examples are presented here. Abandoning his grocery in Loughborough, William Smith resided in Leek (Staffordshire) where he was declared bankrupt in 1862.⁶⁴ When he was made bankrupt in 1891, William Taylor was out of business in Birmingham, but had previously owned a grocery and bakery in Loughborough.⁶⁵ In 1869, Robert Lacey, grocer, tea dealer, tin- and ironmonger went into liquidation in Loughborough.⁶⁶ In the same time-frame, nine butchers in Loughborough went out of business.⁶⁷ In 1892, William Tyler was reduced to lodging in Shakespeare Street, a new working-class locality in the town, where he was declared insolvent, after departing from his butcher's shop in Nottingham Road.⁶⁸

Intermittently during this time, the supply to the town was

⁶³LG 21286 p. 275; 22220 p. 1210; 22519 p. 2477; 22554 p. 4015; 22594 p. 576; 22888 p. 4196; 22624 p. 2480; 22951 p. 1727; 23263 p. 3415; 23289 p. 4460; 23523 p. 4408; 23920 p. 5370; 24967 p. 2098; 25394 p. 4058; 25395 p. 4111; 25982 p. 5347; 26177 p. 3498; 26183 p. 2822.

⁶⁴LG 22594 p. 576.

⁶⁵LG 26183 p. 3822.

⁶⁶LG 23523 p. 4408.

⁶⁷LG 22554 p. 4015; 23403 p. 4178; 23576 p. 271; 26297 p. 3486; 26603 p. 1288; 26610 p. 1911; 26868 p. 3602; Mark Lester, *Victorian Insolvency: Bankruptcy, Imprisonment for Debt and Company Winding-up in Nineteenth-century England* (Oxford: OUP, 1995)..

⁶⁸LG 26297 p. 3486.

disrupted. The Cattle Plague of 1866 was followed by a serious downturn in agricultural prospects, as more fully discussed in the Chapter on livestock. The collapse of local farms also had an effect on consumer demand. Towards the end of the period, severe winters threatened the food supply of the townspeople. In the winter and spring of 1890-91, the government monitored the price of grain in the major distributive centres. The information was recorded in the *London Gazette*. The price of grain was captured in Derby, Leicester, Loughborough, Melton Mowbray and Nottingham in the vicinity. Over the term, wheat prices were lowest in general in Melton Mowbray, but oats higher there. In Loughborough wheat prices were average, but barley prices above the trend, and oats lower.⁶⁹

Distress ensued in the town as the price of food increased. The corporation established a relief committee in January 1891 issuing tickets for groceries and coal. The local paper reported that every day 120 to 150 people queued outside the Corn Exchange to receive tickets. Penny breakfast tickets were issued for children to eat at the Charnwood Coffee Tavern. The fund was maintained by subscriptions by the local elite, including £25 from Mrs Herrick of Beaumanor. In early February as the weather improved, the fund was closed. With the return of inclement times in March, the relief committee was re-established. Of its income of £270 in donations, £196 was expended on succour. Tickets for children's breakfasts totalled 2,046 in March and those for groceries 697.⁷⁰ As the burgeoning population became more removed from the rural hinterland, so it became more vulnerable to harvest fluctuation.

The 'region'

⁶⁹LG 25973 p. 4902 (incomplete return in September); 25898 p. 5321 (one of the October returns); 25994 p. 6141 (one of the November returns); 26007 p. 7558 (ditto December); 26014 p. 217 (ditto January); 26026 p. 1054 (ditto February); 26029 p. 1210 (ditto March); 26036 p. 1818 (another for March).

⁷⁰LH 22 Jan. 1891, p. 5; 5 Feb. 1891, p. 5; 12 March 1891, p. 5.

In 1881, the editor of the *Loughborough Herald*, considering the progress of the hay crop, reported: ‘The crop for the uplands is about average, based upon recent years, but that for the lowlands is hardly so ripe in point of quality, or up to expected yield in point of quantity’.⁷¹ When referring to the upland, the local people were commenting on the Wolds, one of the three regions which coalesced around the town and parish of Loughborough. A notice for a lease in East Leake, five miles to the north of the town, offered a cottage farm of ten acres of ‘good upland grass’ with a grocer’s shop.⁷² The parish of Loughborough was at the junction of three different farming countries: Charnwood Forest with its rocky uplands; the valley of the River Soar with its lush meadows; and the uplands of the Wolds which continued into Nottinghamshire.⁷³

Although the advent of the railway allowed the rapid introduction of produce from around the country (and, indeed, from abroad), the provisioning of Loughborough still depended to a considerable extent on the surrounding hinterland and the efforts of the local population. The Agricultural Returns published in 1868 allow a snapshot of the husbandry of the county just after mid century but also in the middle of the cattle plague. Grain then accounted for 115,107a compared with green crops over only 26,350. The cattle population amounted to 115,048 despite the depredations of these years, sheep to 462,953 and pigs to 38,866, thus 25.4 cattle per hundred acres, 102.2 sheep, and 8.6 pigs. The acreage dedicated to wheat extended to 43,416, to barley 31,941, oats 20,791, rye just 137 acres, beans 11,870 and peas 6,952. The production of vegetables was restricted to an even smaller acreage: potatoes 1,638; turnips, swedes and mangold wurzels over 20,000 acres (as livestock feed), carrots 175a, and greens 676a. Permanent grass

⁷¹LH 7 July 1881, p. 4.

⁷²LH 3 Jan. 1884, p. 1.

⁷³For agriculture in the Midlands, John R. Walton, ‘The Midlands’, in E. J. T. Collins, ed., *The Agrarian History of England & Wales Volume 7 1850-1914* (Cambridge: CUP), chapter 5D.

exceeded all that arable acreage, extending over 271,557a.⁷⁴

Loughborough, of course, did not draw on the whole county for sustenance. Indeed, the county was constituted of diverse regions with different agricultural composition. Moreover, Loughborough's agrarian hinterland extended into south Nottinghamshire. The hinterland can be closely defined by the membership of the Loughborough Agricultural Association. The dinner in 1860 was attended by members from Prestwold; Hathern; Beaumanor; Quorn; Normanton on Soar; Barrow upon Soar; Isley Walton; Dishley; Wymeswold; Hoton; Woodhouse; Cotes; Burton on the Wolds; Long Whatton; and from outside Leicestershire: Rempstone; Costock; Kingston upon Soar, Sutton Bonington; East and West Leake;; Stanford on Soar; Bretby and Gamston.⁷⁵ The judges for the ploughing match were derived from Leake Hills, Costock, Wymeswold and Hoton.⁷⁶ Prizes for drainage work a year later were awarded to competitors from Burton on the Wolds, West Leake (and Leake Pit House), Sutton Bonington, Shepshed and Long Whatton.⁷⁷

Advancing to 1882, the officers of the LAA's show consisted of the local dignitaries and large estate owners, headed by the President, Lady Alice Packe. She was supported by Hussey Packe of Prestwold Hall, Edward Warner of Quorn Hall (also a landowner in the town), C. Shakespeare of Langley Priory, J. Coupland of Goscote Hall, Major-General Burnaby of Baggrave Hall, and Lord John Manners. Such positions were, of course, honorific. The stewards derived from Loughborough, Kingston upon Soar, Prestwold and Hoton. The committee was composed of members from Kegworth, Rempstone, Hoton, Woodhouse, Thurmaston, Shepshed, Costock, Charley, Cotes, Normanton on Soar, Sutton Bonington

⁷⁴*Agricultural Returns of Great Britain* Parliamentary Paper 1868 LXXI, pp. 16-17, 26-7, 36-7.

⁷⁵LM 25 Oct. 1860, p. 3.

⁷⁶LM 25 Oct. 1860, p. 3.

⁷⁷LM 28 Feb. 1861, p. 2.

and Long Whatton.⁷⁸

Another avenue is the contributors to the auction by German & German in 1891, their third 'Loughborough Smithfield' for the sale of store sheep. The vendors inhabited Wanlip, Hathern, Six Hills, Sutton Bonington, Beaumanor, Ravenstone, Charley, Woodthorpe, Lockington, Swithland, Long Whatton, Wymeswold and Seagrave.⁷⁹

As is evident from the holders of honorific posts in the LAA, the region contained some large landed estates. From Kingston Hall, Lord Belper possessed over 1,912 acres in Leicestershire and 2,857 in Nottinghamshire.⁸⁰ The Herricks at Beaumanor owned more than 5,003 acres in Leicestershire.⁸¹ At Burton on the Wolds, Lord St Maur farmed over 1,826 acres.⁸² To the south in Quorndon, Edward Warner accumulated over 1,020 acres in addition to his land in Loughborough.⁸³ At Prestwold, the Packe estate comprised more than 2,865 acres.⁸⁴ All these landowners had connections to the marketing of livestock in Loughborough. The Garendon estate consisting of some 6,857 acres, opened its leys for summer grazing with a tariff per beast.⁸⁵

From the 1861 census enumerators' returns the sizes of 32 working farms in the parish of Loughborough can be abstracted. These data relate only to those defined in the census as farmers. The information does not concern all landownership. The mean size of the farms was 79 acres (standard deviation 65.012) and the median 55½a. Six farms comprised fewer than twenty acres and a dozen under forty. As might be expected the largest holdings were

⁷⁸LH 21 Sept. 1882, p. 6.

⁷⁹LH 17 Sept. 1891, p. 1.

⁸⁰*Return of the Owners of Land, 1873* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode for HMSO, C1097), volume I Leicestershire p. 3; volume II Nottinghamshire p. 2 (hereafter 1873 I and II).

⁸¹1873 I p. 15.

⁸²1873 I p. 25.

⁸³1873 I p. 30.

⁸⁴1873 I p. 22.

⁸⁵1873 I p. 10; LH 20 April 1890, p. 1.

concentrated in Loughborough Parks where almost all the farms exceeded a hundred acres, including the two largest of 200 and 217 acres. The status of these farms can be assessed through references in advertisements to small and compact concerns. A 'small farm' in Willoughby on the Wolds consisted of 61a.⁸⁶

On the periphery of the built-up area of Loughborough, small holdings proliferated, mostly for the production of milk and bacon/ham. When the executors of John Morris auctioned his livestock from Middle Park Lane, already being developed as a housing estate, the lot consisted of merely three cows and two pigs, with an acre of turnips and mangold wurzels. The livestock was probably for his own consumption, but perhaps also for sale to some of the retailers in the town.⁸⁷ Another small farm off Leicester Road comprised a farmhouse and eleven acres in four closes.⁸⁸

Contrary-wise, however, there existed expansive estates in the vicinity all of which contributed to the food supply of the two, especially livestock. For example, the agent of the Duke of Somerset (Lord St Maur) of Burton on the Wolds despatched 82 cattle and 630 sheep for marketing in Loughborough.⁸⁹

The desperate years

Through the four decades, agricultural businesses suffered seriously, with the problem of the cattle plague in the mid-1860s and the 'agricultural depression' of the 1880s. Such impediments were national, but it is necessary to consider the local repercussions and their potential effect on the food supply.⁹⁰

The most catastrophic failure happened to Robert Lacey who had accumulated land in Walton on the Wolds and (to a lesser extent) Sibleby and Seagrave. When he went under in 1882, his

⁸⁶LM 14 April 1864, p. 1.

⁸⁷LH 16 Oct. 1884, p. 1.

⁸⁸LH 1 March 1883, p. 1.

⁸⁹LH 15 Oct. 1891, p. 1.

⁹⁰Richard Perren, *Agriculture in Depression 1870-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

liabilities were initially estimated at £18,875, but revised to £19,229 of which £17,845 17s 8d was secured. His assets amounted to £795 14s 7d of which £559 7s 7d consisted of stock in trade. No buyer venturing forward, he was forced into liquidation.⁹¹

Another casualty was Arthur Edward Cooper against whose estate a receiving order was filed in 1891. By this time, Cooper had become a partner with German & German, auctioneers originally of Ashby de la Zouch, but now also of Loughborough. Initially, Cooper had entered business as a farmer with £2,200 of capital contributed by his father. With this start, Cooper invested in a farm of 214a in Normanton on Soar in 1872. In 1883, he also entered into employment with German, German & Lowe and on Lowe's retirement in 1885 replaced Lowe as partner. Cooper retreated from the partnership in 1890. Cooper's liabilities in 1891 exceeded £5,855 against assets of £396. He attributed his losses to the farming enterprise and in particular the impact of cattle diseases.⁹²

The position of John Walker, farmer of Longcliffe, in 1893 was less serious in terms of the extent of liabilities, just over £545, but his assets only amounted to £72 5s 0d. Although he commenced farming sixteen years previously, for the last four years he had also been employed as a gamekeeper on the Garendon Estate for pay of £1 per week.⁹³

It was precisely in that year (1893) that the editor of the *Loughborough Herald* complained: 'In this part of the country agricultural depression is so severe that unless measures of relief are soon adopted, many farmers will be in the bankruptcy court'.⁹⁴ No relief was forthcoming as floods inundated the vulnerable Soar Valley

⁹¹LH 5 Jan. 1882, p. 4; 2 Feb. 1882, p. 4.

⁹²LH 15 Jan. 1891, p. 5; 22 Jan. 1891, p. 1 (for the operations of German & German).

⁹³LH 14 Sept. 1893, p. 5.

⁹⁴LH 21 Sept. 1893, p. 5.

in 1893, rendering ‘hundreds of acres’ unusable in the spring.⁹⁵ A smaller liquidation in 1887 concerned E. C. Brown of Burton on the Wolds, whose livestock consisted of 25 cattle, 49 sheep and nine pigs.⁹⁶

In the middle of the depression, an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the area caused some consternation. The infection was apparently transmitted from Nottingham to Wymeswold and thence to Hathern.⁹⁷

Not all who held farms were, however, farmers by their primary occupation. When Shelthorpe Farm to the south of the urban area was placed at auction in 1885, it had a sitting tenant on an annual lease, William Faulkes, the builder. The farm consisted of 54a 3r 33p, a median size for farms in the parish. At the sale, the farm was purchased by W. B. Paget, the industrialist and landowner, at £75 per acre. The former building partner in A & S Main, Stephen, having left the partnership, engaged in small livestock rearing off Borough Street in the town. He quit farming in 1893, auctioning off his 17 cattle with eleven acres of grass keeping. His position also illustrates the small farming enterprises on the periphery of the town, predominantly producing dairy produce.⁹⁸

Horticulture: vegetables and urban allotments

Information about the local production of vegetables is elusive and reliance must be placed on occasional references in the newspapers. Separate chapters are devoted to grain and livestock and their produce, but horticulture, vegetables and allotments are considered here as sometimes an integral part of the urban environment. Leicestershire was well provided with allotment gardens by 1873, probably the highest number than in any other county.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁵LH 2 March 1893, p. 4.

⁹⁶LH 2 June 1887, p. 1.

⁹⁷LH 23 Aug. 1883, p. 4; 20 Dec. 1883, p. 4.

⁹⁸LH 31 Aug. 1893, p. 1.

⁹⁹Jeremy Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), pp. 224-5 (Table 16).

principal products of the allotments were potatoes.¹⁰⁰

Potatoes were the province of Thomas Pickworth. When Pickworth was obliged to surrender part of his garden ground in 1886, he placed at auction 120 strikes of exhibition seed potatoes.¹⁰¹ Pickworth was awarded first prizes at the International Potato Show in London in 1882.¹⁰² In the same year, he successfully exhibited at the Birmingham show for his roots and potatoes.¹⁰³ When the International Potato Exhibition convened in 1884 at Crystal Palace Pickworth was again highly rewarded.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Pickworth owned a large drapery in the Market Place, but, having been born in Spalding, he may have developed the horticultural interest.¹⁰⁵

Although Pickworth was a major producer of potatoes, there was plenty of smaller supply locally. Thomas Russell, dyer, was accused at the Police Court of stealing twenty-five pounds of potatoes from the grounds of Henry Tyler, a Loughborough butcher.¹⁰⁶ An auction of seven strikes of seed potatoes was commissioned by the executors of William Sharp, a gardener in Delaney's Yard, Church Gate, in 1861.¹⁰⁷ Another theft from a garden in Derby Road netted the labourer William Clements a stash of thirteen pounds of potatoes, but not without prosecution.¹⁰⁸ A grower in Bottle Acres in the parish of Loughborough produced three and a half acres of White Rock tubers, available in quarter acre lots.¹⁰⁹ A large quantity (thirty strikes) of Myatt and Schoolmaster seed potatoes could be acquired from the executors of George Hayfield in Sutton Bonington in 1885.¹¹⁰ Three acres of Magnum Bonum

¹⁰⁰Burchardt, *Allotment Movement*, p. 158 (Table 8).

¹⁰¹LH 8 April 1886, p. 1.

¹⁰²LH 21 Sept. 1882, p. 4.

¹⁰³LH 30 Nov. 1882, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴LH 16 Oct. 1884, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵TNA RG9/2274, fo. 107v.

¹⁰⁶LM 19 Sept. 1867, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷LM 21 Feb. 1861, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸LM 4 Feb. 1864, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹LM 10 Aug. 1865, p. 1.

¹¹⁰LH 12 March 1885, p. 1.

tubers in Lockington were auctioned in 1889.¹¹¹ Cramp, a gardener and greengrocer, in Loughborough, unsuccessfully instituted a case against George Foulds in 1861, claiming a debt of £8 5s 2d for potatoes; the two had regular transactions.¹¹²

The Board of Guardians in particular provided an outlet for locally produced spuds. Thomas Cramp successfully tendered to supply the workhouse with both milk and potatoes through 1868.¹¹³ The contract in 1881 was awarded to Rowland Vickers of Hathern with the responsibility to supply fifty strikes of Scotch Champion.¹¹⁴ The following year, Mrs Bradshaw was charged with the provision of a hundred strikes at 2s per strike.¹¹⁵ In 1887, the Guardians accepted a tender from T. Bramley of East Leake for the delivery of two tons of Magnum Bonum potatoes at £2 12s 6d per ton.¹¹⁶

Frequent auctions of legumes appeared in the newspapers. The stock was largely supplied from adjacent parishes. For example a large quantity from twenty-one acres in Barrow upon Soar came onto the market in 1860, consisting of Early Surprise and Champions. The auctioneer clarified that the fields were in the proximity of the railway station ‘where trucks may be had to convey them to distant markets’.¹¹⁷ Perhaps the ‘distant market’ included Loughborough. The advantage of the auction of ten acres of ‘blue peas’ in 1864 was proximity to the town: ‘within an easy distance of Loughborough.’¹¹⁸ Nine acres of Sangster’s No 1 in Mountsorrel might also have satisfied that criterion.¹¹⁹ The vendor of peas in the field in 1865 emphasized the propinquity of the crop: six acres

¹¹¹LH 5 Sept. 1889, p. 1.

¹¹²LM 18 July 1861, p. 2.

¹¹³LM 26 Sept. 1867, p. 5.

¹¹⁴LH 19 May 1881, p. 5.

¹¹⁵LH 26 Jan. 1882, p. 4. (The strike contained 84 lbs).

¹¹⁶LH 29 March 1887, p. 5.

¹¹⁷LM 12 July 1860, p. 1.

¹¹⁸LM 30 June 1864, p. 1.

¹¹⁹LM 30 June 1864, p. 1.

of Early Surprise two miles from Loughborough and three acres of Sangster's No. 1 in Knightthorpe.¹²⁰ Kentish Invicta peas constituted the crop available at auction growing over five acres between Rempstone and Costock.¹²¹

At Kegworth, another two acres of early peas were offered in the following month.¹²² More peas were produced for sale in East Leake for auction in July 1880, consisting of four acres of Bedman, Imperial and Prizetakers.¹²³ Available for picking the first week of July, five acres of early peas, comprising half Early Sunrise and half Leicester Defiance, were placed at auction for collection from the fields in Hathern in 1887.¹²⁴ Another auction of peas at Woodthorpe made available four acres of Harrison's Improved Leicester Defiance peas.¹²⁵ The owner of Green Lodge Farm in Barrow placed three and a half acres of peas on the market in 1890.¹²⁶ At the same time, a Shepshed farm produced five and a half acres of Leicester Defiance peas for the local market.¹²⁷ Also in the Charnwood area, nine acres of Fluke, Shaw's and Regent potatoes became available in lots in the autumn of 1866.¹²⁸

A case which appeared at the county court in 1880 concerned contention about a contract to purchase a field of peas in Quorn: Wright v. Whittle. The defendant had agreed to purchase at a total sum of £26, but ultimately refused to accept the peas since he was, he argued, led to believe that they were marrow peas not market ones.¹²⁹ In the same parish four acres of Harrison's Leicester Defiance and Sangster's No. 1 Improved were produced

¹²⁰LM 22 June 1865, p. 1.

¹²¹LH 5 July 1888, p. 1..

¹²²LM 4 July 1867, p. 1.

¹²³LH 8 July 1880, p. 1.

¹²⁴LH 23 June 1887, p. 1.

¹²⁵LH 21 June 1888, p. 1.

¹²⁶LH 10 July 1890, p. 1.

¹²⁷LH 10 July 1890, p. 1.

¹²⁸LM 20 Sept. 1866, p. 1.

¹²⁹LH 23 Dec. 1889, p. 4.

for auction.¹³⁰

Closer to the town, peas were also produced in small fields. On the margin of the town, on Leicester Road, five and a half acres of peas were offered at auction in 1867.¹³¹ Six acres on Moor Lane were offered at auction in 1880.¹³² Few references to other legumes occur. Some juveniles were presented to the petty sessions for the theft of six sheaves of beans from a field of Isaac Henson on Forest Lane. Henson occupied the Model Farm of 91 acres.¹³³ The Loughborough vet, Garton, invited purchasers for purchasing six acres of peas in 1866.¹³⁴ In all cases, the peas were offered for purchase in June and July as the crop began to mature in the fields. It was incumbent on the purchaser to harvest the crop in the fields.

The complication, of course, is whether the legumes were produced for human or animal consumption. The newspapers unfortunately do not include the results of the auctions. Briley & Co., wholesale and retail provision dealers at the corner of High Street and Woodgate, did enumerate peas in their list of groceries.¹³⁵ Another conundrum is how far the advertised auctions in the local press represented the scale of pea production for the market.

Other legumes may well have been supplied from small plots and large gardens as horticultural activity. John Fuller alias Strimer (sic) Jack was accused at the Police Court of theft of cabbages and onions from gardens on Derby Road.¹³⁶ Even so, large-scale production of greens did happen. In 1883, Pickworth, mentioned above for his potato production, offered for sale 3,000 Veitch's Autumn Giant cauliflowers from his garden grounds in the Rushes

¹³⁰LH 30 June 1881, p. 1.

¹³¹LM 27 June 1867, p. 1.

¹³²LH 15 July 1880.

¹³³LM 26 Sept. 1861, p. 2; TNA RG9/2273, fo. 38.

¹³⁴LM 19 July 1866, p. 1.

¹³⁵LH 6 Nov. 1862, p. 4.

¹³⁶LH 6 July 1882, p. 5.

next to the canal wharf.¹³⁷

These quantities were basically wholesale auctions and little reference is detectable for the operations of greengrocers. R. Vickers, potato salesman in Nottingham Road, suffered a robbery at his shop in 1886.¹³⁸ Offering his own character defence at the police court, William Cooper, a greengrocer in the town, explained that he was 72 and had been in business for fifty years. Since six of his twenty-one weights were defective, however, he was fined 5s.¹³⁹ The greengrocer, James Grundy, operated out of a house and shop in Baxter Gate which he held at lease.¹⁴⁰

Horticulture was practised extensively around the periphery of the town. 'The vegetables of all sorts, which it is needless to specify, were luxuriant in growth and excellent in quality', opined the editor of the *Loughborough Monitor* about the Loughborough Horticultural Fete in July 1860.¹⁴¹

The town also hosted an annual Spring Cabbage Show, the Loughborough Autumn Celery and Vegetable Society exhibitions, and the annual George IV Celery Show in the George IV inn in Regent Street, at all of which not only celery but also leeks, red onions, turnips, potatoes, and gourds were on display. The original Celery Show had been established in 1852. The Loughborough Horticultural Society had origins in 1857 and celebrated its thirty-fourth show on Elms Park in 1891.¹⁴²¹⁴³

Allotments and small holdings

The existence of horticulture, of course, raises the question of the provision of allotments in and around the town. Concern about

¹³⁷LH 27 Sept. 1883, p. 1.

¹³⁸LH 14 Jan., 1886, p. 4.

¹³⁹LH 23 Aug. 1888, p. 5.

¹⁴⁰LH 14 June 1888, p. 1.

¹⁴¹LM 26 July 1860, p. 3.

¹⁴²LH 23 July 1891, p. 5.

¹⁴³27 Sept 1860, p. 2; LH 2 Oct 1862, p. 5; LH 16 Oct 1862, p. 5; LH 1 Sept 1881, p 1; LH 8 March 1883, p. 4; LH 4 Oct 1883, p. 2; LH 8 June 1893, p. 5.

the erosion of the existing allotments for building land resulted in an investigation into the 'allotments question'. The report concluded that there existed about a hundred acres of these small allocations within a mile of the Market Place. The units had been created on the lands of the Endowed Schools, the Storer Charity, the Rectory (glebe), E. H. Warner of Quorn, W. B. Paget, and to a lesser extent Robinson's Trustees, White's executors and Seward.¹⁴⁴ The newspaper editor reckoned the total to amount to about 750 units, proportionally one for every five households. The rents per hundred square yards varied from 2s to 5s 6d, the most expensive having existing orchards. The least expensive remained the rectory units. Warner provided about 160 covering twenty-two acres, the Endowed School 146 over nineteen acres, and the rector 142 over sixteen acres. The sizes of the plots ranged from 400 square yards to 1,100. The locations were dispersed in Toothill Road, Meadow Lane, by the railway station, on Leicester Road, Ashby Road, the Grammar School grounds, Forest Road and Middle Park Lane, Freehold Street, William Street and Bridge Street. At the same time, W. E. Woolley and W. Moss cooperated to divide a field of fourteen acres into thirty-seven units available at 10d to 1s 3d per square yard, twenty-eight of which were taken immediately.¹⁴⁵

The consternation was not unwarranted since some of the charities had been revoking the leases for building development. Allotment gardens on William Street were sold for £179 per acre as building land.¹⁴⁶ Most controversy concerned the actions of the trustees of Storer's Charity. This institution possessed a considerable number of allotments on Ashby Road, each of six hundred square yards. The Charity's income amounted to £4 per acre. Early in 1888, the trustees issued notices to quit to some of the

¹⁴⁴For the varied interests of landlords in making available allotments, Burchardt, *Allotment Movement*, pp. 117-35.

¹⁴⁵LH 23 Aug. 1888, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶LM 28 Nov. 1867, p. 5.

plot holders who convened a meeting at the Golden Fleece Inn, attended by more than thirty. They prevailed upon the trustees to recognize the charitable purposes of their role.¹⁴⁷

At one stage, the Local Board of Health engaged in the provision of allotments, partitioning 1,884 square yards in Green Close between Ashby Road and the Gas Works. Seven tenants received lots of various sizes for different terms. The arrangement was, however, impermanent as the land became too valuable for building¹⁴⁸ In nearby Bridge Street, a close (3a 0r 39p) which had previously been allocated in allotment gardens was placed at auction in 1862 as it 'is admirably adapted for building purposes'.¹⁴⁹ About four acres of allotments were put up for auction near William Street in 1865.¹⁵⁰

In 1887, the editor had previously concluded that: 'The town is fairly supplied with allotments...' At that time, the rector converted glebe land in Toothill Road and Meadow Lane into forty new allotments at a rent of 3s per hundred square yards, most containing six hundred square yards.¹⁵¹ The decline in allotments was moderated by the rector who continued to lay out more ground. In 1888, he provided twenty-nine units between Meadow Lane and Cambridge Street, each of six hundred square yards at 3s per hundred.¹⁵² During his incumbency, the Reverend Pitts awarded eighteen prizes annually for the best allotments.¹⁵³

Awards had also been dispensed by the Loughborough Agricultural Association at its annual show for the best spade-cultivated allotment of garden less than two hundred square yards in the parish of Loughborough, the recipient not in receipt of poor relief for the previous twelve months (Class VII). The supporters of

¹⁴⁷LH 2 Feb. 1888, p. 5.

¹⁴⁸LM 30 Jan. 1862, p. 1; 6 Feb. 1862, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹LM 17 April 1862, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰LM 23 Nov. 1865, p. 1.

¹⁵¹LH 3 Nov. 1887, p. 5.

¹⁵²LH 1 Nov. 1888, p. 5.

¹⁵³LH 3 Aug. 1893, p. 5.

the prizes were Archdeacon Fearon, E. Warner and W. B. Paget, the sponsors of allotments. The winners in 1883 inhabited Russell Street, Dead Lane, Cross Street and North Street.¹⁵⁴ Before his bankruptcy, E. C. Middleton had also furnished allotments on three fields. He provided an annual allotment supper at the Plough Hotel, at which seventy or so allotment holders attended. He too awarded prizes for competence.¹⁵⁵

Some of the provision for the urban populace was thus self-produced on the high number of allotment holdings. The produce was limited, of course, to horticultural crops. The supply of major consumables depended on import into the town and (after 1888) borough by intermediaries. Many of these larger concerns in the centre of the urban space were both wholesale and retail. They were also interlocked, negotiating each with the other. In the subsequent pages, these different distributive businesses are considered in categories, similar to the approach by Scola. First, the provision dealers (grocers and greengrocers) are addressed. The next chapter concerns the grain supply and the bakers and confectioners. Subsequently, the supply of the product of livestock is analysed: meat and dairy produce. The conclusion draws together some strands of commonality and divergence.

Most of the provisions for the urban inhabitants, then, originated outside the town.¹⁵⁶ Self-sufficiency on allotments and small holdings assisted at the margins only. The staples were substantially supplied from outside as all towns depended on the countryside and increasingly in the late nineteenth century on imports.¹⁵⁷ The following chapter will begin to consider these substantive is-

¹⁵⁴LH 19 July 1883, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵LM 4 Oct. 1860, p. 2; 2 Oct. 1862, p. 5; 13 Oct. 1864.

¹⁵⁶Collins, 'The food supplies and food policy' and Perren, 'The marketing of agricultural produce' in *Agrarian History* 7 chs 1 and 15.

¹⁵⁷Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), pp. 44-5.

sues in the local context commencing with provisioning of groceries, especially tea which also symbolised Victorian Imperialism and preference.

2 GROCERS AND GREENGROCERS

Grocers

The development of the grocery trade in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century has been examined in detail. That decade and a half was seminal for the establishment of a category of merchandising. There was a transition in the 1870s and 1880s when 'emporium' stores in the large cities intruded into provisioning.¹⁵⁸ In Loughborough, large groceries developed in the urban centre, but not the conglomerate and multiple grocery store.

Perhaps the best starting point is numbers. The Directory for 1853 included thirty grocers, tea dealers and provisioners.¹⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, those listed were specialized grocers. The actual stock of the numerous additional shopkeepers is unknown. A comparison can, however, be made with the 1851 census.¹⁶⁰ The enumerators described thirty-eight inhabitants as involved in grocery. The reason for the difference is the inclusion in the census of combined trades (baker and grocer; grocer and chandler), smaller establishments, and part-time involvement. In the Directory of 1853, Alice Ward was entered as shopkeeper at Meadow Bridge, but in the census she is inscribed as grocer of Canal Row on the urban periphery and a poor location.¹⁶¹ Moving to 1864, the Directory recorded twenty-seven grocers and tea dealers.¹⁶² In the census of 1861, however, fifty-four inhabitants were involved in provisioning.¹⁶³ Many had combined occupations (grocer and flour seller; baker and grocer; grocer and fruiterer; grocer and shoemaker; grocer and nail maker; beerseller and grocer; grocer and land drainer; grocer and cotton mill hand; grocer and labourer). Obviously several of these

¹⁵⁸ Janet Blackman, 'The development of the retail grocery trade in the nineteenth century', *Business History* 9 (1967), pp. 110-17.

¹⁵⁹ Melville 1853, pp. 114-22.

¹⁶⁰ TNA HO107/2085, fos. 10v-363.

¹⁶¹ Melville 1853, p. 121; TNA HO107/2065, fo. 231.

¹⁶² Wright 1864, p. 144

¹⁶³ TNA RG9/2273, fos 1-82; 2274/fos 1-114; 2275, fos 1-57.

provisioners were marginally engaged in supplying their neighbours as a side line. In 1884, John Tyler was served by Thomas Oram's wife; she went upstairs briefly and when she returned she discovered Tyler behind the counter. Oram proceeded against Tyler in the courts for the theft of 3s 0½d. Oram was described in the record as a painter and grocer.¹⁶⁴ Some, moreover, were located on the periphery of the town as the urban space expanded, along Woodgate, Ashby Road, and in Wellington Street.

There were also wives engaged in trading whose husband had a different occupation. More comprehensive than the earlier directories, Barker's in 1875 included thirty-six grocers.¹⁶⁵ Even so, the census of 1871 recorded fifty-nine townfolk involved in some way in provisioning.¹⁶⁶ There existed the combinations of combined occupations, such as Mary Harrold, grocer, baker and lodging house keeper in Bedford Square.¹⁶⁷

Wives engaged in provisioning whilst their husbands were otherwise employed. Mary Ann was a grocer's shop keeper as her husband worked as a cotton framework knitter in Wards End.¹⁶⁸ Nearby, Prudence, whose partner was a tailor and grocer, minded the shop ('grocer's shop keeper').¹⁶⁹ Whilst Thomas Adams pursued his trade as a gardener, Eliza ran a provision shop, also in Wards End.¹⁷⁰ More demonstrably, Clara Sills was described by the enumerator as 'wife of a small grocer &c', her husband not listed.¹⁷¹

The business sidelines were represented by Charles Jarrow boatman '& small grocer' and John Hallam 'Fish dealer & small grocer',

¹⁶⁴LH 31 July 1884, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵Barker 1975.

¹⁶⁶RG10//3254, fos 1-84; 3255, fos 1-85; 3256, fos 1-92; 3257, fos 1-24.

¹⁶⁷TNA RG10/3254, fo. 16.

¹⁶⁸TNA 10/3254, fo. 54.

¹⁶⁹TNA RG10/3254, fo. 54.

¹⁷⁰TNA RG10/3254, fo. 80.

¹⁷¹TNA 10/3256, fo. 24.

both on Canal Bank.¹⁷² Their existence reflects the wide variation in the character of provisioning in the town: major provision houses in the central precinct; small operations as the town expanded now also in Moor Lane, Wellington and Russell Streets.

Kelly's Directory of 1881 comprehended slightly fewer grocers, just thirty-one.¹⁷³ By comparison, the census of that year enumerated fifty-nine inhabitants occupied in provisioning.¹⁷⁴ The grocery shops had now extended into Clarence, Bedford, Barrow, Freehold, Queen and Factory Streets, especially into the new terraced suburbs around the new hosiery factories. Two grocery stores existed in each of Freehold and Barrow Streets and one in Factory Street.¹⁷⁵ Most businesses were now specialist grocery stores providing for an expanding urban population. An exception was the framework knitter, George Watts, who also dabbled in the supply of groceries on Sparrow Hill.¹⁷⁶ .

In the middle of the century, the grocery trade was in transition to a new specialized commerce in the urban centre. In 1859, Reuben Hull made extensive alterations and advertised his new enterprise in the local newspaper. His promise represented the new advantages of the local press for enticing customers:

R. H. assures all parties that it is his intention to purchase only Articles of First-rate quality, at the very best markets, and offering them at the lowest remunerating prices, hoping that business conducted on such a principle, with punctuality and promptitude in the execution of Orders, will meet that support and patronage which it is his desire to obtain.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷²TNA RG10/3256, fo. 28v.

¹⁷³Kelly 1881, pp. 665-669.

¹⁷⁴TNA RG11/3144, fos 1-143; 3145, fos 1-144; 3146, fos 1-86.

¹⁷⁵TNA RG11/3145, fos 90v, 91; 3146, fos 14v, 32r-v.

¹⁷⁶TNA RG11/3145, fo. 61v.

¹⁷⁷LM 4 Aug, 1859, p. 3 (new store); 25 Aug. 1859 (large advertisement).

The development of a local press after the removal of the stamp duty in 1855 was an immense opportunity for local provisioners for promoting their service. Provisioners did not consistently advertise in the early years of the press, but took the opportunity at particular times such as the opening of new services or facilities. It was only in the 1880s that these entrepreneurs engaged in regular advertising and then varying between large and small panels.

The advertisements of the grocers in the central precincts, especially on the occasion of new openings, emphasized provisions, establishment, family grocery, merchant. Thus Crosher & Clarke defined themselves in the newspaper as ‘family grocers’ and Roberts in Swan Street as ‘Family Grocer and Tea Dealer’.¹⁷⁸ Reuben Bull in Sparrow Hill referred to his business as ‘tea, grocery and provision merchant’.¹⁷⁹ When Barratt took over the business of A. G. Sayer in High Street, he entitled his new enterprise ‘The Tea and Grocery Establishment’ and ‘Barratt’s Grocery Establishment’.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, Bunch, replacing Benson’s grocery, designated his new business ‘Wholesale and retail grocery establishment and family tea warehouse’.¹⁸¹

It is perhaps epitomized by A. Stevenson who in October 1866 advertised the opening in Baxter Gate of a ‘new grocery and provision warehouse’.¹⁸² The emphasis here was on provisioning and warehouse, specialism, quantity and size. A week later, James Frost of Church Gate countered with an advertisement: ‘James Frost: The Noted Tea and Provision Warehouse’, furnishing a variety of teas (‘superior mixture’), ‘London mixture’, young Hyson, and Gunpowder), bacon, butter and Huntley & Palmer’s biscuits.¹⁸³ The same tactic was adopted by John Briley when he opened his new premises on the corner of Woodgate and High Street: ‘The

¹⁷⁸LM 10 Nov. 1859, p. 1; 5 Jan. 1860, p. 5.

¹⁷⁹LM 9 Aug. 1860, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰LM 13 June 1861, p. 2; 14 Nov. 1861, p. 1.

¹⁸¹LM 19 Sept. 1861, p. 1.

¹⁸²LM 4 Oct. 1866, p. 1.

¹⁸³LM 11 Oct. 1866, p. 1.

new cheap wholesale and retail provision stores', carrying ham, bacon, 'foreign' butter, cheese, lard, greats, peas, meal and pea flour.¹⁸⁴

The commerce through which the provisions entered Loughborough can only be rarely glimpsed. Many grocers acquired their tea from London houses, but some certainly arrived via Liverpool. In *Ottely v. Clarke* in the county court at the end of 1860, Ottley, a Liverpool tea merchant, proceeded against Clarke, the Loughborough grocer, for a balance of £8 15s 9d on their account for four boxes of tea. The court found for the plaintiff.¹⁸⁵ Horniman's regularly advertised in the *Loughborough Monitor* in the 1860s, listing its local agents, among whom Cumberland & Co. of Swan Street was the appointed outlet in Loughborough. Horniman in particular referred to the Parliamentary Report on adulteration as justification for supplying only through approved agents.¹⁸⁶

Although the grocery and provision establishments in central Loughborough expanded, they catered for the higher status inhabitants. There were two countervailing tendencies: the formation of new shops in the expanding outer areas of the town; and the persistence of village groceries and hybrid shops.¹⁸⁷

The second category are more easily despatched. Their presence, as well as in the directories, was indicated by the auction of the business in the Loughborough press. In 1861, for example, a messuage with grocer's shop, garden, framework knitter's shop, and piggery, with a malting office for ten quarters, all recently erected, in Costock were offered for auction.¹⁸⁸ Considering its size and population, Shepshed necessarily had several businesses such as the house, bakehouse, grocer's shop, with wind flour mill and

¹⁸⁴LM 6 Fe3b. 1862, p. 4.

¹⁸⁵LM 20 Dec. 1860, p. 2.

¹⁸⁶LM 3 Jan. 1861, p. 1; 10 Jan. 1861, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷For village shops Jon Stobart and Lucy Bailey, 'Retail revolution and the village shop, c. 1660-1860', *Economic History Review* 71 (2018), pp. 393-417.

¹⁸⁸LM 21 Feb. 1861, p. 1.

steam engine put up for sale there in 1861.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, Barrow upon Soar required local provisioners and a house with bakehouse and front shop used as a grocery and bakery, were available for lease there.¹⁹⁰ Even in large villages like Kegworth, composite shops persisted to accommodate local demand. On the auction of the stock in trade of Mrs Fanny Gibbons, draper, grocer, shoe and provision dealer there in 1861, her commodities comprised tea, coffee, sugar, spice, but also prints, shawls, muslin, and ladies' and children's boots and shoes.¹⁹¹ (Kegworth was also populous enough for a 'New tea warehouse' to be established on High Street in 1862).¹⁹² In Wymeswold, Collington & Son operated as grocers and drapers (although the partnership was dissolved in 1866).¹⁹³ In Hoton, a house with grocer's and butcher's shops was placed to let 'well situated for doing a good business'.¹⁹⁴ In the same village, W. T. Atkins continued in business as a grocer, draper and druggist.¹⁹⁵ Provisioners thus existed in the 1860s in all of Costock, Shepshed, Barrow upon Soar, Kegworth, Hoton, Griffydam, Walton on the Wolds, Hathern, Woodhouse Eaves, Wymeswold and Belton. Many operated as unspecialized shops, combining grocery with other commodities, such as butchery or drapery.¹⁹⁶ Yet others entered provisioning as a sideline and perhaps inevitably became casualties. In Shepshed John Corbett acted as grocer, druggist, baker, bread dealer, framework knitter and hosier; his bankruptcy

¹⁸⁹LM 21 March 1861, p. 2.

¹⁹⁰LM 21 March 1861, p. 2.

¹⁹¹LM 12 Sept. 1861, p. 1.

¹⁹²LM 3 Oct. 1862, p. 4.

¹⁹³LM 13 Sept. 1866, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴LM 23 Aug. 1866, p. 1.

¹⁹⁵LM 1 Dec. 1864, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶LM 21 Feb. 1861, p. 1; 21 March 1861, pp. 1, 2; 5 March 1861, p. 1; 7 May 1863, p. 1; 28 May 1863, p. 1; 29 Oct. 1863, p. 1; 24 Sept. 1863, p. 1; 21 Jan. 1864, p. 1; 9 June 1864, p. 1; 1 Dec. 1864, p. 1; 4 May 1865, p. 1; 30 Nov. 1865, p. 1; 1 March 1866, p. 1; 19 April 1866, p. 1; 10 May 1866, p. 1; 12 July 1866, p. 1; 23 Aug. 1866, p. 1.

was declared in 1862.¹⁹⁷

There continued, moreover, to be hybrid stores in Loughborough in which grocery and other provisioning were combined and these had the opportunity to develop as the town expanded outwards. In 1881, William Widdowson of Nottingham Road, grocer and baker, lapsed into liquidation. The stock in trade was itemized for auction: three cwt of paper bags; brown paper; tea and cap papers; four cwt of black and green tea; stationery; ginger; mustard; starch; lemon peel; black lead; blue; soap; door mats; brushes; tin goods; time pieces; and jewellery.¹⁹⁸ The fixtures and fittings included dough tubs, bread tins, four sets of scales and weights, a coffee mill, a counter, shelving, trade cart, harness, pony, chaff cutter, straw and manure. The premises consisted of a dwelling house, grocer's and baker's shop, bakehouse, flour room, warehouse and stabling. Although engaged in grocery, Widdowson was operating an undifferentiated general store which contrasted quite sharply with the specialized grocery stores in the central precinct.

Not all was plain sailing for grocers in the town. Widdowson's failure reflects the earlier combination of grocery and bakery of John Taylor in Wards End who entered bankruptcy in 1866.¹⁹⁹ Five years before that collapse, John Chester, grocer and provision merchant as self-described, had his stock in trade put up for auction for the benefit of his creditors.²⁰⁰ The business of Thomas Bowley was assigned to Morris Woodroffe of Stanford on Soar, farmer, and Ambrose Cumberland, grocer of Loughborough, in trust for Bowley's creditors. Here one grocer was evidently indebted to a larger provisioner in the town, although Bowley also operated out of the Market Place. They auctioned off Bowley's stock in trade consisting of teas, coffees, sugars, spices, fruit, sauces, pickles, jams,

¹⁹⁷LM 24 April 1862, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸LH 28 April 1881, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹LM 27 Sept. 1866, p. 1.

²⁰⁰LM 3 May 1861, p. 1.

hops, rice and candles.²⁰¹ Combining grocery with his occupation as ostler, John Lawtey was reduced to bankruptcy in 1864, as was John Chester a year later.²⁰² Another who dabbled in several commodities, Robert Lacey, grocer, tea dealer and ironmonger, was discharged from bankruptcy in 1869.²⁰³ A decline in fortune brought down Richard Main, once a grocer and shopkeeper of Moira Street, but by the time of his bankruptcy a beerhouse keeper in Barrow Street.²⁰⁴ The grocer John Merishaw went under early in 1875.²⁰⁵ When Frederick Harris, grocer and provision dealer in Swan Street in the town, collapsed in 1881, his liabilities extended to £530.²⁰⁶

The collapse of Chester is interesting in that a new tenant was immediately sought for his premises, commending 'To any steady industrious young man who can command about £300 this is an opening rarely to be met with...'²⁰⁷ Two points arise here. First is the relatively early age at which grocers entered the trade, confirmed by the census evidence below. Second, most of the grocers' premises were leased, not owned in freehold. Even a house and grocer's shop on Bridge Street, presumably a small concern, could be had for a rent of £10 per annum, not considerably more than a moderate house in the vicinity.²⁰⁸ Some of the owners of the freehold in the 1860s, moreover, did not inhabit Loughborough. The bakehouse, grocer's shop and garden formerly occupied by Wale in Mill Street were owned by John Shelton of Syston.²⁰⁹ A corner shop on Leicester Road, leased to T. J. Chester, was owned by E. Peet of Ruddington.²¹⁰

²⁰¹LM 21 Aug. 1862, p. 1; 28 Aug. 1862, p. 1.

²⁰²LM 4 Aug. 1864, p. 1; 26 Oct. 1865, p. 1; LG 1864 Part II, p. 3957.

²⁰³LG 1869 Part IV, p. 5334.

²⁰⁴LG 1867 Part II, p. 5156.

²⁰⁵LG 1875 Part I, p. 740.

²⁰⁶LH 26 May 1881, p. 1; LG 1881 Part II, p. 4031.

²⁰⁷LM 16 Nov. 1865, p. 1.

²⁰⁸LM 27 July 1865, p. 1.

²⁰⁹LM 4 Jan. 1866, p. 1.

²¹⁰LM 25 Dec. 1862, p. 1.

Some of the failure probably resulted from over-extending, but some also from the manner of business: credit.²¹¹ In *Henson v. Hurst* in the county court, Hurst had racked up debt of £7 17s 11d owed to Henson for groceries; not appearing, Hurst was ordered to redeem the debt at 4s per month.²¹² In a similar case, a couple of years later in 1863, Briley pursued R. Main in the same court for accumulated debts of £6 0s 4d for provisions; the verdict decided that the sum owed amounted to £5 15s 4d to be defrayed at 7s 6d per month.²¹³ The innkeeper Joseph Black had incurred such debts that his estate was assigned for the benefit of his creditors to Frederick Thirlby, grocer, and William Tyler, butcher, both of Loughborough, who were probably the principal creditors.²¹⁴ Thirlby and Son possessed the 'Tea, Grocery and Hop Establishment' in Biggin Street.²¹⁵

Not all grocers, of course, experienced this ignominy in the 1860s. The most successful continued in business over decades. In 1866, Richard Crosher left the partnership with John Clarke which had enjoyed such profitability. Ultimately Crosher was in this commerce 'for upwards of Forty-two years', twenty-four of which in collaboration with Clarke.²¹⁶ The business, indeed, continued as Clarke and Henson, Clarke combining with the established grocer, Henry Henson.²¹⁷ (This partnership was dissolved in 1867 after a short life).²¹⁸

On Crosher's death in 1882, the *Loughborough Herald* carried a

²¹¹Sean O'Connell, *Credit and Community: Working Class Debt in the UK Since 1880* (Oxford: OUP, 2009); Mick Reed, "Gnawing it out": a new look at economic relations in nineteenth-century rural England', *Rural History* 1 (1990), pp. 83-94.

²¹²LM 19 Dec. 1861, p. 5.

²¹³LM 21 May 1863, p. 5.

²¹⁴LM 23 April 1863, p. 1.

²¹⁵LM 18 Feb. 1864, p. 1.

²¹⁶LM 10 Nov. 1859, p. 1 (Crosher & Clarke 'family grocers'); White 1846, p. 287; Melville 1853, p. 116.

²¹⁷LM 5 April 1866, p. 1.

²¹⁸LM 17 Jan. 1867, p. 1.

eulogy. According to the piece, arriving from Bagworth about forty (sic) years previously, Crosher had conducted a successful business in the premises now occupied by the grocer, Mayo. Crosher had been involved in local affairs, in the management of the Dispensary, Infirmary, Emmanuel Infant School, and Chairman of the Loughborough Gas Company. Although a parishioner of Emmanuel, he elected to be buried at All Saints.²¹⁹

In fact, according to every census return, Crosher had been born in Newbold Verdon, where he was baptised on 30 March 1800.²²⁰ He arrived and established his business in Loughborough between 1822 and 1828 and before 1825.²²¹ It seems likely that his brother simultaneously migrated to Leicester where he too acquired a business in a similar line in Church Gate.²²² Possibly through this connection he met his first wife, Susanna Smith, whom he married at St Mary, Leicester, by licence in 1825, he then a bachelor of Loughborough and she a spinster of Leicester.²²³ By 1846, he had entered into partnership with Clarke and had established his household at Forest Field House near Middle Park Lane.²²⁴ In his will of 1867 (proved in 1882 with a codicil), he referred to Forest Field House containing about 3a with two tenanted cottages.²²⁵ In fact, in the Return of Owners of Land of 1873, he was accredited 16a 1r 8p in Loughborough.²²⁶ His gross personal estate was valued at £13,044 7s 1d in 1882, including a legacy of £4,000 to his second wife, his junior by over thirty years.²²⁷ By his demise, Crosher had been

²¹⁹LH 12 April 1882, p. 4.

²²⁰TNA HO107/2085, fo. 40v; RG11/3144, fo. 41r; ROLLR DE750.

²²¹*Pigot's Directory of Leicestershire 1822, 1828, 1835*, pp. 224, 496.

²²²*Pigot*, pp. 131, 485.

²²³ROLLR 7D41/25, p. 184 (no. 551).

²²⁴White 1846, pp. 283, 287.

²²⁵ROLLR DE463/25, pp. 384-388 (at p. 384).

²²⁶*Return of Owners of Land* Leicestershire, p. 9.

²²⁷TNA RG11/3144, fo. 41r.

retired from the grocery business for more than fifteen years. He referred to himself in his will as 'gentleman'. After quitting the enterprise, he redefined himself and put all his affairs in order.

An earlier successful business was developed by Ambrose Cumberland, who, on his death in 1902, possessed estate valued at £10,585 19s 11d, including not only his shop but also four houses on Sparrow Hill (after 1898 real estate was included in the valuations, not just personal estate).²²⁸ Cumberland had a decent start in life as the son of a Shepshed farmer, baptised in 1826.²²⁹ By 1841, he was apprenticed to John Mason, grocer in the Market Place at Loughborough.²³⁰ Mason died on 9 August 1848.²³¹ Sworn in £1,500, his will was proved by his executors, his sister and the banker Middleton. Within two years, Cumberland had established his own grocery store in the Market Place. When he married Mary Helen Lander at the end of 1850, he was inscribed in the register as grocer and she as 'Lady'. The bride was the daughter of William Lander, a farmer of 450a. in South Thurmaston employing sixteen labourers.²³² In 1851, Cumberland employed two men, including one live-in apprentice, and also a female servant.²³³ When he started his own enterprise, Cumberland was in his mid twenties or a little older.

As mentioned above, Frederick Thirlby was a creditor in a liquidation. Born in Ibstock in 1807, he had established his emporium in Biggin by 1841, probably in the late 1830s, when he was in his mid twenties.²³⁴ At his demise in 1878, his personal estate was

²²⁸NPC 1902 Caballero-Dyson p. 212; ROLLR DE462/45, pp. 544-549 (will 26 May 1898; probate 1902).

²²⁹ROLLR DE610/12, p. 162 (no. 1289).

²³⁰TNA HO107/595/7, fo. 46.

²³¹ROLLR DE73 PR/T/1848/121.

²³²ROLLR DE1256/10, p. 49 (no. 98); TNA HO107/2087, fo. 663v.

²³³TNA HO/2085, fo. 316.

²³⁴TNA HO107/595/8, fo. 6; RG10/3256, fo. 51v; Pigot 1835, p. 495 (not listed in the grocers).

evaluated at under £3,000.²³⁵

Although the National Probate Calendar described John George Timms as a 'gentleman' in 1892, his occupation in the census of 1891 was inscribed as retired grocer.²³⁶ By the time of his death, he inhabited Knightthorpe, the salubrious suburb of Loughborough in its own parish (with Dishley). His estate was valued at £5,897 14s 6d. (now including real estate). Born in Thrussington in 1831 to a farming family, Timms had opened his store in Loughborough by 1853, when in his early twenties.²³⁷ In 1871, he employed one assistant and two apprentices, all living in, and a female servant.²³⁸

With estate estimated at almost £30,000 on his death in 1930, Thomas Mayo was highly successful, but his career displayed incongruities. Born in the middle of the century to a small farmer in Souldern (Oxfordshire), he entered into the grocery trade as a grocer's assistant (shopman) in Coventry.²³⁹ Apparently he then resided in Harpole (Northamptonshire) where the census enumerator described his being of independent means.²⁴⁰ He was in his late thirties when he opened his provision store in Loughborough, a large concern with four live-in assistants.²⁴¹ He evidently passed on the business to William Tom Mayo, one of his executors, during his lifetime. He retired to Burleigh Farm, Nanpanton.²⁴²

Born in Loughborough, Edwin Moss pursued a successful career. Initially apprentice to a grocery in Rugby, he returned to Loughborough to assist J. Moore in Moore's High Street. Having established his own store in Swan Street in his mid twenties, Moss subsequently moved to Moore's premises in High Street, but

²³⁵NPC 1892 Sabine-Tyzack p. 318; TNA RG12/2516 fo. 105v

²³⁶NPC 1892 Sabine-Tyzack p. 318; TNA RG12/2516 fo. 105v

²³⁷ROLLR DE2664/2, p. 29 (no. 231); Melville 1853, p. 121.

²³⁸TNA RG10/3256, fo. 51v.

²³⁹TNA HO107/1729, fo. 252; RG9/898, fo. 01V; RG10/3175, fo. 84.

²⁴⁰TNA RG11/1555, fo. 53v.

²⁴¹TNA RG12/2516, fo. 31.

²⁴²ROLLR DE462/71, p. 869; NPC 1930 La Barte-Pyzer p. 260.

retired at the turn of the century. He had served on the council between 1888-1905 and was brother of the mayor, William Moss. He died in Ashgrove Nursing Home on Park Road in 1937, having retired some thirty years previously.²⁴³

Surprisingly, Joseph Chester of Chester Bros possessed estate valued at only £1,027 in his house in Toothill Road and office in Church Gate when he died in 1897.²⁴⁴ Such moderate amounts were more representative of the wealth of most grocery traders in Loughborough at their demise: Augustus Clarke under £450; Ferdinand Fowkes £35; John Twells (under £100); Charles Wilcocks £1,758 6s 9d; Stephen Woodcock (retired at Albany Promenade) £207 18s 0d.²⁴⁵

Some common features recur in these biographies, the first of which is the early age at which grocers established their own businesses, in their early to mid twenties. The second is the ability of the successful grocers to retire and become in effect 'gentlemen' inhabiting the salubrious suburbs developing on the periphery of the town. The first feature can be explored in more detail through the census.

Of all the grocers and provision dealers enumerated in 1861, only half a dozen (out of thirty-seven) were aged below thirty. The mean age was forty-seven (standard deviation 13.482) and the median forty-six. Taking the grocers who appeared for the first time in the census of 1891, a third eleven had not attained the age of thirty. The mean age was reduced to forty (standard deviation 13.646) and the median thirty-nine. Most of these younger grocers embarked upon their enterprise in the new housing for the lower middle and working classes in Paget Street, Ashby Road, Russell

²⁴³TNA RG10/3256, fo. 52; RG12/2516, fo. 63v; NPC 1938 Laban-Poywell p. 517; ROLLR DE462/79, p. 116; *Nottingham Evening Post* 13 Dec. 1937, p. 8.

²⁴⁴NPC 1897 Cabbie-Dyus p. 56.

²⁴⁵NPC 1873 Smallbone-Tyzick p. 485; 1878 Cabanyes-Cutts p. 174; 1891 Faber-Gyles p. 188; 1891 Weale-Zumaran p. 186; 1918 Taaffe-Zwierzchlewski p. 384.

Street, and Freehold Street.

Some idea of the stock in trade of the central grocers is visible either in the occasional longer advertisements or on abandonment of trade. When closing his High Street operation in 1861, Alfred Sayer offered his stock in trade of tea, coffee (with his coffee mill), sugar, spices, tobacco, cigars, snuff, nuts, and vinegar.²⁴⁶ Chester's stock in trade auctioned for his creditors by his assignees comprised tea, coffee, sugar, spices, soap, bacon, hams, arrowroot, figs, dates, nuts, vinegar and his coffee mill.²⁴⁷

Newly opened in 1881 in the Market Place, the Leicestershire Provision Company asserted: 'Look here! Look here! Try our bacon', then itemising its ham, potted meat, lobster and salmon as a selection of its wares.²⁴⁸ Also trading from the Market Place, Thomas Mayo, 'Wholesale and family grocer, Italian warehouse', recommended his Roquefort, Parmesan, and Cheddar cheese, York and Limerick Hams, and Wiltshire bacon.²⁴⁹ Similarly, Chester Bros advocated a selective menu of their higher-status stock: American cheese; bacon; lobster; salmon; oysters; boiled and roasted mutton; and jam.²⁵⁰ Not to be superseded, Edwin Moss offered through the vehicle of the local press his eight varieties of tea, five types of sugar, seven modules of soap, dried fruit, 'finest American cheese', 'finest' Cumberland bacon, shoulder bacon, breakfast bacon and fine mild cured bacon.²⁵¹ Obviously, the centrally-located stores catered for an upmarket clientele with a wide range of merchandise.

Immediately after opening his new store, Reuben Hull itemized the teas which he offered: black tea; fine Pekoe; finest Pekoe; good standard mixtures; fine young Hyson; fine cowslip flavour;

²⁴⁶LM 23 May 1861, p. 1.

²⁴⁷LM 23 May 1861, p. 1.

²⁴⁸LH 31 March 1881, p. 1.

²⁴⁹LH 22 Sept. 1881, p. 1.

²⁵⁰LH 22 July 1880, p. 1.

²⁵¹LH 8 July 1880, p. 1.

finest cowslip flavour; and Gunpowder.²⁵² Teas became the leading commodity promoted by grocers for a variety of reasons and, indeed, became the focus of serious competition between grocers in the 1880s. Barratt, who had recently purchased the business late Alfred Sayer's, highlighted the same items: fine young Hyson tea; good Gunpowder; good Congou; fine Congou (breakfast); good plantation coffee; fine mountain coffee; finest Mocha coffee.²⁵³ Beverages were the emphatic element of the advertisement by William Bunch when he assumed the premises formerly occupied by Benson. ‘

W. J. B. would call attention to his newly selected stock of TEAS, consisting of choice Congous, fine Ouchain, young Hysons, rich flavoured Gunpowder, together with a specimen of the finest Japan Tea, imported in its original and genuine condition.²⁵⁴

Higgs of Baxter Gate offered in his advertisement good black tea, better black tea, best black tea, coffee, raw sugar, crystal sugar, lump sugar, currants, raisins, hops, bacon, cheese, spices, candles, and salt butter.²⁵⁵

The opening of new stores thus was an occasion for advertising in the local newspaper not only the new establishment, but the quality and quantity of its goods. Green & Co. reopened a ‘Tea and Grocery Establishment’ on Sparrow Hill, as ‘tea dealers and family grocers’, itemising their good black tea, fine Congou, excellent Congou, good mixed tea, young Hyson, fine Moyune Hyson, finest Hyson, fine Gunpowder, fine coffee, finest Mocha, good coffee, good raw sugar, fine raw sugar, crushed lump and sparkling lump sugar.²⁵⁶ When Ball of Biggin Street went under in 1884, his

²⁵²LM 9 Aug. 1860, p. 2.

²⁵³LM 27 June 1861, p. 1.

²⁵⁴LM 19 Sept. 1861, p. 1.

²⁵⁵LM 6 Nov. 1862, p. 4.

²⁵⁶LM 1 Oct. 1863, p. 1.

stock in trade comprised starch, soup, sago, rice, raisins, pickles, ketchup, blue, citron, lemon peel, golden syrup, figs, biscuits, lobster, sardines, marmalade, cheese, linseed, beans, cornflower, soda and almonds.²⁵⁷ A large proportion even of these centrally-located provisioners advertised in the 1860s only sporadically, and often only once when they opened their stores. Only by the 1880s did the principal provisioners regularly advertise.

By the middle of the century, grocers were already importing commodities from outside the locality. In 1861, Croshier & Clarke advertised their Wiltshire hams and bacon, Bath chaps, and, moreover, 'American flour'.²⁵⁸ T. P. Rowley, a grocer in the Market Place, made known that he was vending 'American prepared corn'.²⁵⁹

The principal grocers, like the bakers and butchers, were also sustained by demand from the Boards of Guardians, certainly of Loughborough, and possibly also of Barrow upon Soar Union. Cumberland benefited from the acceptance of his tender for groceries to the Loughborough Board in 1863.²⁶⁰ In 1867, it was the turn of John Timms to be successful.²⁶¹ The beneficiaries in 1881 were W. & J. Cotton, but the award was made to Thomas Mayo the following year.²⁶² Six years later, Emma Burrows, continuing the business of her late husband, received the contract.²⁶³ The Board required cheese, raw sugar, salt and fresh butter, black and green teas, pepper, sago, mustard, blue peas and oatmeal.²⁶⁴

An important development for the populace of the town happened in the middle of the 1860s. In January 1865, the Industrial Cooperative Society invited tenders for the erection of a new store

²⁵⁷LH 12 June 1884, p. 1.

²⁵⁸LM 2 May 1861, p. 1.

²⁵⁹LM 14 Nov. 1861, p. 1.

²⁶⁰LM 25 June 1863, p. 5.

²⁶¹LM 26 Sept. 1867, p. 5.

²⁶²LH 24 March 1881, p. 3; 21 Sept. 1882, p. 4.

²⁶³LH 27 Sept. 1888, p. 5.

²⁶⁴LM 8 Dec. 1864, p. 1.

in Woodgate to replace the old store in Pinfold gate.²⁶⁵ The contract was awarded to the local builder Wheatley for a price of £310. The foundation stone was laid on 21 February 1865, the premises to include a reading room for ‘upwards of 300 persons’.²⁶⁶ The degree of success of the Co-op was, it seems, moderate, considering the report to the thirty-sixth quarterly meeting in 1881, when the membership had attained 154. The cash account amounted to almost £141, the fixed stock almost £108, and the property account at £936. It was then possible to return a dividend to members of 2s in the £, a total of £717.²⁶⁷ Another self-professed disruptor was the Leicestershire Provision Company which claimed to have caused the lowering of prices in the town: ‘Who are now supplying the public with first-class Provisions 25 per cent lower than common brands supplied by other so-called Provision Merchants ...’²⁶⁸

The contest of the teas

It might be noticed above that the prominent item in grocers’ advertisements (and perhaps also in their inventories) was tea. As late as 1806, Souchong and Hyson tea commanded a price of 8s and 12s per lb.²⁶⁹ Tea remained a select commodity. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a demotic change had happened: tea was now a staple of consumption; a wide variety of teas was available; and it was promoted by grocers as their leading product. The

²⁶⁵LM 19 Jan. 1865, p. 1.

²⁶⁶LM 23 Feb. 1865, p. 5.

²⁶⁷LH 4 Aug. 1881, p. 4.

²⁶⁸LH 6 April 1882, p. 1.

²⁶⁹Stobart, *Sugar & Spice*, p. 49; Anne McCants, ‘Poor consumers as global consumers: the diffusion of tea and coffee drinking in the eighteenth century’ *Economic History Review* second series 61 (2008), pp. 172-200, argues for an earlier dissemination of tea-drinking, but the location is Amsterdam; John Burnett, *A Social History of Food in England from 1875 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1989) in general.

competition between grocers focused on tea and hyperbole was the mainstay of the competition.

In Loughborough, the first visible promotion occurred in 1867 when Albert Stevenson advertised his 'London Tea Warehouse' in Baxter Gate. The adoption of the capital's epithet was intended to convince the provincial customers of the selective nature of the tea. Stevenson professed accordingly to have

new seasonal teas which he has carefully selected, and which he believes, for strength, excellence of flavour, and lowness of price, surpasses that of any other house in the trade. He feels confident that one trial will secure continued patronage...

Here Stevenson was emphasizing the uniqueness, quality and price. He referred to 'any other house' to convey the notion of merchant status. What the advertisement then proceeded to was a enormous variety of teas from which the customer could select, graded hierarchically, with ultimate superiority: good Congou, fine Congou, strong Pekoe, Stevenson's celebrated mixture of black teas, finest Lapsong Souhlong, finest Assam, flowery Pekoe, young Hyson, good Hyson, fine Hyson, finest Moyune young Hyson, good Gunpowder, Imperial Gunpowder, strong fine flavoured Gunpowder, very choice Gunpowder, the choicest Moyune Pinhead Gunpowder, good mixed tea, very superior mixed tea, finest mixed tea...²⁷⁰ By finely grading the teas, Stevenson intended to intimate the special knowledge of the vendor and perhaps also to induce wealthier customers to purchase the more expensive varieties.

In the 1880s, this hyperbole in advertisements expanded because of the increased competition between the vendors in the central precinct. In this regard, it is a great pity that there is a hiatus in the available newspapers between 1867 and 1880. In fact, Stevenson's categories had been rather restrained by comparison with the later promotions and, indeed, bore a resemblance to gradations of

²⁷⁰LM 3 Oct. 1867, p. 1.

tea. His segmentation might be compared, for example, with Edwin Moss's descriptions in 1884: 'superb family tea' at 2s per lb; 'marvellous tea' at 2s 6d; and 'perfect luxury' at 3s.²⁷¹ Moss was involved in the competition for the tea market in the centre of the town. This 'battle' consisted of regular advertisements in the *Loughborough Herald* extolling the virtue of the competitors' teas as the primary commodity in their grocery premises. The virtue of the tea signified the quality of all their commodities. This rivalry existed between Chester Brothers and Edwin Moss and at various times between those two enterprises and the Leicestershire Provision Company and The Globe Tea Company, and latterly Thomas Mayo. The height of the contest occurred between 1880 and 1885. The strategies for marketing tea revolved around: cheapness; quality; and latterly incentives. Chester Bros proclaimed the value of their teas in 1880: 'Just the very thing', retail teas at wholesale prices, 'a marvel of cheapness'.²⁷² Moss responded in the same vein, indicating that he marketed the tea at low margins.

E. M. has resolved not to adhere to the old fashion of large profit on this one article Tea, but he undertakes to sell the best Tea that can be purchased at their respective prices, at a small commission only, on the actual price paid to the importers...²⁷³

Two years later, Moss opined that his 'grand tea' would meet the tea from London houses at higher prices.²⁷⁴ In the same year, he contrasted the price of his tea with other local purveyors: 'Teas are sold for Small Profits and are totally different to other Tea sold in this neighbourhood'.²⁷⁵ Correspondingly, Chester Bros marked down their lowest-priced tea ('The great Reduction') to 1s 3d per

²⁷¹LH 19 June 1884, p. 1.

²⁷²LH 20 May 1880, p. 1.

²⁷³LH 21 April 1881, p. 1.

²⁷⁴LH 5 Jan. 1882, p. 1.

²⁷⁵LH 26 Jan. 1882, p. 1.

lb: 'The finest quality of broken Tea in England' at the price.²⁷⁶ Into the competition entered Arthur Burrows, 'Family grocer and provision merchant' (as above), advertizing to 'the Low Price Teas which are now being Sold' by him.²⁷⁷ This intervention by Burrows was sporadic. Most of the continuous front-page advertisements were placed by Chester Bros and Moss. Whilst price was a constant issue, quality too was commended.

The final gambit was the introduction of incentives: tokens. Interestingly, Arthur Burrows was apparently the instigator of this stratagem. Early in 1881, he offered 'The "Pictorial" Tea'. Consumers could collect the wrappers from his 'celebrated tea' to acquire 'a splendid work of art', 'Autumn Fruit', valued at half a guinea, size 19" by 25", and printed in sixteen colours. Clients required the wrappers from the equivalent of seven pounds of tea.²⁷⁸ The example was followed by the recently-opened Globe Tea Company (Loughborough Branch No. 10). With every quarter pound of tea, customers would receive a 'cheque' (or coupon) to exchange for a 'present'. The list of 'presents' consisted mainly of tableware, for example four to eight coupons for a cream jug or two for a comport or fruit stand. The menu comprised some seventy gifts.²⁷⁹ The GTC extended this provision further in offering a Christmas present to all customers who visited the store on Christmas eve.²⁸⁰ In 1885, every regular customer shopping on 19 December at the GTC was to be presented with a print of 'Little Dears'.²⁸¹ The Leicestershire Provision Company consequently matched the offer: Christmas presents on Saturday, 20 December, 1884.²⁸² In a countervailing tactic, Arthur Ball of Biggin Street, in an occasional advertisement, promoted teas of 'Quality without presents', main-

²⁷⁶LH 29 June 1882, p. 1.

²⁷⁷LH 3 Aug. 1882, p. 1.

²⁷⁸LH 10 Feb. 1881, p. 4.

²⁷⁹LH 28 April 1881, p. 1; 5 Feb. 1885, p. 1; 30 July 1885, p. 1.

²⁸⁰LH 22 Dec. 1881, p. 4.

²⁸¹LH 10 Dec. 1885, p. 1.

²⁸²LH 18 Dec, 1884, p. 1.

taining that his teas were ‘as good as any and better than most’, a rather modest proclamation in comparison with the hyperbole of the other vendors.²⁸³ In a unique departure for Loughborough, the GTC resorted to long verses as advertisements in the local press, extolling the virtue of their tea.²⁸⁴

Assertions of quality indulged in hyperbole and excess, culminating, perhaps, in Moss’s depiction of his ‘Mighty Teas’.²⁸⁵ Claim and counter-claim littered the newspaper in the 1880s and early 1890s. In its earlier advertisements, Chester Bros urged the purchase of their ‘really good tea’ (1s 6d), ‘choice tea’ (2s) and ‘Perfection in tea’ (2s 6d).²⁸⁶ For 2s 6d, Moss marketed ‘The grand tea’, and for lesser sums his ‘very choice’ (2s 6d also) and ‘extraordinary’ tea (2s).²⁸⁷ In 1882, Chester Bros elevated the pitch, referring to their Sterling Congou at 2s per lb that ‘This is one of the finest black teas in England at the money’ and their Young Hyson at 2s ‘The best tea ever sold at the price’.²⁸⁸ Later in the year, the brothers congratulated themselves on ‘The distinctive character and uniformly choice quality of the above Celebrated Teas [which] have gained for them an unqualified reputation’.²⁸⁹ Their teas, they proclaimed, were ‘far-famed’ and the 2s tea ‘The best value in England’, an assertion which they subsequently made for their 1s 6d tea.²⁹⁰ Then their 2s tea ‘defies all competition’.²⁹¹ In 1885, the siblings described themselves as the ‘Tea Men’ vending their ‘Famous 2/- Tea’.²⁹² The Globe Tea Company, looking to the elite market, advanced its ‘grand’ tea at 2s, ‘marvellous’ tea at 2s 6d,

²⁸³LH 10 April 1884, p. 1; 1 May 1884, p. 1.

²⁸⁴LH 19 July 1883, p. 1.

²⁸⁵LH 14 Dec. 1893, p. 4.

²⁸⁶LH 28 July 1881, p. 1.

²⁸⁷LH 23 Feb. 1882, p. 1; 23 July 1885, p. 1 (‘Grand Tea’).

²⁸⁸LH 11 May 1882, p. 1.

²⁸⁹LH 14 Sept. 1882, p. 1.

²⁹⁰LH 8 March 1883, p. 1; LH 1 May 1884, p. 1; LH 19 June 1884, p. 4.

²⁹¹LH 1 Jan. 1885, p. 1.

²⁹²LH 27 Aug. 1885, p. 1.

and ‘excellent’ tea at 3s.²⁹³ When Elizabeth Burrows continued her late husband’s business, she too advertised tea as her leading product: ‘A perfect luxury. Burrows’ Teas’.²⁹⁴ Indeed, she participated in the hyperbole: ‘The finest tea the world produces may be had at popular prices’.²⁹⁵ A very popular touch was introduced by Henson of Biggin Street who attributed the success of the town football club to the players drinking his tea for strength and endurance.²⁹⁶

Rather late, Moss responded about his Kangalia Tea from Ceylon: ‘the tea of the future’, significantly in lead packets.²⁹⁷ The tea landscape was changing as packaged tea intruded into the local market formerly dominated by tea dispensed from the tea chest. In 1893, Ambrose Cumberland emphasized that his Ceylon tea at 2s and 2s 6d was direct from the chest.²⁹⁸ The Globe Tea Company had issued an earlier warning not to be ‘gulled’ by packet tea; rather, purchase where it is weighed out.²⁹⁹ The virtue of local tea was the blending and mixing, the skill of the grocer. Increasingly, the local paper was carrying advertisements, often small, from distant suppliers of teas in packets. Some had local agents and outlets. The London Office of the Gordon estate Ceylon Tea enterprise directed readers to Elizabeth Burrows in High Street and The Globe Tea Company to purchase their teas in air-tight lead packets, as ‘the greatest luxury of the day’.³⁰⁰ Strangely perhaps, H. M. Wilson, hay and corn merchant of Swan Street, acted as agent for ‘The Celebrated London Teas’ with the trademark ‘Tower’ and logo ‘Strength’ (which promised an unadulterated tea).³⁰¹ Moss

²⁹³LH 30 July 1885, p. 1.

²⁹⁴LH 16 Jan. 1890, p. 4.

²⁹⁵LH 15 May 1890, p. 1; also 15 Jan. 1891, p. 4 for the ‘pleasure and profit’ of drinking her teas.

²⁹⁶LH 2 Feb. 1893, p. 1.

²⁹⁷LH 6 Dec. 1888, p. 4.

²⁹⁸LH 16 Feb. 1893, p. 1.

²⁹⁹LH 5 Feb. 1885, p. 1.

³⁰⁰LH 28 Oct. 1886, p. 1.

³⁰¹LH 7 June 1883, p. 1.

embarked on mail delivery of tea, despatching one pound in return for twenty-seven stamps.³⁰² Small notices were placed by Ellis, Davies & Co., of Liverpool, for their Ceylon tea, and by Whittle's of Oakham for their 'speciality' teas.³⁰³ A larger panel promoted Arthur Seaton, tea dealer and grocer of Uppingham.³⁰⁴ Oliver, Oliver and Company posted in the paper to recruit agents for selling their teas and coffee locally.³⁰⁵

What mattered, of course, to local customers of these central provision stores was value, quality, but also extent and variety of stock. Frequented by the middle class, the stores necessarily needed to have an expansive stock. Some of the range has been suggested above, but further detail is provided here about the stockholding of the major central premises. In his initial advertisement in the local press, Moss of High Street itemised four varieties of tea, ox tongues, mild cured bacon, American cheese and fine rich cheese.³⁰⁶

Credit has been mentioned above as a potential cause of failure. Few insights are provided into the nature of the credit relationships. One of the most interesting is the numerous actions brought collectively in one session of the county court by Robert Ferguson, grocer and draper, of Loughborough. He proceeded for debts by different customers of 19s 3d, £3 11s 3d, 11s, £2 5s 8d, £3 2s 9d, 17s 7d, £1 19s 10d, 18s 7d, £3 17s 7d, £4 18s 5d and £2 19s 0d. Mostly, the debtors are difficult to identify because of homonymous names, but the occupation of three was stated: Charles Winterton and Thomas Corah, labourers, and Thomas Black, maltster. None was recorded in the census of 1861. Ferguson v. Kirchen almost certainly involved Thomas Kirchen, aged 65, living on Sparrow Hill, whom the enumerator described in 1861 as 'late working Maltster (sic)' and his wife as a seamstress. The debtors were thus

³⁰²LH 16 Aug. 1883, p. 1.

³⁰³LH 27 Dec. 1883, p. 3; 3 Jan. 1884, p. 1.

³⁰⁴LH 19 June 1884, p. 4; 21 May 1885, p. 1.

³⁰⁵LH 16 Oct. 1884, p. 1.

³⁰⁶LH 26 Aug. 1880, p. 1.

almost certainly working class. Ferguson had allowed substantial credit to accumulate.³⁰⁷

Greengrocers

Greengrocers are an elusive category. Although listed under this occupation in a directory of 1864, some of them probably changed trade. For example, at his death Samuel Dakin was described as a fish and game dealer.³⁰⁸ Joseph Gutteridge occurred in the census towards his death as 'market gardener', not wholly removed from greengrocer.³⁰⁹ It is quite possible that some of the 'greengrocers' of the directory were subsumed as 'shopkeepers' in other listings. Some directories simply did not include a listing of greengrocers.

What is clear from the successive censuses and directories, however, is that many of the greengrocers were transient in the trade. It is also evident that their numbers expanded as the town extended outwards, so that in 1891 greengrocers had their outlets in Regent Street, Meadow Lane, Gladstone Street, Moor Lane, New King Street, Russell Street, and Granville Street, serving a very local clientele. In Wright's directory of 1864 fourteen men are listed as greengrocers; in Wright's equivalent of 1888 twice that number.³¹⁰

One continuous business was, indeed, located in Regent Street, the base of Alfred Cramp. Born in 1825 to a lace maker, Cramp and his father had become 'gardeners' in Factory Street by the time of Alfred's marriage to Charlotte in 1849. Two years later, Alfred had his own establishment as a gardener working out of Wellington Street.³¹¹ He subsequently (by 1865) moved to Leicester Road where his outlet was a three-storey house with shop.³¹² Having

³⁰⁷LM 24 Feb. 1859 p. 2; TNA RG9/2274 fo. 19.

³⁰⁸Wright 1864, p. 144; NPC 1897 Cable-Dyton p. 208.

³⁰⁹Wright 1864, p. 144; TNA RG9/2273.

³¹⁰Wright 1864, p. 144; Wright 1888, p. 476.

³¹¹ROLLR DE667/7 p. 8 (no. 63); DE 667/18, p. 147 (no. 294) (marriage); TNA HO107/2085 fo. 137 (1851).

³¹²TNA RG9/3146, fo. 41; RG10/3254, fo. 9v; LM 13 April 1865, p. 1.

retired, he died in 1897, nominating Charlotte as his sole executrix with an estate of £1,888 7s 1d.³¹³

Like some of the grocers, some greengrocers were wives. Whilst William Biddles (aged 44) earned his living as a labourer, his wife, Emily (aged 40) ran a greengrocery, assisted by one son (aged 17); the elder son (aged 18) worked as a gardener in collaboration with the greengrocery.³¹⁴ So also in New King Street, Frederick Robey was employed as a cotton framework knitter in the nearby factory and his wife, Harriett, managed their greengrocery business.³¹⁵ More closely allied, James Downs worked as a gardener and greengrocer and his wife, Louisa, managed the greengrocery side.³¹⁶

This sort of family enterprise suggests that their stock was locally produced and made available very locally to neighbours. It may therefore be appropriate to consider horticulture here. As noted above, Joseph Gutteridge was included in the directory of 1864 as a greengrocer, but in the census of 1861 defined as a market gardener.³¹⁷ He was indeed assisted in the gardening enterprise by his three children in 1861. After his demise, two of his daughters, both spinsters and aged fifty-eight and forty-six, continued the market gardening.³¹⁸ The few other market gardeners in the census were dispersed on the periphery of the town and only occasionally mentioned in the censuses: Station Street; Factory Street; Nottingham Road; William Street; and Meadow Lane. The young lodger, George Fare, had migrated up from Portsmouth and at age eighteen was a market gardener.³¹⁹ It is quite possible that these numbers are an under-recording as horticulture was a sideline for

³¹³TNA RG12/2515, fo. 6 (1891 retired); NPC 1897 Cabble-Dyus p. 137.

³¹⁴TNA RG12/2514, fo. 49v.

³¹⁵TNA RG12/2515, fo. 37v.

³¹⁶TNA RG12/2525, fo. 128.

³¹⁷Wright 1864, p. 144; TNA RG9/2273.

³¹⁸TNA RG10/3254, fo. 37.

³¹⁹TNA RG12/2515, fo. 42v.

some, and subsumed in allotments, and omitted in the record.

Groceries had importance for all urban classes, more particularly for the urban middle class in the variety of their consumption.³²⁰ Staple to the diet of all was bread. The grain supply was thus of primary importance for the town. The next chapter explores the processes in the making of the town's bread supply: corn exchange; millers; and bakers; and as an auxiliary process, confectionery.

³²⁰Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), pp. 191-215.

3 THE GRAIN SUPPLY

Fundamental for the welfare of the urban population was, of course, the grain supply. It was the necessity in which it was not self-sufficient since grain was not amenable to production in small holdings. Some urban inhabitants could satisfy some of their needs, such as bacon, milk, fowl, and vegetables, through self-sufficiency in gardens, however small, smallholdings and allotments. Grain of necessity needed to be imported from the surrounding countryside (and even abroad). One of the consequences of the agricultural depression was the conversion from arable to pastoral farming and the loss of a certain amount of grain production. That situation obtained particularly in the regions around Loughborough which were conducive to livestock husbandry and grassland. Conversely, foreign imports of grain increased dramatically in the late nineteenth century.³²¹

Fortunately, the *Loughborough Monitor* recorded weekly grain transactions at the Town Hall and Corn Exchanger weekly from the last week in January 1859. Unfortunately, the recording became erratic after the middle of April 1860 and then was abandoned altogether in terms of the quantities, providing just a summary comment. If one whole year is abstracted, January 1859 to the same month a year later, the town imported 11,213 quarters of wheat. Obviously the quantity introduced into the town varied by month; immediately after the harvest, the amount was much higher than in the spring and summer. The weekly totals ranged from 56 to 550 quarters. Taking the entire period, from the end of January 1859 to the middle of April in 1860, the mean weekly amount was 214 quarters (standard deviation 105.411) and the median 209. (Amounts were not recorded for two of the weeks).³²²

³²¹Encapsulated by Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: An Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), pp. 44-49.

³²²For corn return for 1892, George Green and M. W. Green,

The importation of barley leaves some ambiguities. For the same period, there are only forty-seven weekly amounts, with large omissions in 1859. For these weeks, the mean weekly import amounted to $189\frac{1}{2}$ quarters (standard deviation 127.489) and the median 180. Significantly, a large proportion might well have been directed to brewing. The small brewers no doubt purchased their grain at the exchange. It is uncertain how the Midland Brewery Company obtained its supply. The amount consumed in other products is unclear.

Similarly the figures for the weekly amounts of oats suffer from many omissions, leaving only forty-six weekly numbers. The mean weekly total was sixty quarters (standard deviation 35.429) and the median 56. Almost certainly all this grain was consumed by horses at coaching inns and by carriers. Thomas Potter, carrier in the town, for example, rented a residence with a large warehouse and stabling for seven horses in Devonshire Square.³²³ The similar number of weekly amounts for beans resulted in a mean weekly import of 47 quarters (standard deviation 44.947) and median thirty. How much was devoted to human consumption remains uncertain. The grain production of the immediate hinterland is difficult to ascertain. The Agricultural Returns of 1868 pertain to the whole county. From the newspapers, some illustrative information can be obtained when some farms were put to auction on death, but the material is sporadic.³²⁴

Earlier, the 1801 Crop Returns provided a more detailed breakdown of arable farming in the county, parish by parish.³²⁵ Despite

Loughborough Markets and Fairs (Loughborough: Echo Press Ltd, 1964), p. 46.

³²³LM 15 Nov. 1860, p. 2.

³²⁴LM 30 July 1863, p. 1; 28 July 1864, p. 1; 26 July 1866, p. 1; 6 Dec. 1866, p. 1; 5 Dec. 1867, p. 1; LH 21 July 1887, p. 1; 22 Oct. 1891, p. 1; 27 July 1893, p. 1.

³²⁵W. G. Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Crop Returns of 1801', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical So-*

Table 1: Sample arable production on local farms (acreage)

Location	Date	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Legumes
Barrow upon Soar	1863	32a 0r 0p	4a 3r 0p	8a 0r 0p	0
Quorndon	1864	19a 1r 14p	18a 2r 7p	0	4a 1r 16p
Barrow upon Soar	1866	c. 45a	c. 20a	0	c. 12a
Whitwick	1866	0	4a	3a	3a
Barrow upon Soar	1867	35a	19½a	0	11a
Loughborough	1887	0	18a 0r 38p	3a 2r 0p	0
Hathern	1891	20a	20a	6a 2r 0p	9a
Rempstone	1893	c. 33a	c.24a	c. 25a	0

some ambiguity about the accuracy of some of the returns because of the reluctance of farmers to divulge, the returns are an indicator of the condition of arable husbandry fifty years previously.³²⁶ Those returns were requested, however, in a time of the instability of war, so might be somewhat distorted by the necessities of the time. Unfortunately, moreover, some parish returns seem to be missing, not least Loughborough itself. A second point is that a large parish like Quorndon, although its centre was a located in the river valley, extended to the margin of Charnwood Forest. There remain the returns of eight parishes in Leicestershire which came within the hinterland of Loughborough. In the table below, they are aggregated into their farming regions. The numbers of parishes and area of crops in each region are disparate, so what is important is the proportion of each grain.

Corn merchants

The exchange of grain in the town depended on corn merchants who dealt wholesale in the commodity. According to White's Directory of 1846, seven corn merchants plied their business in Loughborough. In 1853, Melville's Directory advertised only four. The number included in the 1864 Directory returned to six, but that of

ciety 24 (1948), pp. 127-53.

³²⁶Hoskins, 'Crop Returns', p. 129.

Table 2: 1801 Leicestershire Crop Returns by region near Loughborough (acres)

Region	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Legumes
Charnwood	410a	262a	369a	122a
Valley	299a	411a	144a	80a
Wolds	670a	510a	540a	137a

1867 returned only three. These numbers are capricious, of course, since inclusion was a matter of payment and promotion. Overall, the Directories represented the ‘stable’ corn merchants, Henry Bryan, Joseph Chester, John Hammond, William Phipps, Jackson & Co., and John Smith & Co.³²⁷ Some seem to have been transient. John Keightley, when he married at All Saints in 1865, was attributed the occupation of corn merchant in Peel Street, although aged only 24. Even younger at his espousal, 20, Thomas Tyler was also designated a corn merchant in High Street.³²⁸ The transactions in grain were supervised by the Corn Inspector at the Town Hall and Corn Exchange.³²⁹

Investment in the grain trade was a risky and capital intensive business, with inevitable casualties. The concern of Michael Heafford was so short lived that he failed to appear in the Directories. He commenced business in the commerce of grain in October 1858 with capital of £70 13s 7d. Two years later, he had become so stretched that his liabilities extended to £1,030 but his assets amounted only to £365. Since his books were so erratic, he was allowed only a third class certificate at Nottingham Bankruptcy court.³³⁰ He was probably pursued by creditors in south Nottinghamshire. The following year, his premises were disposed at auction, consisting of an eight-bedroom house and warehouse formerly

³²⁷White 1846); Melville 1854, p. 143; Buchanan 1867, pp. 259, 262,

³²⁸ROLLR DE667/19, pp. 154, 197 (nos 307 and 394).

³²⁹White 1864, p. 148..

³³⁰LM 8 Nov. 1860, p. 2; LG 22408 p. 2846.

the Boot Inn conveniently next to the Town Hall, the whole extending from the Market Place to Woodgate.³³¹ His occupation combined the trades of auctioneer and corn merchant, but which contributed most to his collapse is not known. After involvement as a corn merchant in the town, in Nottingham Road, for over a quarter of a century, John Jackson succumbed to bankruptcy in 1885.³³² In 1882, he had been pursued by James Harding & Son for a debt of £18 17s 3d.³³³ The premises were assumed by John Chester who maintained that he would continue to supply corn and cake flour as a corn merchant from this base. Three years later, the premises were back on the market to let.³³⁴ The capital requirements to engage in the corn trade in the town were thus considerable. John Peberdy, a corn factor in the town, had leased premises consisting of a three-bedroom house, a stable with four stalls, and a 37' granary.³³⁵ Ostensibly more successful because seemingly more permanently visible in the record, Henry Bryan, corn, cake and flour merchant, opened his business in 1860 and moved to the premises near the Town Hall and Corn Exchange in 1866, seemingly into the business buildings abandoned by Chester.³³⁶ The uncertainty of the business is reflected in the comment in the local newspaper when Bryan was setting out in business: 'Holders of wheat in condition were, however, not anxious to sell, as a further rise in prices is evidently expected'.³³⁷

Millers

Fundamental to the provision of grain in the town, of course, were the millers. Several mills were located on the periphery of the town and also remotely in the parish on the river. The Wellington

³³¹LM 19 Sept. 1861, p. 2.

³³²TNA RG9/2274, fo. 46 (1861); LG 1885 volume II, p. 3590.

³³³LH 4 May 1882, p. 5.

³³⁴LM 31 Oct. 1861, p. 1; 11 Feb. 1864, p. 1.

³³⁵LM 17 July 1862, p. 1.

³³⁶LM 14 June 1860; 11 Jan. 1866, p. 1.

³³⁷LM 4 Oct. 1860, p. 4.

Mill was located on the Leicester Canal on Canal Bank, but by 1860 had a twenty horsepower engine with a patent boiler by Galloway, thus a steam corn mill taking advantage of the water supply. The miller had the benefit of three French and one pair of grey stones, a dressing machine and elevators.³³⁸ In 1861, however, the mill was recorded as 'unoccupied'.³³⁹ It is probable, however, that the mill staff inhabited the town; for example, the elderly journeyman miller, Thomas Kettlebane, had an address in Rectory Place.³⁴⁰ Further south up river, there was a steam flour mill in Quorndon.³⁴¹

Three other mills existed in the parish. At the end of Mill Street accordingly was located the Mill Hill, the miller William Wale residing in Mill Street (see further below).³⁴² Two water mills were remote from the centre on the eastern edge of the parish on the river Soar. The Lower Mill was on the Loughborough side of Cotes Bridge on the Nottingham Road. Further upstream was the Upper Mill.

In 1851, the Upper Mill was occupied by John Ashen, a single man aged twenty born in Old Dalby. His apprentice was of the same age.³⁴³ Ten years later, the census enumerator recorded at the Upper Mill: 'No one sleeps in the mill house'.³⁴⁴ The reason was seemingly that James Cooper, the owner of the mill, had assigned his estate to John Tyler, a local farmer, Charles Gross, a farmer of Barrow upon Soar, Daniel Nichols, a grocer in Shepshed, and Edward Cooper, the miller at Sibleby.³⁴⁵ In other words, Cooper had lapsed into bankruptcy. The assignees were his major creditors in trust for the others. The turnover in the occupants of the mill was

³³⁸LM 26 Jan. 1860, p. 2.

³³⁹TNA RG9/2274, fo. 78v.

³⁴⁰TNA HO107/2085, fo. 270v.

³⁴¹LM 18 June 1863, p. 1.

³⁴²TNA RG9/3254, fo. 63V; RG11/3144, fo. 67; RG12/2514, fo. 11v.

³⁴³TNA HO107/2085, fo. 211.

³⁴⁴TNA RG9/2274, fo. 50v.

³⁴⁵LG 22481 p. 726 (1861).

rapid.

The Lower Mill had been operated by a partnership of William Wright and Anthony Hart, which was dissolved in 1855.³⁴⁶ In 1861 the mill was in the possession of Maria White, a spinster aged 32, who employed four men, including the mill manager, Thomas Burkill, aged 42, who inhabited the Mill House.³⁴⁷ A decade later, the mill was in the occupation of John Goodacre, miller, who employed six men. The Mill House was now inhabited by the mill waggoner, Joseph Mitchell, a young man of twenty-five. Close by, in Railway Terrace, resided two of the mill employees.³⁴⁸ In Swan Street was listed Edwin Earp, miller and baker, who is considered further below as a baker.³⁴⁹ Every local village had its own windmill, of course, including the small village of Costock.³⁵⁰ Loughborough millers, however, also supplied the village bakers directly. Dexter, the miller at Lower Mill, successfully brought an action for debt against Marston, a shopkeeper and baker of East Leake, alleging a debt of £7.³⁵¹

Problems remain, however, in the occupational nomenclature, confusing miller, corn merchant, flour merchant, and baker. This confusion can be illustrated first by the biography of William Wale, mentioned above. William was the eldest son of John Wale, a baker of The Cock Pit, who had migrated the short distance from Shepshed to Loughborough after William's birth. In 1851, William, aged twenty-one, assisted his father as a baker. Ten years later, William had advanced to an independent baker and flour dealer in Mill Street. In 1871, however, the census then recorded him as a baker and miller in Mill Street. After 1881, he moved to Storer

³⁴⁶LG 21775 p. 3333; 21798 p. 3779.

³⁴⁷TNA RG9/2274, fo. 50v.

³⁴⁸TNA RG10/3255, fos 80v, 81v.

³⁴⁹TNA RG10/3255, fo. 53.

³⁵⁰LM 27 Sept 1866 (Wymeswold); 1 Nov. 1866, p. 1 (Costock); 24 Jan. 1889, p. 1 (Belton with a detailed description); 24 April 1890, p. 4 (Long Whatton).

³⁵¹LM 26 April 1865, p. 5.

Street where in 1891 he was described as miller and corn dealer. By 1901, still in Storer Street, he had retired, now inscribed as 'Gentleman (Retired Miller)'.³⁵² In fact, through his longevous career he had accumulated an estate valued at his death in 1904 as £11,800 17s. 0d.³⁵³

Success had not eluded him, but the exact origins of his income are ambiguous. That conundrum obtains with Edwin Earp. In 1853, Earp was included in the directory as a baker in Swan Street, but in that of 1864 as a corn miller in the adjacent Rushes.³⁵⁴ As a baker, he benefited from contracts with the Board of Guardians.³⁵⁵ For a time, Edwin was in partnership with his son Thomas as Edwin Earp and son, bakers and flour sellers, a union dissolved in 1877.³⁵⁶ When the notice appeared for creditors to claim on the estate of Edwin on his demise in 1895, he was described as 'baker (formerly baker and miller)'.³⁵⁷ Earp was born in Newbold Verdon in Leicestershire, but in his early teens had been apprenticed to George Handley, a Loughborough baker.³⁵⁸ In 1849, he married Sarah Payne of Market Harborough.³⁵⁹ He had established himself as a baker in Swan Street.³⁶⁰ In 1861, he was described not only as miller and baker but also a farmer of forty acres, but thereafter as miller and baker and then baker.³⁶¹ On his death in 1895, his estate was valued at £249 18s 1d, all directed to his widow, Sarah, as sole executrix.³⁶² His son, Edwin, conducted a separate bakery

³⁵²TNA HO107/2085, fo. 323; RG9/2273, fo. 60; RG10/3254, fo. 63v; RG11/3144, fo. 67; RG12/2514, fo. 11v; RG13/2976, fo. 5.

³⁵³NPC 1904 Ubank-Zundel p. 35; ROLLR DE462/47, pp. 390-394.

³⁵⁴Melville 1853, p. 117; White 1864, p. 143.

³⁵⁵LH 15 June 1882, p. 4; 26 June 1884 p. 4; 27 Sept. 1888, p. 5.

³⁵⁶LG 24479 p. 4024.

³⁵⁷LG 26671 p. 5661.

³⁵⁸TNA HO107/595/9, fo. 12 (1841).

³⁵⁹ROLLR DE1396/3 p. 283 (no. 565).

³⁶⁰TNA HO107/2085 fo. 279.

³⁶¹TNA HO107/2085 fo. 279; RG9/2274, fo. 109v.

³⁶²NPC 1895 Eachus-Gysser p. 3.

from Derby Road with less success and was declared bankrupt in 1896.³⁶³

Bakers The direct providers to the customers were the numerous bakers who made and supplied bread to the urban inhabitants. In 1851, seventeen bakers inhabited Loughborough, a number which increased to twenty-five in 1861, decreased slightly to twenty-one in 1871, then surged again to twenty-eight in 1881 and thirty-six in 1891. As the built area expanded, so new bakeries were opened in the new districts of the town. In 1891, paradoxically, only one baking establishment remained in the historical bakers' location of Baxter Gate. Five bakers continued to inhabit Sparrow Hill, in the centre, and by 1881 three in Regent Street.³⁶⁴ Others continued around the central area in the Rushes, Pinfold Gate and Swan Street. Many of the other bakers had been established in the newly-built districts: Storer Road; Oxford Street; Paget Street (two); Lower Cambridge Street; Moira Street; Wellington Street; Moor Lane; Russell Street; and Freehold Street. For example, Storer Road was still under development, but Ambrose Webster, aged 38, had already opened his bakery in 1891, with his nephew, aged 20 as his assistant baker.³⁶⁵ Similarly, Paget Street was still in completion, but two bakers had opened premises there.³⁶⁶

As mentioned in the case of Earp, some bakers were assisted in their development by contracts from the Boards of Guardians. Another support was Storer's Charity which every six months invited tenders for the supply of loaves. In 1882, the contract was specified as 2,080 four pound loaves from two bakers equally (each 1,040) at the rate of eighty every fortnight.³⁶⁷

The origins of the bakers are interesting. An examination of the marriage registers of All Saints between 1837 and 1891 reveals

³⁶³LG 26764, p. 4474.

³⁶⁴TNA RG11/3144 fos 116v-117v.

³⁶⁵TNA RG12/2514, fo. 11.

³⁶⁶TNA RG12/2514, fo. 32v.

³⁶⁷LH 2 Nov. 1882, p. 1.

that only six grooms who were Loughborough bakers were the sons of bakers. Three times as many had fathers engaged in other occupations: bricklayer; dyer; cooper; cordwainer; gardener' joiner; warehouseman; Excise man; hosier; butcher; hairdresser; farmer; and tailor. The age profile of bakers changed dramatically at the end of the century. From 1851 to 1881, the numbers under forty years of age and over fifty years were similar. In 1891, perhaps as the older generation died out, the age profile became much younger. Now twenty-two were aged under forty, nine of whom were in their twenties. By comparison only eight exceeded the age of fifty.

Since baking was a specialised occupation, very few had the opportunity to combine baking with another occupation, in contrast to, for example, grocery. Exceptionally, the widower Edward Laithwaite of Market Street combined baking with his work as a bricklayer's labourer.³⁶⁸ By and large, baking provided a successful living. Only eleven bakers succumbed to bankruptcy between 1850 and 1897. Their failure may have been induced by periods of difficulty: five in the 1890s when severe winters occurred. The senior Earp, mentioned above, was one of the fortunate survivors. His consolidation was assisted by contracts from the Board of Guardians. Another beneficiary was William Gilbert who was awarded the contract early in his business in 1863.³⁶⁹ Born the son of a joiner in Mountsorrel in 1827, by 1861 he had assumed the premises in Baxter Gate late Tomlinson's and advertised his business as wholesale and retail baker.³⁷⁰ In 1881, at the zenith of his career, Gilbert was described as a baker and farmer of 72 acres.³⁷¹ So he was described again in his will of 1899 and accordingly at the probate registry on his death in 1900. His estate amounted to

³⁶⁸TNA HO107/2085 fo. 93v.

³⁶⁹LM 19 March 1863 p. 5.

³⁷⁰ROLLR DE1250/5 p. 24 (no. 188). LM 7 Nov. 1861 p. 1.

³⁷¹TNA RG11/3145, fo. 135; RG9/2275 fo. 1 (1861, baker and flour seller); RG10/3256 fo. 76 (1871, baker and maltster); RG12/2515 fo. 126 (1891, baker).

more than £2,073.³⁷²

Bakers were in competition but also formed occupational networks. When John Jacques, a baker in Loughborough, made his will just before his demise in 1884, he appointed as his trustees and executors his friend Edwin Earp, baker, and George Levers of Loughborough, baker and grocer. In the event, the estate of Jacques was valued at over £794.³⁷³ By his will, Jacques specified that Levers would have first option to buy his premises in the Rushes for £600, which, in fact, Jacques had purchased from Levers and others in 1872 and which were now occupied by Levers and another tenant.³⁷⁴ Since customers expected their bread to be fresh, village bakers continued to operate in the neighbourhood.³⁷⁵

The provision of bread was not, however, without problems. Notoriously, there was a prevalence of underweight bread since bakers consistently declined to weigh the bread which they purveyed.³⁷⁶ Bread was intended to be sold by the pound. George Briggs travelled with his cart to deliver bread, but carried no scales for weighing the bread.³⁷⁷ The employee of John Adcock, another town baker, was detained in Cambridge Street for delivering bread on his cart without scales.³⁷⁸ Bread was delivered in hand carts around the town to customers. Edward Wade was prosecuted for the theft of bread from the hand cart of Charles Hurst, a Loughborough baker, as Hurst's boy delivered bread.³⁷⁹

Confectioners

³⁷²ROLLR DE1160/1/15 p. 347; DE462/43 pp. 531-2; NPC Eacott-Gynn p. 216.

³⁷³ROLLR DE462/27 pp. 370-2; NPC Iakle-Lyttelton p. 58.

³⁷⁴ROLLR DE462/27 pp. 370-2.

³⁷⁵LM 16 Nov. 1865 p. 1 (Wymeswold); 17 May 1866 p. 1 (Long Whatton).

³⁷⁶LH 17 Sept. 1891, p. 5.

³⁷⁷LH 5 Nov. 1891, p. 5.

³⁷⁸LH 11 Oct. 1883, p. 5.

³⁷⁹LH 10 Feb. 1859, p. 1.

Listed in the directory for 1867, Richard Tebbutt, wholesale and retail confectioner of North Street, specified in his entry: 'Good family plum cake supplied to schools and large parties on the best possible terms'.³⁸⁰ The occupation in the nineteenth century was not congruent with the modern interpretation of confectionery, but as related to baking, although of a particular kind.

When a confectioner's shop became available to let in 1864, the shop contained two front windows with a bakehouse, oven and flour chamber.³⁸¹ The premises were large and had provision for baking. 'Must be an experienced Pork Pie hand' was the qualification necessary to assume the position of journeyman confectioner.³⁸² In 1888, when she was found guilty of having five inaccurate weights in the bakehouse, Charlotte Lomas, confectioner, dismissed her baker, Frederick Garton, who had been in her employ for forty years (as the weights in her shop were not defective).³⁸³ Two years later, two lads were detained for stealing two pork pies and a cake (value 2s 8d) from the premises of Skinner's confectionery shop on Leicester Road. Two of Skinner's employees witnessed the malfeasance: Herbert Green, baker, and Miss Emerson, shop assistant. (Skinner asked for leniency, so the lads were dismissed).³⁸⁴ William Emery of Mill Street, confectioner, operated out of the 'Cook Shop'.³⁸⁵

When the opportunity presented, John Tillson, pastry cook and confectioner, purchased the premises next to his own in High Street to open a 'refreshment room' (more on Tillson below).³⁸⁶ In 1865 he advertised his wares as retail pastry, confectionery, fancy bread, biscuits, and flour.³⁸⁷ Also in the High Street, J. & W. Martin

³⁸⁰Buchanan 1867, p. 48.

³⁸¹LM 30 June 1864, p. 1.

³⁸²LM 20 Sept. 1866, p. 1.

³⁸³LH 30 Aug. 1888, p. 5.

³⁸⁴LH 20 Feb. 1890, p. 5.

³⁸⁵TNA RG10/3254, fo. 59v.

³⁸⁶LH 28 June 1888, p. 4; 22 Aug. 1889, p. 4.

³⁸⁷LM 23 Feb. 1865, p. 1.

described their business as ‘The celebrated pie and cake shop’.³⁸⁸ Cumberland & Company advertised their wares of pork pies, bride cakes and potted meat, and Tillson also pork pies and Christmas cakes.³⁸⁹ Taking advantage of the rhetoric in local advertisements, Coster described his confectionery shop as ‘The people’s rock shop’, producing his own pork pies, sausages and polonies.³⁹⁰ Also engaging in the local hyperbole, Cumberland & Company, confectioners, recommended their ‘very Superior Pork Pies’: ‘Which are better in C. & Co’s judgment than any Pork Pies in Christendom’.³⁹¹ Confectioners therefore specialized in baked goods other than bread. In effect, there was an overlap as some bakers also engaged in the production of confectionery.

Throughout the later nineteenth century, the town population could sustain half a dozen of so specialized confectionery stores. In fact, in 1846 White listed nine and in 1853 Melville seven.³⁹² In the subsequent censuses the numbers stabilised around half a dozen, some transient. Only a small number were in continuous business: the Misses Callis; Davison; and Tillson.

The Misses Callis (Eliza and Mary) assumed the business of their brother John. Established in the High Street for many years, John died in 1851, naming two executors and trustees, one of whom was William Thirlby, grocer, of Loughborough. For the grant of probate, they swore in under £450. Making provision for his mother, John also included his four sisters as beneficiaries, two of whom were married, and Eliza and Mary spinsters. Eliza and Mary immediately resumed his business in the High Street as pastry cooks and confectioners.³⁹³ In line with the renovation of the centre of the town in these years, they re-fronted their shop

³⁸⁸LH 6 Nov. 1884, p. 1.

³⁸⁹LH 30 May 1889, p. 1; 6 Dec. 1888, p. 4.

³⁹⁰LH 22 Sept. 1881, p. 1.

³⁹¹LH 5 Dec, 1889, p. 1.

³⁹²White 1846 p. 286; Melville 1853 pp. 114-22.

³⁹³ROLLR Will 1851 John Callis; Melville 1853 p. 115.

in 1860.³⁹⁴ Their business extended into the third quarter of the century.³⁹⁵ Joseph Tillson had been employed for thirteen years by the Misses Callis as their baker and specialist in the making of pork pies. In 1862, Tillson established his own business, moving into a shop in Church Gate.³⁹⁶ He subsequently moved into High Street, where his wife and daughter assisted in the shop with another female employee. When he died in 1891, his estate was valued at £1,432 1s 7d which he entrusted to his wife, Clara Ruth. She continued the business well into the twentieth century.³⁹⁷ Two strands of the Davisons existed, but Robert, in Devonshire Square was the principal and continuous.³⁹⁸ Robert Davison had been born in Bleasby (Nottinghamshire) in the last decade of the eighteenth century.³⁹⁹ After Robert's death in 1869 (with an estate valued at under £450), the enterprise was continued by his widow, Sarah, with her son and daughter as assistants and then by Thomas alone.⁴⁰⁰

One of the transformations of the late nineteenth century was the increasing importation of food into England. Combined with the agrarian difficulties of 1876 onwards, the import of grain was an incentive to relinquish arable farming and to convert to permanent pasture.⁴⁰¹ This impetus made sense as the living standards of some of the urban population improved and meat entered more substantially into diets. The next chapter explores the local context of the supply of meat and dairy produce.

³⁹⁴LH 28 June 1860, p. 1.

³⁹⁵TNA RG9/2275, fo. 11; RG10/3256, fo. 65.

³⁹⁶LH 3 July 1862, p. 1.

³⁹⁷ROLLR DE462/34, p. 492; TNA RG11/3145, fo. 130; RG12/2515, fo. 124; RG13/2977, fo. 158V; LH 4 June 1891, p. 4.

³⁹⁸TNA HO/2085, fos 90v (Robert), 226v (John).

³⁹⁹TNA HO107/2085 fo. 90v.

⁴⁰⁰ROLLR DE462/12, pp. 336-38; TNA RG10/3254, fo. 74; RG11/3144, fo. 78.

⁴⁰¹Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare*, pp. 44-49.

4 MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCTION

Principally, the supply of livestock produce still emanated from the town's hinterland well into the 1890s. Livestock production continued as a strong feature of agricultural output in all the three regions in the hinterland of Loughborough. As will be demonstrated below, however, some of that product, not least at the annual 'Loughborough Smithfield' sales, was destined for export to other regions of the country.⁴⁰² The local butchers, nevertheless, procured their livestock products from within the town's region.

Cattle dealers and auctioneers

In the marketing of livestock, the cattle dealers were quickly replaced by the auctioneers. The visibility of the former is opaque. In the 1851 census there appeared only Samuel Brookes, a drover lodging in Salmon Street. Samuel Ogle, lodged in the Rushes, the location of the lodging houses, in 1861, then described as a drover, and 1871, but now as a butcher and cattle drover.⁴⁰³ In 1861, four heads of household were recorded as cattle dealers; in 1871 two; in 1881 two again; and in 1891 three. No continuity occurred; none recurred in the censuses.⁴⁰⁴ One cattle drover, aged only fifty and a widower, was confined to the workhouse.⁴⁰⁵ At least one cattle dealer was buying rather than selling. William Clarke, a single man of 42, lodged in the Rushes in 1861. Since his birthplace was Norwich, he was probably one of the 'easterners' buying at the Loughborough cattle fairs, as described by the editor of the *Loughborough Monitor*.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰²For the cattle market in general, George Green and M. W. Green, *Loughborough Markets and Fairs* (Loughborough: Echo Press Ltd, 1964), pp. 48-50.

⁴⁰³TNA RG9/2274, fo. 112; RG10/3257, fo. 5.

⁴⁰⁴TNA RG9/2274, fo. 28; RG9/2275, fos 4, 44; RG10/3255, fo. 70v; RG10/3257, fos 5, 14; RG11/3144, fo. 17v.

⁴⁰⁵RG12/2514, fos 36v, 102; RG12/2516, fo. 19v.

⁴⁰⁶TNA RG9/2275, fo. 40.

The main commerce in livestock was transacted by the auctioneers. These firms were general auctioneers who also regularly organized livestock auctions. As will be explained below, however, at least some of their stock was sold outside the region and it is impossible to assess how much was purchased by local butchers. As will also be explored below, it is evident that the local butchers did acquire their carcasses from local estates.

Fortnightly auctions of cattle and sheep were initiated by Jackson in the middle of 1862 at the Auction Mart near the railway station. Jackson dubbed this enterprise 'The Central Fat Stock Auction Mart'.⁴⁰⁷ The initial sale occurred on 30 June when he promised to offer 110 cattle and thirty sheep. In fact, the stock was much smaller and later in the year the sales were postponed.⁴⁰⁸ By 1880, John Abbott had revived the weekly fat stock sale on the recreation ground near the railway station, on Mondays.⁴⁰⁹ Abbott continued these occasions but with various partners. By 1884, the firm consisted of Garton & Abbott, selling fat stock on Mondays and store livestock on Thursdays. The following year, Abbott had combined with Woodruff.⁴¹⁰ The event was now designated The Loughborough Smithfield. From 1889, the company comprised Souler, Walker and Abbott after Abbott & Woodroffe was dissolved.⁴¹¹ In that same year, Garton collaborated with Amatt as a livestock auctioneer in the town.⁴¹² Two years later, Abbott again dissolved the partnership and now combined with German & German.⁴¹³ This new partnership confirmed the position of German & German in the Loughborough cattle trade which they had entered in 1889.⁴¹⁴ In 1890 Barradale, who had only recently begun

⁴⁰⁷LM 12 June 1862, p. 1; 26 June 1862 p. 1.

⁴⁰⁸LM 4 Sept. 1862 p. 1; 18 Sept. 1862, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁹LH 3 June 1880 p. 1; 17 June 1889 p. 1.

⁴¹⁰LH 25 Dec. 1884 p. 1.

⁴¹¹LH 31 Jan. 1889 p. 1.

⁴¹²LH 31 Jan. 1889 p. 1.

⁴¹³LH 9 July 1891 p. 7.

⁴¹⁴LH 19 Dec. 1889 p. 5.

livestock auctions in Loughborough, left the town and sold his interest to German, German & Cooper (Cooper was soon thereafter bankrupt).⁴¹⁵ In 1889, three auction houses had been involved in annual Christmas fat stock sales; a year later, the sales were dominated by the German brothers. Previously established in Ashby de la Zouch, German & German now also had a considerable business in Loughborough, with one brother stationed in Ashby and the other in Loughborough.

It was in about 1871, John Abbott resuscitated the annual Christmas fat stock sale in Loughborough.⁴¹⁶ The viability of the Loughborough annual fat stock sales before Christmas was affected by similar sales in the vicinity. The Shardlow annual fat stock sale offered competition. In 1862, on behalf of James Sutton of Shardlow Hall, the complement for sale consisted of 34 heifers, 19 cows, 119 sheep and six pigs.⁴¹⁷ Most of the local landowners supported their own annual fat stock sales: at Normanton Hill, Beaumanor, Kingston, and Charnwood Lodge. In 1862, the Normanton Hill auction supplied 34 cattle and 130 sheep; Beaumanor 45 cattle and 130 sheep; Kingston 44 cattle and 160 sheep.⁴¹⁸ Two years later, at the new Charnwood Lodge annual sale, 126 cattle and four pigs were dispatched.⁴¹⁹ The proceeds of the Kingston Christmas sale in 1862 exceeded £1,000.⁴²⁰ Even so, the same landowners also furnished stock for sale at Abbott's event, including Lord Belper, Lord St Maur and Mrs Herrick.⁴²¹ In 1880, the revenue from Abbott's Christmas sale amounted to £1,180.⁴²²

Loughborough butchers attended these sales and bought stock.

⁴¹⁵LH 9 Feb. 1888 p. 1 (first sale); 1 May 1890 p. 1.

⁴¹⁶LH 23 Nov. 1882 p. 1 (eleventh sale).

⁴¹⁷LM 6 Nov. 1862, p. 1; 27 Oct. 1864, p. 1; 19 Oct. 1865 p. 1; 1 Nov. 1866 p. 1.

⁴¹⁸LM 20 Nov. 1862 p. 1; 25 Dec. 1862 p. 1.

⁴¹⁹LM 25 Feb. 1864 p. 1; 8 March 1866 p. 1 (sixth event in 1866).

⁴²⁰LM 25 Dec. 1862 p. 1.

⁴²¹LH 9 Dec. 1880 p. 1.

⁴²²LH 23 Dec. 1880, p. 4.

Ramsay, Hood, Oram and Tyler all made purchases at the Normanton Hill auction in December 1863.⁴²³ At the Beaumanor sale the following year, the buyers included Tyler, King and Bates.⁴²⁴ The following year at Beaumanor, Tyler, King, Bates and Ramsay returned to buy.⁴²⁵ When describing the Christmas Meat Show in Loughborough, the editor of the *Monitor* itemised the stock purchased by the town butchers from the Herricks of Beaumanor, Lord St Maur of Burton on the Wolds, and the other local landowners.

Returning to German & German, at their Christmas fat stock sale in 1893, they offered 65 bullocks, two hundred wethers, and eighty pigs. A few years previously, the brothers also initiated special sales of store sheep: in September 1890 850 store sheep and in September 1891 76 rams, five hundred couples of ewes and lambs.⁴²⁶

More traditional than these new auction houses were the annual Loughborough fairs at which cattle and horses were auctioned. By 1881, the cattle auction had been removed to the recreation ground near the railway, although the horses were still auctioned in Devonshire Square.⁴²⁷ The success of the several fairs through the year was variable and also volatile over the decades. In May 1862, the *Monitor*'s editor confessed: 'Our cattle fair was held on Friday last. The supply was very small'.⁴²⁸ There was little improvement when he opined in August 1863: 'but the supply of beasts was very small, and but few changed hands'.⁴²⁹ In 1865, the comment in August was as disappointing: 'scarcely any beasts in it'.⁴³⁰ The November fair was more productive: 'There was a large quantity of beasts of good quality, and a large number changed hands at a good

⁴²³LM 24 Dec. 1863, p. 5.

⁴²⁴LM 15 Dec. 1864, p. 5.

⁴²⁵LM 21 Dec. 1865 p. 5.

⁴²⁶LH 25 Sept. 1890 p. 5; 24 Sept. 1891 p. 5; 21 Dec. 1893 p. 5.

⁴²⁷LH 10 Nov. 1881 p. 5; 26 Oct. 1882 p. 1.

⁴²⁸LM 1 May 1862 p. 5.

⁴²⁹LM 13 Aug. 1863 p. 5.

⁴³⁰LM 17 Aug. 1865 p. 5.

price'.⁴³¹ The fairs earlier in the year were lapsing into desuetude. Unfortunately, there is no indication whether local purchasers were significant. In 1883, 1,240 beasts were displayed at the November cattle fair, but the editor reported: 'As usual the majority were purchased for the Norfolk markets'.⁴³² Again, at the November fair in 1885, the good supply was largely taken up for the 'eastern counties'.⁴³³ The following year, the editor commented that the buyers predominated from Lincolnshire and Norfolk.⁴³⁴

Butchers

Direct contact with the urban population was the remit of the butchers. In total between 1850 and 1897 92 individuals acted as butchers in the town, nine of whom failed through bankruptcy.⁴³⁵ Significantly, the discharge from bankruptcy of William Poynton, a butcher in the town, was opposed by another town butcher, John Kidger, a creditor for £20.⁴³⁶ Seventeen butchers recurred in three successive censuses and thus must be considered longevous and successful. About two thirds (62) of all the butchers were aged under forty at their first occurrence in a census and of these thirty (one third of the total) under thirty. Independent butchers' shops were established by young men. In the marriage registers between 1837 and 1897, the parentage of Loughborough butchers can be established as an indicator of origins. Thirty-five butchers were registered as grooms in the registers, ten of whom were the sons of butchers. Most of these young butchers were the offspring of fathers who were not butchers.

The prospering butchers are now addressed. These seventeen were all located in the central precinct of the town: Baxter Gate

⁴³¹LM 19 Nov. 1863 p. 5.

⁴³²LH 15 Nov. 1883 p. 4.

⁴³³LH 19 Nov 1885 p. 4.

⁴³⁴LH 18 Nov. 1886 p. 4.

⁴³⁵LG 22554 p. 4015; 23403 p. 4178; 23576 p. 271; 26297 p. 3486; 26610 p. 1911; 26868 p. 3602.

⁴³⁶LM 15 Dec. 1864 p. 1.

(three); Church Gate (three); High Street (one); Swan Street (two); Market Place (one); Rushes (one); and Wards End and Devonshire Square (two). Nine of the seventeen made wills and their estates were assessed in the National Probate Calendar. Two actually had estate assessed at under £100 at their death. Both were ostensibly still engaged in the occupation. Having made his will in 1866, George Moss died in 1889 with a small personal estate of £79 10s 0d.⁴³⁷ Henry Tyler's estate in 1891 fell just short of £88.⁴³⁸ Four estates did not exceed £1,000: over £415 (Philip Clarke); over £634 (William Caldwell); over £671 (John King); and over £771 (Henry Corah).⁴³⁹

The valuations pertain only to personal estate, which, at least for Clarke, disguised his actual wealth. In his will, he made provision for trustees to hold his house and shop in Devonshire Square and Mills Yard and five cottages at the rear.⁴⁴⁰ Some of the premises were auctioned by the trustees in 1890, realising £1,790.⁴⁴¹ Similarly, John King in his will bequeathed his shop and the business's goodwill to his nephew, Henry Corah, the butcher.⁴⁴² The further complication, however, is that many retailers actually leased their premises rather than owner-occupation. The three most successful butchers, it appears, were Edwin Bates, Thomas Frisby, and James Walley. At Frisby's demise in 1894, his personal estate attained more than £2,308.⁴⁴³ Having retired from the occupation, Edwin Bates died in 1901, when his estate had a gross value of

⁴³⁷NPC 1889 Ma Vius-Nye p. 413; ROLLR DE462/32, p. 21.

⁴³⁸ROLLR DE462/35 pp. 180-1.

⁴³⁹ROLLR DE462/33 pp. 612-13 and NPC 1890 Cabab-Cyster p. 231; ROLLR DE462/37 pp. 534-35 and NPC Cabban-Dytch p. 3; ROLLR DE462/37 pp. 404-5 and NPC 1894 Kahane-Mytton p. 30; ROLLR DE462/49 p. 498 and NPC Cabaud-Dyson p. 159.

⁴⁴⁰ROLLR DE462/33 pp. 612-13.

⁴⁴¹LH 4 Sept. 1890 p. 5.

⁴⁴²ROLLR DE462/37 pp. 404-5.

⁴⁴³ROLLR DE462/37 pp. 626-7 and NPC 1894 Eacott-Gyles p. 134.

more than £4,364.⁴⁴⁴

Walley died in 1914, after the introduction of some real estate into the valuation. In his will and consequently in the NPC, he was described as a farmer of Nanpanton, but he had removed to the hamlet after 1901.⁴⁴⁵ On his demise, his estate was evaluated at over £2,951.⁴⁴⁶ His will reveals that he had already accumulated property in the borough, although it was encumbered, presumably with mortgages. His real estate consisted of a shop in the Market Place, a close of land near Beacon Road, and three messuages and a shop in Mill Street.⁴⁴⁷ The son of a licensed victualler in the town, Walley became apprenticed to John Tyler, butcher, and then established his own business.⁴⁴⁸

Like the bakers, the butchers were assisted in establishing their presence by the patronage of the Board of Guardians. In 1859, William Richards received the contract: beef at 6d per lb; mutton at 5½d; suet 5d; legs and shins 3s 6d per pair.⁴⁴⁹ Philip Clarke was a substantial supplier to the Board.⁴⁵⁰ In the later years, Thomas Frisby was regularly awarded the contract.⁴⁵¹

Historically, butchery was symbolically considered an unsavoury trade because of its consequent pollution.⁴⁵² By the nineteenth cen-

⁴⁴⁴ROLLR DE1169/1/16 p. 119 and NPC 1901 Aaron-Byworth p. 146.

⁴⁴⁵TNA RG13/2978 fo. 13 (butcher, Mill Street); Schedule 1911 census Nanpanton, farmer.

⁴⁴⁶NPC 1914 Tabberer-Zullig p. 146.

⁴⁴⁷ROLLR DE462/57 pp. 345-47.

⁴⁴⁸ROLLR DE2594/1 p. 42 (no. 331) (baptism 1843 at Emmanuel); TNA RG9/2275, fo. 24v (1861); RG10/3254 fo. 59 (1871).

⁴⁴⁹LM 22 Sept. 1859 p. 4.

⁴⁵⁰LH 24 March 1884 p. 5.

⁴⁵¹LH 26 June 1884 p. 4; 1 Dec. 1884 p. 5; 29 March 1888 p. 5; 27 Sept. 1888 p. 5; 28 Dec. 1893 p. 5.

⁴⁵²Kathy Stuart, *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts: Honor and Ritual Pollution in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000).

tury, its reputation was still ambiguous as contravention of byelaws persisted. Even when maintaining the byelaws, the location of the butchers' shops in the centre of the town was noisome. When the premises late occupied by Charles Bilson, butcher, in Baxtergate came up for letting, appended to the butcher's shop were a slaughterhouse, fasting pen, and two piggeries. The butchers bought live stock and slaughtered on their own premises.⁴⁵³ Usually, they leased grazing land near the town centre preparatory to slaughtering on their premises in the town. Thus the butcher John King leased six and a half acres in Middle Park and one and a half in Moor Lane (before those locations were developed for housing).⁴⁵⁴

The actual configuration of the shop is rarely discoverable. Probably the butcher had a window board to display some of the meat with the window open. In 1884, meat to the value of 2s 8d was stolen from such a plank in Arthur Woodcock's shop.⁴⁵⁵ Moss had a slab in front of his window from which a piece of meat worth 3s 6d was stolen.⁴⁵⁶ The same display was involved when fourteen pounds of beef were illicitly taken from John Smith's butchery in Churchgate.⁴⁵⁷

Some butchers, moreover, lived on the margins and were troublesome. One culprit was Charles Mason of Wellington Street. In 1859, he and colleagues were caught trespassing and poaching at Swithland.⁴⁵⁸ In the same year, he was embroiled in a case of debt with Whitby, a cattle dealer of Nottingham, about the sale of a rump of beef.⁴⁵⁹ The following year he was accused of stealing a meat cleaver from Clemerson's, although the case was dismissed on the grounds that he had worked at Clemerson's and Clemerson

⁴⁵³LM 20 Feb. 1859 p. 1; TNA HO107/2085 fo. 298 (1851).

⁴⁵⁴LM 18 Feb. 1864 p. 1.

⁴⁵⁵LH 17 Jan. 1884 p. 4.

⁴⁵⁶LH 15 March 1888 p. 5.

⁴⁵⁷LM 7 April 1859 p. 2; 8 Nov. 1860 p. 2.

⁴⁵⁸LM 28 April 1859 p. 2; TNA RG9/2273 fo. 115v (1861).

⁴⁵⁹LM 24 Feb. 1859 p. 2.

had suffered a bankruptcy.⁴⁶⁰ The son of a local lacemaker, born in 1825, Mason was dead by the age of 41.⁴⁶¹

Although the number of butchers' shops expanded with the physical growth of the town, most villages retained their own local suppliers, with butchers' shops in Hathern, Long Whatton, Barrow upon Soar, Shepshed, Belton, and Wymeswold.⁴⁶² Freshness of supply was paramount and was achieved by killing on the premises. That importance also helped the Loughborough butchers to resist the intrusion of consolidated meat companies like the New Zealand, Australia & River Plate Frozen Meat Company which announced in 1884 that it would attend Loughborough market every Thursday.⁴⁶³

One constant feature then was the auction of grasskeeping and the following eddish which were important for the supply of meat to the town. Grasskeeping consisted of the temporary right to graze land and take the hay crop for a defined period of time, usually to the next Lady Day (25 March). Eddish was the aftergrowth after the taking of the hay crop. In the local newspapers, there were 37 auctions of grasskeeping in all parts of the hinterland of the town. Eleven of those auctions concerned grasskeeping over fifty to a hundred acres. Another seven exceeded a hundred acres. The range extended from grasskeeping over $2\frac{1}{2}$ a to over 180a. The mean extent was $57\frac{1}{2}$ a (standard deviation 49.475) and the median 43a. In the context of the larger acreages, the lessor promised to provide their own 'careful shepherd'. 'A careful shepherd will be provided' ran the advertisement for the auction of grasskeeping over 97a 1r 0p on the Glebe Farm in Long Whatton in 1882. In 1885 'a careful shepherd' was available to the purchaser of the grasskeeping over 88a in Willoughby on the Wolds. So when the

⁴⁶⁰LM 18 Oct. 1860 p. 2.

⁴⁶¹ROLLR DE667/6 p. 29 (no. 2353); *Leicester Journal* 29 June 1866 p. 8.

⁴⁶²LM 30 Oct. 1862 p. 1; 28 May 1863 p. 1; 14 Sept. 1865 p. 1; 26 Oct. 1865 p. 1; 28 Feb. 1867 p. 1; 13 June 1889 p. 1.

⁴⁶³LH 11 Sept. 1884 p. 1.

Reverend John Martin offered grasskeeping over 177½ in Charley (in Charnwood Forest) in 1891, he offered also a shepherd. By implication, then, these more extensive grasskeepings were intended for sheep grazing.⁴⁶⁴

The milk supply

When he was 'out of employment' as a baker and living in Fennel Street, Charles Dean was probably maintained by his daughter operating as a milk seller to produce a small income.⁴⁶⁵ Towards the end of the century, Mary Shelton, aged 57, operated as a milk seller out of Herriott Road. Her sons had different occupations, but her lodger, William Belton, aged only thirteen, was also occupied as a milk seller.⁴⁶⁶ These local suppliers of milk existed economically on the margins of urban society and spatially on the urban periphery. Their existence is also rarely visible and may sometimes be subsumed under cowkeeper.

The numbers again appear to expand over the decades, from the evidence of the censuses. In 1851, two cowkeepers and one milk seller were enumerated. One of the cowkeepers, Mary Farmer, was aged 76 and possessed six acres of land. The single milk seller was Mary Capp, a widow aged 45.⁴⁶⁷ Ten years later the census records just three cowkeepers. Another ten years on (1871) reveals only four cowkeepers and one milk seller. The milk agent was a lodger, William Munton, aged 70.⁴⁶⁸ In 1881, only two individuals were specified as cowkeepers. More informatively, James Dickens was entered in Dead Lane as a cowkeeper and dairyman and Thomas Chapman in School Street as grazier and milk seller.⁴⁶⁹ Two others were designated milk sellers, including a wife, Elizabeth Byld

⁴⁶⁴LH 8 May 1880, p. 1; 18 May 1882, p. 1; 8 Oct. 1885, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁵TNA RG10/3256, fo. 39.

⁴⁶⁶TNA RG12/2516, fo. 66v.

⁴⁶⁷TNA HO107/2085, fos 257v, 340.

⁴⁶⁸TNA RG10/3255, fo. 38.

⁴⁶⁹TNA RG11/3145, fos 46v, 69.

in Meadow Lane.⁴⁷⁰ In Moor Lane, John Dexter's occupation as dairyman may not have involved him in sales, as also the dairymaid in Gregory Street Sarah Rhyder.⁴⁷¹ By 1891, nine inhabitants were engaged as milk sellers and additionally a thirteen-year-old boy as a milk boy.⁴⁷² In Barrow Street, John Withers, aged 25, was entered as 'dairyman' and his wife as 'Employed in Dairy'.⁴⁷³ In Gladstone Street, George Staniland was established as a butcher and milk seller.⁴⁷⁴ William Cooper, more centrally in Bridge Street, combined his employment as a dyer's labourer with milk seller.⁴⁷⁵

By 1891, the milk sellers were all located on the periphery of the urban space: Gladstone Street; The Avenue; Salmon Street; Nottingham Road; King Street; Queen Street; Barrow Street; Moor Lane; Cobden Street; and Russell Street. They were vending locally in the neighbourhood streets mainly to the industrial working class. The exception might have been the milkman, George Hemstock, whose address was Park Lane.⁴⁷⁶

Wages of £30 per annum with complimentary board and lodging were proposed by Judd, dairyman, of Derby Road in 1859 to secure the right couple without family to manage his dairy.⁴⁷⁷ From at least 1863, Thomas Cramp supplied milk to the Board of Guardians.⁴⁷⁸

The quality of dairy cattle may well have been improved by longer-distance imported beasts. From Watford, at Little Bushey Farm, Fowler selected ten animals for sale at the Loughborough cattle market. The cows consisted of Alderney and Guernsey animals 'direct from the Islands', to be auctioned at the King's

⁴⁷⁰TNA RG11/3145, fo. 8v.

⁴⁷¹TNA RG11/3146, fos 17, 62v.

⁴⁷²TNA RG12515, fo. 57v (Joseph Owen).

⁴⁷³TNA RG12/2515, fo. 30.

⁴⁷⁴TNA RG12/2514, fo. 36.

⁴⁷⁵TNA RG12/2514, fo. 92.

⁴⁷⁶RG12/2516, fo. 60v.

⁴⁷⁷LM 10 Nov. 1859, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁸LM 19 March 1863, p. 5.

Head Hotel in the town.⁴⁷⁹ Twelve ‘very superior’ Alderney and Guernsey cows and heifers ‘possessing great Beauty with rich and productive Milking Quantities’ were delivered to Loughborough for sale at the Bull and Anchor Hotel Yard in 1867. W. Wright received instructions for this auction from P. H. Fowler of the Clarendon (Beast) Repository in Watford. The date of the sale corresponded with the usual time for fat stock and store sale in the town.⁴⁸⁰ Abbott, the livestock auctioneer, received a consignment of two pure-bred Kerry cows from the herd of R. Barter of Cork in Ireland.⁴⁸¹ Another introduction of Alderney, Jersey and Guernsey cattle happened at the Cattle Fair in November 1887, when a herd of a dozen young cows and heifers was offered.⁴⁸² When Jesse Coope abandoned farming from Grace Dieu Manor farm in 1882, the remnants of his herd included a roan Ayrshire, another Ayrshire and an Alderney cow.⁴⁸³

At the winter fair in 1864, ‘Milkers were much in demand’.⁴⁸⁴ When most of the farms were auctioned, the lot included dairy utensils. The sale of the farm in Willoughby on the Wolds of the late William Turner comprised 29 cattle as the only livestock with 43a of summer grass keeping, the dairy utensils and two dozen Stilton cheese hoops.⁴⁸⁵

The Local Board busied itself with the application of the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order of 1885, particularly for the registration of small businesses locally and the concern for the transmission of contagious animal diseases.⁴⁸⁶ One of these dairies had been introduced onto land at Canal Bank by Cayless, who quit

⁴⁷⁹LM 20 June 1861, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁰LM 7 Nov. 1867, p. 1.

⁴⁸¹LH 5 Feb. 1885, p. 1.

⁴⁸²LH 3 Nov. 1887, p. 1.

⁴⁸³LH 31 Aug. 1882, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁴LM 17 Nov. 1864, p. 5.

⁴⁸⁵LH 13 May 1886, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁶LH 30 Dec. 1886, p. 4.

in 1866.⁴⁸⁷ An auction of 3a 3r 28p of pasture at Wards End in 1867 'near the market place' included a cowshed and hay loft.⁴⁸⁸ Householders also maintained cows for their personal milk supply. The auction of the household contents of the late Mrs Harley of Derby Road, from her large six-bedroom house, included two dairy cows, one of which was in calf.⁴⁸⁹

Competition existed, of course, for dairy produce, especially the milk supply, with the development of the rail link to London. In *Potter v. Hare*, the matter at issue was a commission for the sale of milk amounting to £25 17s 5½d. Potter possessed a dairy farm in Lockington and had negotiated with Hare, a milk trader in London.⁴⁹⁰

Cheese was locally produced although the local grocers tended more to advertise the product imported from elsewhere in the country and American cheese. Cracked cheese were offered at Kingston Fields Farm in large and small lots at 6d per pound.⁴⁹¹ A Spring and Autumn cheese fair was organized annually in the town towards the end of March and at Michaelmas.⁴⁹² In 1862 at Michaelmas, Smalley of Shepshed achieved the highest award.⁴⁹³ The produce, nevertheless, fluctuated and the editor of the local newspaper remarked in March 1866 of the poor local supply.⁴⁹⁴

In *Gill v. Keightley* in the county court, the plaintiff asserted that the defendant, who had a farm at Wymeswold, had agreed to exchange butter for groceries.⁴⁹⁵ This commodity was supplied from local resources. In 1860, a basket containing nine pounds of

⁴⁸⁷LH 25 Oct. 1866, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁸LM 27 June 1867, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁹LM 15 Sept. 1864, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁰LH 26 Oct. 1882, p. 6.

⁴⁹¹LM 19 Sept. 1867, p. 1.

⁴⁹²LM 26 March 1863, p. 5; 1 Oct. 1863 p. 5; 6 Oct. 1864, p. 1; 4 Oct. 1866, p. 5.

⁴⁹³LM 2 Oct. 1862, p. 5.

⁴⁹⁴LM 29 March 1866, p. 5.

⁴⁹⁵LM 25 June 1863, p. 5.

butter was stolen from the wagon of Mrs Gunn, carrier, outside the Rose & Crown in Baxtergate. The butter was being delivered on behalf of Mr Nixon of Stanford on Soar.⁴⁹⁶ A separate section of the market place was designated as the butter market. The Town Hall and Corn Exchange Company resolved in 1861 to request that the lord of the manor, Thomas Cradock, allow the construction of a suitable building for a poultry and butter market.⁴⁹⁷ In the butter market later in that year Ann Marshall of Shepshed was robbed of 4s 8d.⁴⁹⁸ 'Short weight' butter was confiscated by the Market Superintendent.⁴⁹⁹ The culprit was Mary Hayes of Diseworth who had offered twenty-three half pound units.⁵⁰⁰ In 1880, the Markets Committee of the Local Board agreed to the erection of a mobile tent for the Thursday butter market.⁵⁰¹

By the 1880s, however, butter and cheese were being imported from greater distances. The Leicestershire Provision Company which opened in the Market Place in 1881 commended its Dorset butter, consignments of which it received daily.⁵⁰² Thomas Mayo, also in the Market Place, also stocked 'pure' Dorset butter, along with Roquefort, Parmesan and Cheddar cheese.⁵⁰³ Occasional advertisements appeared in the local paper for the delivery by post of Devon butter by W. Reynolds of Iddesleigh.⁵⁰⁴ Chester Bros were particular in advertising their stock of American (soft) cheese at 7d and 6d per lb.⁵⁰⁵ Soon after, the Leicestershire Provision Company also commended its American cheese as well as Irish and Dorset butter.⁵⁰⁶ Another large commercial house in the Market

⁴⁹⁶LM 12 July 1860, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁷LM 8 Aug. 1861, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁸LM 12 Dec. 1861, p. 5.

⁴⁹⁹LM 1 May 1862, p. 5.

⁵⁰⁰LM 8 May 1862, p. 5.

⁵⁰¹LM 16 Sept. 1880, p. 1.

⁵⁰²LM 31 March 1881, p. 1; 28 July 1881, p. 1.

⁵⁰³LM 22 Sept. 1881, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁴LH 13 Sept. 1883, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁵LH 2 Oct. 1884, p. 1 (large panel).

⁵⁰⁶LH 15 Oct. 1885, p. 4.

Place, Cumberland's, advertised: 'Best butter from Lord Vernon's Dairy'.⁵⁰⁷ Cumberland then proceeded to advertise Kiel butter, Irish roll bacon, and American cheese.⁵⁰⁸ Located in the High Street, Edwin Moss by 1880 was offering 'finest American cheese' and Cumberland bacon.⁵⁰⁹

As the LPC proclaimed, however, it (and the likes of Chester, Moss and Mayo) were high-class provisioners in the commercial centre of the town: 'One of the best retail establishments in England'.⁵¹⁰ Their clientele was the middle-class sophisticates as opposed to the small grocery outlets appearing in the newly built localities in the town. Even so, Cotton's Cash Stores in Swan Street stocked American cheese, Danish butter, and Wiltshire hams and bacon.⁵¹¹ Chester Bros reduced the price of its 'rich and mild' American cheese to 5d per lb.⁵¹²

Fish, poultry and game

When Samuel Dakin died in 1897, his estate was valued at £2,554 2s 6d, amassed through his occupation as a fish and game dealer in Loughborough.⁵¹³ Rather elusive in the census returns, Dakin arrived (from Dorset) in Loughborough about 1856 (as his eldest daughter in 1881, born in Loughborough, was aged twenty-five).⁵¹⁴ His wife, Elizabeth, was a native of the town. Certainly by 1867 his business was established in Baxter Gate.⁵¹⁵ By his will, he appointed his wife, Elizabeth, and son, John, as his trustees and executors, with the provision that Elizabeth continue the business.⁵¹⁶ John had, indeed, already established himself in the business sup-

⁵⁰⁷LH 29 Oct. 1891, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁸LH 16 March 1893, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁹LH 8 July 1880, p. 1.

⁵¹⁰LH 15 Oct. 1885, p. 4.

⁵¹¹LH 1 July 1886, p. 1.

⁵¹²LH 1 July 1886, p. 1.

⁵¹³NPC 1897 Cabbe-Dyton p. 208.

⁵¹⁴TNA RG11/3245 fo. 144v.

⁵¹⁵Buchanan 1867 p. 260.

⁵¹⁶ROLLR DE462/38 pp. 111-14.

porting his father in Baxter Gate.⁵¹⁷ (When Elizabeth died in 1907 the estate had diminished to £351).⁵¹⁸ Dakin's was the outstanding success in the provision of fish and game in the town.

In the middle of the century, two fishmongers and poultry dealers stood out in the town: Henson (Swan Street) and Brumby (Church Gate). Both were prominent in the annual Christmas Meat Show. In 1859, Brumby exhibited four hundred couples of rabbits and a hundred of each of pheasants, geese, turkeys, fowl and ducks.⁵¹⁹ Of his involvement in 1862, the local newspaper commented: 'Display extended across the front of two buildings, arranged in a vary attractive form'.⁵²⁰ Three years later, his exhibition was equivalent, 'covering upwards of 50 feet of frontage'.⁵²¹ Yet both succumbed to bankruptcy. In 1866, John Henson went down first, late fishmonger, but now managing a beerhouse.⁵²² Soon afterwards, Brumby also collapsed, at the time out of business.⁵²³ Nor were they alone. Henry North went under not long after in 1869.⁵²⁴ William Barker had premises in High Street as a fish and game dealer, but was reduced to lodging in Granville Street, out of business, at the time of his bankruptcy.⁵²⁵ On the margin of trading, William Carter hawked fish, oysters and confectionery, which ended in disaster in 1860.⁵²⁶ Into voluntary liquidation went the Loughborough Fish, Game and Poultry Company, a shadowy organization, in 1878.⁵²⁷

The proliferation of the number of fishmongers and poultry deal-

⁵¹⁷ROLLR DE667/20 p. 48 (no. 95) (marriage of John 1872); TNA RG11/3145 fo. 143v.

⁵¹⁸ROLLR DE462/50 pp. 77-78; DE1169/1/22 p. 64.

⁵¹⁹LM 22 Dec. 1859 p. 3.

⁵²⁰LM 18 Dec. 1862 p. 5.

⁵²¹LM 28 Dec. 1865 p. 5.

⁵²²LM 19 July 1866, p. 1; LG 23165 p. 5188.

⁵²³LG 23574 p.; 103.

⁵²⁴LG 23562 p. 6890.

⁵²⁵LG 26503 p. 2137.

⁵²⁶LG 22382 p. 6890.

⁵²⁷LG 24603 p. 4059.

ers followed the pattern of the grocers and butchers, but remained geographically concentrated in the centre rather than dispersed through the town. White in 1846 listed only two fishmongers.⁵²⁸

One of these, William Carter of Baxter Gate, was recorded in the 1851 census, then aged 60, a fishmonger and Chelsea pensioner, assisted by his seventeen-year-old son.⁵²⁹ In 1861, the number entered in the census was no larger. In 1871, four were enumerated, including James Downes of Church Gate whose two sons had been born whilst Downes inhabited Grimsby.⁵³⁰ On the margins of the trade and of the spatial geography was John Hallam on Canal Bank, fish dealer and 'small grocer'.⁵³¹ Hallam, although seemingly peripheral, still traded on Canal Bank in 1881.⁵³² Now, however, he faced competition from five other vendors, including John and Samuel Dakin, and John and William Barradell, three of whom traded out of Baxter Gate.⁵³³ Prominent in 1891 were the Barradells and Dakins, but an explosion of sellers resulted in ten competitors. One was William Barker in the High Street who had entered the world in Grimsby.⁵³⁴ Trading from Baxter Gate too, A. H. Russell opened his shop in 1882. As a fish and poultry dealer, Russell offered through the press fresh American oysters and mild-cured herrings and invited local farmers to supply him with poultry.⁵³⁵

Tripe

At the lowest level of trading rested the tripe dressers. In each

⁵²⁸White 1846 p. 287.

⁵²⁹TNA HO107/2085 fo. 294.

⁵³⁰TNA RG10/3255 fo. 32.

⁵³¹TNA RG10/3256 fo. 28v.

⁵³²RG11/3145 fo. 10.

⁵³³TNA RG11/3144 fo. 69v; RG11/3145 fos 139v, 143v, 144v; RG11/3146 fo. 49.

⁵³⁴TNA RG12/2515 fo. 123.

⁵³⁵LH 30 Nov. 1882 p. 1; 14 Dec. 1882 p. 4; 1 Feb. 1883 p. 4; 8 Feb. 1883 p. 4.

census from 1851 to 1881, only two tripe dressers were enumerated. The number doubled in 1891. For the most part, those engaged in the trade were women: Mary wife of the pensioner Reuben Stout; the widow Ann Wells (1851 and 1861, but her son was a butcher); Elizabeth the wife of the joiner Samuel Rowbotham; and the widow Ann Lowe with her son (1881 and 1891). The first male involved in the trade noted in the censuses was Charles Hack, but he was entered as a butcher and tripe dresser.⁵³⁶ By 1891, however, the male participants outnumbered the female three to one. All the traders were aged, from fifty-five to eighty-six, with the exception of William Hack and his sister, aged thirty-nine and forty-seven, who succeeded Charles Hack in the Rushes and, more surprisingly, a boy of fourteen employed as a tripe dresser's assistant.⁵³⁷ Most of these tripe dressers inhabited the poorer areas of the town, for example several in the Rushes near the lodging houses but also conveniently the butchers' shops, and the older housing on Sparrow Hill. In fact, George Smith inhabited Court E on Sparrow Hill.⁵³⁸

The providers of meat and dairy products were similar in many respects to the other provisioners, except for the tradition of a noxious trade in the centre of the town which required constant oversight and regulation. Many young people entered the trade in their twenties and thirties. Like some (but not all) of the grocery products, the consumables furnished by the retailers of meat and dairy foodstuffs were perishable. Delivery at the local level was important. More is visible about the higher level of wholesale trading, the auctioneers, by comparison with corn merchants.

⁵³⁶TNA RG10/3256 fo. 85.

⁵³⁷TNA RG11/3144; RG12/2516 fo. 22.

⁵³⁸RG12/2515 fo. 120.

CONCLUSION

A considerable amount of research into consumer relations in the nineteenth century has concentrated on aggregate movements or on the largest urban entities.⁵³⁹ In this examination, the focus has been on a smaller urban place and disaggregated information. As a result, there remain plenty of lacunae. There has been no attempt to revisit debates like the standard of living.⁵⁴⁰ Omitted too is any discussion of other necessities of urban life.⁵⁴¹

One of the differentiating features of provisioning was the different approaches to advertising in the local press. For the most part, clothing enterprises (including boot and shoe) regularly advertised on the front pages of the local press. The provisioning trades did so less substantially. The grocery and provision establishments placed block notices on the front pages for periods of time, particularly in the 1880s when there was stiff competition in the centre of the town. By comparison, the butchers and bakers rarely, if ever, advertised in the press. What can be gleaned about these two occupations in the press is confined to the commission of nuisances and the letting of premises. Advertising was more strongly associated with the provision merchants.

Advertising was also the province of the larger provisioning concerns in the centre of the town: those which catered for an emergent urban middle class. No doubt the rest of the urban population was familiar with these merchants. There was, however, a division in the retailing nexus. The large retailers in the centre directed their attention to the urban middle class. The retailers for the other social groups had more limited stock, tended not to

⁵³⁹Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

⁵⁴⁰The original debate between Hobsbawm and Hartwell has moved on considerably: Dauntton, *Wealth and Welfare*, pp. 377-84.

⁵⁴¹See, for example, Vivienne Richmond, *Clothing the Poor in Nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 72-92.

advertise, and developed in the new working-class districts like the Paget Estate and off Leicester Road and Moor Lane. There was a binary function and dialectical difference within retailing.⁵⁴² The retailers in the working-class periphery often belonged to the lower middle class or, indeed, marginally to the working class. Some engaged in the provision of groceries and the bottom-of-the-range meat products as bylines. Their existence was thus often transient and marginal.

The urban middle class had disposable income which enabled the central grocers to stock a wide range of provisions. Indeed, these businesses place an emphasis on the nomenclature of provision merchant and establishment. By this self-description they intended to separate themselves from the small outlets. The smaller grocery stores which developed in the peripheral areas catered for the urban proletariat. These businesses did not advertise, so their stock is not often visible, except when they went under. No doubt, their provisions were more limited as their clients had restricted and often uncertain or fluctuating means.⁵⁴³ That difference in status did not prevent the larger, central retailers from going under. All retailing involved capital outlay and risk. No business was immune.⁵⁴⁴ Even some of the largest enterprises seem to have become over-extended. One of the causes was the necessity of credit in retailing.

⁵⁴²Geoffrey Crossick, 'The petite bourgeoisie in nineteenth-century Britain: the urban and liberal case' in Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, eds, *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-century Europe* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 62-94; Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* translated with an Introduction by Charles Levin (London: Verso, 2019), p. 11.

⁵⁴³Paul Johnson, *Saving and Spending: The Working-class Economy in Britain, 1870-1939* (Oxford: OUP, 1985).

⁵⁴⁴Julian Hoppit, *Risk and Failure in English Business 1700-1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), although changes were made to the law in the nineteenth century.

In the categories of provisioning above, it has been remarked that many of the retailers were not endogenous, had not been born in the parish of Loughborough. (The following figures relate to all types of retailer: grocer; butcher; bakers; etc). In 1851, substantially those engaged in provisioning had origins outside Loughborough. Fifty percent more were exogenous and had migrated into the town. By 1891, there was parity: the same proportion was endogenous as exogenous. More continuity of internal retail firms might have been the cause. Marginally more long-distance migrants, however, entered trading in Loughborough in 1891. Despite the continuity of some core firms, retail was an opportunity not only for incomers, but for younger people to enter into business. Many butchers started their business in their twenties and a fair proportion of grocers. The age profile of retailers in the decennial census included a number of startups by a younger cohort.

The market place has been mentioned in passing in the above chapters. Some consolidation is made here. Licensed for Thursdays and Saturdays, the market continued to fulfil a necessary function in the provisioning of the townspeople. For some of the late nineteenth century, the market and cattle market were in private ownership. In 1886, the Local Board instructed the clerk to open negotiations with Mr Cradock for a renewal of the lease of the Cattle Market for another seven years.⁵⁴⁵ In the same year, the Board determined to have constructed four new market stalls at a cost of £19.⁵⁴⁶ In 1880, the Board invited tenders for the construction of a covered shed for the pig market and the erection of cattle pens in Fishpool.⁵⁴⁷ The income for the Local Board from the tolls for the year 1883 amounted to £425, from which the Board expended over £189 on improvements, but the outstanding interest on loans on the market account exceeded £148.⁵⁴⁸ From 1880, the Cattle

⁵⁴⁵LH 22 July 1886, p. 4.

⁵⁴⁶LH 23 Sept. 1886, p. 4.

⁵⁴⁷LH 16 Sept. 1880, p. 1.

⁵⁴⁸LH 14 June 1883 p. 1.

Fair was removed from the centre of the town out to the recreation ground near the Midland railway station, obviously to improve the sanitary conditions, although the sale of horses continued to take place in the old Cattle Market in Devonshire Square.⁵⁴⁹

The marketplace was not always a beneficial institution. Unregulated in many ways, it was an arena of fraud and mis-selling. Unlike the shops, unsavoury practices could more easily be perpetrated. Some of these rogue transactions were brought before the police court of Loughborough. Journeying from Leicester, Edward Skipper, offered putrid geese in the market which he had concealed by sprinkling powder on the birds. At the same meeting of the police court, another trader from Leicester, Walter Bellamy, was accused of vending unfit rabbits. Nine couples hanging on his stall were obviously rotten and fourteen couples confiscated.⁵⁵⁰ In 1886, Frederick and Henry Lee attempted to sell unwholesome meat in the market place near Fearon's Fountain. Another butcher from Leicester, Joseph Sykes, was prepared to sell unwholesome mutton in the market and was fined the serious amount of £10.⁵⁵¹ The two had travelled up from Leicester. The police seized fifteen or sixteen pieces of beef.⁵⁵² A butcher who travelled from Burton upon Trent, Arthur Green, was also discovered trying to dispose of 67 pieces of unfit meat in the market.⁵⁵³ Mackerel and cod were declared unfit on the stall of a Leicester fishmonger by the market inspector. Another fishmonger nearby in the market, also from Leicester, Thomas Nicholls, forfeited deteriorating mackerel.⁵⁵⁴ Yet another trader from Leicester endeavoured to sell unfit fish, 32 codlings, in the market, in his case a repeat offence.⁵⁵⁵ Another, Edwin Cavanagh, fish dealer from the county borough, brought incorrect

⁵⁴⁹LH 28 Oct. 1880, p. 1; 10 Nov. 1881, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁰LH 8 Dec. 1881, p. 4.

⁵⁵¹LH 28 Feb. 1889, p. 5.

⁵⁵²LH 23 April 1886, p. 4.

⁵⁵³LH 31 March 1887, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁴LH 22 June 1882, p. 4; 13 July 1882, p. 5.

⁵⁵⁵LH 29 Oct. 1883, p. 5.

weights into the market.⁵⁵⁶ Pigs' plucks were the offensive items which John Higgitt of Leicester wanted to sell on his Loughborough stall which were seized.⁵⁵⁷

Rivalry in the stalls had erratic consequences. The competition between Richard Allen, tobacconist and butcher, of Leicester, and Francis Heggs, butcher's labourer or assistant on the adjacent stall resulted in a fracas, witnessed by the other vendors of fish and meat in the market. The perpetrators of the altercation were dismissed at their own costs.⁵⁵⁸ Two butchers from down south also assaulted each other in the market place at their Saturday stalls, Charles Burrell of Leicester, and Thomas Orton of South Knighton.⁵⁵⁹ All these offences were reported in the press in the 1880s. The editor at the time had a special interest in reporting the proceedings at the police court. The prosecution of the perpetrators might have been discriminatory, against outsiders. Certainly, Loughborough denizens do not seem to feature. Inspection might also have been more assiduous in these years through the concern with adulteration and the health of the urban population. All the offenders were, however, brought to court and found guilty. It seems then that outside traders were insistent on attending a foreign market to pass off compromised commodities. The market place was the preserve of the small traders who had no other outlet, including butchers and fishmongers. When Thomas Carpmail, butcher, had to abandon his leasehold premises in Baxter Gate, he announced in the press that he would stand in the market on Saturdays to sell beef.⁵⁶⁰

The evidence of the newspapers suggests that Loughborough was still largely provisioned locally. There remained a reliance on, for example, teas mixed from the chest by the local grocers.

⁵⁵⁶LH 9 Feb. 1882, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁷LH 24 June 1884, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁸LH 17 March 1887, p. 6.

⁵⁵⁹LH 29 Jan. 1885, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁰LH 25 Dec. 1884, p. 1.

Horniman's advertised in the local press, but worked through local agents. The intrusion of packaged tea does not seem to happen until the 1890s. Nor was Loughborough a site for the new emporia or multiple stores. Clemerson's two stores contained departments, but the firm was concerned only with furnishing and furniture. The Co-operative store on Woodgate seems to have only marginally affected shopping. If the Christmas Meat Show is a reflection, the local butchers largely sourced their supplies from the local estates. When those local landowners had their annual fat stock sales, Loughborough butchers were among the purchasers. Paradoxically, the major buyers at the 'Loughborough Smithfield' and cattle fairs were apparently from Lincolnshire and Norfolk. Even towards the end of the nineteenth century, the town was embedded in its 'country' or region. The industrial development of the town had resulted in the separation of the urban population from the rural, but dependence on local provisioning was still paramount.