

ECONOMIC HISTORY

The economic history of Dunster has been very varied. In the early Middle Ages a small town grew up in the medieval period with a thriving market, a port, and a large household at the Castle to be provisioned. Every resource was exploited including fish, sheep, cattle, grain, and timber. The river Avill and its tributaries not only supplied power for the many mills but also water meadows for hay. In addition to the needs of husbandry hay had to supply the Castle stables. That is probably why other manors such as Avill were required to carry hay to the Castle or pay 12d.¹ Sea and river fishing were valuable and many fishweirs survive in the bay. The availability of wool, water, and labour encouraged yarn and cloth production, which flourished until the 18th century. By the early modern period ‘dunsters’ were among Somerset’s cloth exports. Dunster prospered and its market served a very wide area with easy access to Minehead harbour, which had by then replaced Dunster haven.

In 1710 38 men and women were taxed on their stock in trade. The cloth industry supported the growth of town and provided relatively well-paid jobs leading to a demand for a wide range of crafts and services. In 1772 there were said to be 27 inhabitants who were not parishioners, clearly drawn to Dunster as a place to make a living, including four smiths, a cutler, a carpenter, a tailor, a painter, an innkeeper, and a cooper.² By then however, Dunster’s prosperity had waned with the decline in cloth manufacture and in the market, and a consequent decline in the town itself, although Dunster also had a pottery and a brickyard and various food industries such as milling and malting. The number of poor rates collected in 1766 was more than double the number in 1760 yet in neighbouring Carhampton they remained the same.³ In 1759 Foremarsh manor property in Dunster included a house in ruins, five listed as

¹ TNA, SC 6/970/11.

² SHC, DD/L 1/33/47.

³ Ibid. 1/38/14/3.

tumbling or tumbled down and others as bad.⁴ In 1778 houses and an inn on the Luttrell estate were ruinous and shops in the market had not been let for many years. One house had tumbled down and its female occupiers were in the workhouse. In 1781 the large Sydenham house in Church Street was taken down and used as a garden as were several houses at the old park gate. Ten other properties had been demolished.⁵ It was said that there were only 190 houses in the parish in the 1780s compared with nearly 400 at the beginning of the century.⁶ By 1820 several Luttrell tenants had been in arrears for more than 10 years, even the excise officer was two years behind. Most were very poor and were excused payment including one man in arrears for 31 years.⁷ In 1840 there were still many gaps along the streets, including High Street and Gallox Street, where demolished houses had not been replaced.⁸

Towards the end of the 18th century there was a fledgling tourist industry and in the 19th century Dunster provided shops and services for the local area, including the Luttrells and their guests at the Castle, and inns for travellers, By the mid 20th century the Luttrells had moved out, Minehead had become the local centre, even absorbing Alcombe and other parts of the parish, and Dunster now no more than a village depended on tourism boosted by the National Trust's custody of the castle and mill. In the early 21st century the millions of visitors helped to maintain local employment and supported many businesses.

AGRICULTURE

⁴ Ibid. 1/28/23/1, 58.

⁵ Ibid. DD/L 1/10/35C, 1/17/63.

⁶ Ibid. A/AQP 8/13; Census; above, intro.

⁷ SHC, DD/L 1/4/13.

⁸ Ibid. DD/L 1/10/35A (map c. 1777); ibid tithe award; above, intro.

Dunster sits on a strip of land between the Exmoor uplands and the coastal marshes. Much of Dunster manor's land lay in Carhampton including the great arable fields.⁹ The importance of Dunster market, the castle household, cloth workers and the proximity of the Bristol Channel trade probably encouraged production for sale. With the decline in the market and the cloth trade in the 18th century Dunster farmers appear to have turned to meat production and the breeding of horses on the marshes, which were enclosed in 1866. Fatstock markets and shows were popular and Dunster's annual show still attracts large numbers of livestock.

Farming in the Middle Ages

In 1086 the four estates, which comprised the parish of Dunster, had nine ploughlands but only 6 ½ teams were recorded and six serfs, four at Alcombe. Most arable was held in demesne and there were only six villein farmers, probably representing scattered farmsteads in the north and west of the parish. Demesne meadow was scarce, Alcombe with 8a. had the most, but there was plenty of pasture and the Alcombe demesne had 200 sheep. Apart from Dunster itself whose value had tripled although no demesne estate is recorded, and part of Staunton, the estates had not changed in value since the Conquest. Dunster's increase in value, it was only worth 5s. in 1066, may be due to higher rents from a re-arrangement in land holding to enable house and castle building. William de Mohun held several neighbouring estates and probably left most of Dunster's land to its 15 bordars or smallholders.¹⁰ Presumably the estates shared the marshes and hill land as they did later and Dunster's burgesses had rights on Croydon Hill confirmed by Reginald de Mohun in 1250s and by his grandson John. Their rights to take furze, berries, turf, fern and heath

⁹ Below, Carhampton, econ.hist.

¹⁰ VCH Som. I, 501—3.

were still acknowledged in 1822. John de Mohun also granted them rights on the marsh including the taking of slime, presumably for fertiliser,¹¹ although a marlpit was recorded in 1281.¹² Avill tenants had rights to turf, bracken, broom and heath on the hill between Colverslade and Cobbeworthy ditch and the lord had a tract of marsh.¹³

A survey of 1266 shows that major changes had occurred with an increase in villein holdings to 39 although they were very small; the largest holding was a half-virgate, 17 held a furlong, 2 had 9 a., 16 had 6a. and 3 held 3a. or less. Heavy labour dues were demanded of villeins on Dunster manor who worked almost as much of the lord's land as they held themselves. In addition to reaping 76 a. of wheat, 38 a. of barley, 38 a. of oats, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, hoeing, mowing, carrying hay and corn, and unspecified manual or boon works, tenants were required to dig, mend weirs, collect firewood, make hurdles and hayricks, and provide a man and horse to carry as far as Bridgwater and Exeter. Smallholders owed hens and larder money. The 30 free tenants paid cash, pepper, wax or capon rents. One man held land for keeping the lord's animals in the south of the manor and another was allowed to put six cows and six calves in the Waterlete in Carhampton as did the lord's officers. By this date the lord's demesne was mainly in Carhampton parish. The reeve, hayward, bedel, keeper of the Waterlete, carpenter, plough maker and falconer were quit of rent and had grazing and meadow. Already the c.150 burgage holders outnumbered the agricultural tenants on the manor.¹⁴ In 1326 Staunton' unfree tenants owed two half days ploughing, harrowing with a horse, hoeing for three and a half days, mowing all the lord's meadow and lifting and ricking the hay, and reaping corn for four days. Six

¹¹ SHC, DD/L P8/1, 3—4; 290, survey 1822; DD/S/SN 1.

¹² Ibid. DD/L P8/2/25.

¹³ TNA, E 326/9688; SHC, DD/S/SN 1; DD/L P8/2/20.

¹⁴ SHC, DD/L P8/4.

owed another three and a half days reaping but the others paid money in lieu.¹⁵ An Avill tenant owed a day's corn reaping in 1349.¹⁶

Most arable in the parish belonged to estates other than Dunster manor each of which would have had its own fields. The tenant of a farm at Avill in 1314 had to do several days work in his lord's arable as well as maintaining the mill leat and providing bread and 3 capons at Christmas and bread and 30 eggs at Easter.¹⁷ Avill field was recorded in 1331 but there were also small closes¹⁸ and Avill tenants shared meadow and reed in Carmoor in Carhampton with those of Dunster.¹⁹ Staunton demesne in 1326 had 52 a. of arable of two qualities and 27 a. of meadow and pasture mostly in closes. There were also 11 tenants with land.²⁰ In 1383 Staunton's pastures were Leypark, Colston, Catelynch, Whethull, and Heymarsh.²¹

There was little room for arable within the south of the parish around Dunster itself. A few small fields were divided between tenants in 1-a. plots.²² The largest, recorded as Dunster field in the early 14th century²³ and inclosed by 1561,²⁴ lay under Grabbist around St Leonard's well. Others were Abovetown field recorded in 1399, Wagland, later pasture, between Conygar hill and the priory and Algore, north of the hill, later Agar.²⁵ Whitstone at Marsh, largely in Carhampton, was let in landshares for capon rents in 1421, when it produced wheat and peas. Shares there survived into the 18th century.²⁶ Westmershfield recorded in 1365 may have been reclaimed land,

¹⁵ Ibid. C 134/99/1.

¹⁶ Ibid. E 326/9688.

¹⁷ SHC, DD/S/SN 1.

¹⁸ TNA, E 326/9682, 9702, 9715—16; SHC, tithe award.

¹⁹ TNA, E 326/9676.

²⁰ Ibid. C 134/99/1.

²¹ *Cal. Inq. Misc.* III, p. 41. In 1840, Leigh Park and Wheathill were arable: SHC, tithe award.

²² SHC, DD/S/SN 2; DD/S/WH 66; DD/L P8/2/30, 38—41; P11/4; Hunt, (ed.), *Cartularies of Bath Priory* (Som. Rec. Soc. 7), 100, 129.

²³ Hunt, *Cart. Bath Priory* (Som. Rec. Soc. 7), 110.

²⁴ SHC, DD/L P14/8.

²⁵ Ibid. P14/8.

²⁶ Ibid. P8/2/152; P11/3—4; DD/L 1/23/1b, 5.

possibly the later Marsh or Western field near Marsh where wheat and barley were grown in the later 14th century. Landshares there survived in the 1760s although probably meadow by that date.²⁷ The Mohun ownership of Dunster and Carhampton manors gave them and their Dunster tenants access to the low-lying coastlands of the latter parish and ensured sufficient arable for Dunster's needs.²⁸

In 1330 the demesne of Dunster, a fifth of the manor by value, comprised 400 a. of arable of differing values and 58 ½ a of meadow, mostly in Carhampton, and pasture at the Castle, Conygar and Hangar. The prior held Grabbist Hill, which he had the right to break for rye, a right retained by his lay successors until at least the 1590s.²⁹ The gated barton called Bernecourt included a granary and a dovecot. Over 40 a. of meadow was kept in hand for hay but the pasture was let for over £20. River fishing, the dovecot, and winter grazing were kept in hand to keep the household supplied with fresh fish and meat. There were several dovecotes, the Ronbury family conveyed one to John de Mohun in the 13th century, and by 1260 a vineyard,³⁰ possibly that north of the castle in the early 15th century although a vineyard garden under Grabbist was recorded in 1840.³¹ By the 1390s pasture was let at Croydon, Gallox Down, Stablehey, Vernage,³² Conygar Hill and around the Castle and was an important source of revenue. The demesne dovecot and garden were farmed out, as were tenants' works although customary labour was used for mowing 22 a. of meadow and when Avilham, inclosed and watered annually, was not under grass tenants and their wives produced beans and wheat there for food and drink.³³

²⁷ Ibid. DD/L P8/2/128; P9/5; DD/L 1/10/35A (map 1768); *ibid.* tithe award.

²⁸ Below, Carhampton.

²⁹ SHC, DD/L P3/20.

³⁰ Ibid. P1/4/2, P8/2/16, P9/2/1, P16/19, P17/2, P18/3.

³¹ Ibid. P8/2/151; P11/3; *ibid.* tithe award.

³² Possibly Vinegar near Gallox Bridge.

³³ SHC, DD/L P9/4; P10/1; P11/1.

Sir Hugh Luttrell's service with the king entailed much travelling and increased his need for horses. In 1402 a grange under Conygar, usually let, was kept in hand to store the lord's hay and customary work was used to produce hay.³⁴ Hugh's succession to East Quantoxhead in 1403 gave him access to an extremely productive home farm and he no longer depended on Dunster to supply the needs of the Castle. In the early 15th century grain and stock for the household were brought from East Quantoxhead or from Wales but skins and tallow were turned into leather and candles for the household and horn was sold. Swans, geese and poultry were kept, and cider came from the Castle's gardens, rabbits from the park and warren, and over 2,000 squabs annually from the dovecot but the castle was heavily dependent on imported food and drink. Even with supplies coming in from other manors, over £2 a week was spent in the 1400s on purchasing supplies from the market or through Minehead, rising to £13 a week before Christmas when wax, resin, almonds, dates, fowls, conger eels, rays, and oysters were bought.³⁵ For his work on the castle in the 1420s Sir Hugh Luttrell bought oxen, seven in 1427, to draw the many waggons of coal, lime, stone, and firewood needed. A new waggon and eight oxbows were made and eight drovers employed.³⁶

A major re-arrangement of demesne farming across the Luttrell manors saw sheep moved to Carhampton in 1432, arable increased at East Quantoxhead to supply the Luttrell household and Dunster land, presumably earning more from rent, let out.³⁷ In 1421 there were c. 32 holdings of ancient tenure with between 6a. and 24a. and others, presumably former demesne, including one 60-a. farm, many closes of pasture and a dovecot held for a poultry rent. Labour services still demanded were 16 autumn

³⁴ Ibid. P10/1, P11/3.

³⁵ Ibid. P37/7, 10.

³⁶ Ibid. P11/3.

³⁷ VCH Som. V, 122, 124; SHC, DD/L P37/11.

works in Broadwood and 88 a. of mowing in Avelham and Carmoor. The prior, the lord of Avill and two other estate owners had each to provide a large waggon to carry grain and hay, which might reflect the small holdings held by customary tenants who could not be expected to have waggons.³⁸

Borough court records reveal that large numbers of pigs were kept in Dunster. Ten piglets belonging to the prior were found in High Street in 1405 and most inhabitants seem to have kept some animals wit burgesses having grazing rights in the marshes.³⁹ In 1534 Thomas Skynner left each of his children, number not stated, 12 wethers and eight ewes and his bees, which were ‘out with other men’ presumably in their orchards.⁴⁰ Sylvester Aldecot or Allercott left his children bees at Carhampton and Selworthy in 1577.⁴¹ Livestock wintered behind houses in High Street in the 1550s when a yeoman took a candle to see his cattle and started a fire, destroying a barn and stable.⁴² John Luttrell (d. 1558), farmer of the Priory estate, divided a large flock of sheep among his family.⁴³ In 1553 Ridgeway Hill provided commons for Avill, Alcombe, and Staunton, still largely open in 1840. Alcombe Common was divided between the owner (100 a. to the south) and the tenants who had pasture for 10 sheep and Alcombe’s common marsh, surrounded on three sides by ‘arms of the sea’, provided 100 a. for the owner and unspecified acreage for the tenants.⁴⁴ The Avill demesne was let out and the tenant of 40 a. forfeited it for felling oaks to make gates and bars c.1555.⁴⁵

³⁸ SHC, DD/L P11/4.

³⁹ Ibid. P10/2; below, this section.

⁴⁰ F. W. Weaver, ed. Wells Wills, 80.

⁴¹ M. Siraut, ed., Somerset Wills (Som. Rec. Soc. 89), 10.

⁴² SHC, DD/L P14/6.

⁴³ F. W. Weaver, (ed.), Somersetshire Wills, 1530—1558 (Som. Rec. Soc. 21), 211—12.

⁴⁴ TNA, LR 2/269; SHC, tithe award.

⁴⁵ TNA, REQ 2/127/12.

Farming in the 17th and 18th centuries

In 1602 George Luttrell sought to restrict the common rights of Dunster burgesses by denying that Croyden Hill was in the parish, having sold pasture and fuel rights to tenants in Carhampton who resented claims by the burgesses.⁴⁶ Luttrell was also in dispute with his architect William Arnold in 1619 over former priory land in the marsh leased to him with timber to build a house and fence the ground. Arnold built three dams to keep out the salt water and a 10-ft. wide ditch to keep cattle and sheep off the land but salt water often overflowed the land and stock grazing on the adjoining salt marsh broke in.⁴⁷ The common marshes, divided between Dunster (over 120 a.), Avill or Ellicombe (36 a.), Alcombe (over 100 a.) and Minehead (c. 100 a.), were grazed by cattle and sheep but as local farmers kept few animals individuals accumulated and let rights.⁴⁸ William Prowse of Minehead contracted with 30 people for 45 rights in 1727.⁴⁹ Before 1715, and possibly by 1671, twelve Alcombe tenants had divided their share of the marsh, which lay alongside the warren, into twelve fields.⁵⁰

Surviving probate inventories show that most Dunster farmers in the 17th century grew corn and were not very well off although one was musical having virginals, a cittern and a treble in 1674.⁵¹ One of the more prosperous was Sylvester Allercott (d. 1669) with a flock of 190 sheep and 12 a. under beans, wheat, and barley, but he also owned the Red Lion and several houses including a new house empty of furniture but including a wool chamber storing 40 fleeces.⁵² Welsh cattle were imported in the later 17th century and presumably improved breeding as cattle

⁴⁶ SHC, DD/L P15/2

⁴⁷ TNA, C 3/299/30.

⁴⁸ SHC, DD/L 1/28/23/63.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 1/32/35.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 2/1/1, 2/36/3; *ibid.* tithe award.

⁵¹ Ibid. DD/SP 1644/58; 1646/44, 77; 1667/50, 75; 1674/30; 1675/47.

⁵² Ibid. DD/L 2/31/2.

became more important than sheep in late 17th-century Dunster.⁵³ Francis Luttrell (d. 1690) maintained a home farm using a team of oxen, produced cheese from 22 cows and kept pigs for bacon.⁵⁴ Robert Giles of Ellicombe (d. 1697) was a wealthy farmer who had almost no livestock but produced cider⁵⁵ as did the Luttrells. In 1724 eight new hogsheads were made for Alexander Luttrell and others repaired.⁵⁶ The extensive stables at the Castle required large quantities of hay. In 1725 the estate spent £3 a week on haymaking.⁵⁷ Abraham Allen of Alcombe, a dairy and arable farmer, who had two fields under carrots in 1731, presumably as animal fodder, 5 a. of peas and beans and was rebuilding or extending his house.⁵⁸ George Blyth of Alcombe died c. 1763 leaving a very comfortably furnished house, 8 oxen, 4 horses, 7 cattle, 104 sheep and lambs and wheat, barley and beans worth nearly £100.⁵⁹

In 1746 most of the Luttrell demesne was rack-rented⁶⁰ but much Acland property was held on traditional leases for lives with suit of court and heriots due and customary rights such as cutting fuel.⁶¹ From the 1750s Henry Fownes Luttrell increased his estate buying freehold plots, houses, mills, and Foremarsh manor.⁶² George Gale ran the Luttrell estate until 1782 bought plough oxen, probably to cultivate the large amount of land left in hand. In 1762 he spent over £219 farming such land but received over £405 besides payments for pasturing 82 cattle in the park and elsewhere and 230 sheep and lambs in Carhampton in 1761.⁶³

⁵³ J. Thirsk ed. The Agrarian History of England and Wales, V (1), 377; SHC, DD/SP 1675/39, 47; 1693/12.

⁵⁴ SHC, T/PH/pro 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid. DD/SP 1697/10.

⁵⁶ Ibid. DD/L 1/5/16.

⁵⁷ Ibid. T/PH/pro 5; Ibid. DD/L 1/5/16.

⁵⁸ Ibid. DD/SP 1731/1.

⁵⁹ Ibid. DD/L 2/1/1.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 1/10/35B

⁶¹ Devon RO 1148/add 2/61.

⁶² SHC, DD/L 1/4/12; below, Carhampton, landownership.

⁶³ SHC, DD/L 1/4/12.

A hop garden was in use in 1620⁶⁴ and Saffron Close was recorded in 1676.⁶⁵ The castle had productive orchards and gardens and in 1761 a walled melon garden was recorded. New brick-walled kitchen gardens costing c. £50 were established at the priory site in 1772—3.⁶⁶ The former priory estate was a productive farm whose rent accounted for nearly half the Luttrell's Dunster rent roll and which supplied wheat, reed, and straw to the castle and the loan of carthorses when needed.⁶⁷ In 1760 the tenant had to lay 120 seams of rotten manure on every acre intended for wheat. After three corn crops, the last of barley or oats sown with 12 lb of clover per acre, the land was left fallow for a year. The tenant was allowed wood and water when it could be spared. In 1766 the farm carried 14 plough oxen, 55 cows and other cattle, 211 sheep and lambs and 19 pigs. The value of the stock and stored wheat was over £600.⁶⁸ Priory farm had a large yard and mow barton. In the later 18th century the house was rebuilt but a planned ox barton with 22 stalls east of the barn was not built, possibly because horses replaced oxen. The yard, around the old dovecot, included two barns, three lincays, a shippon and a small stable. Priory Green Road cuts across the former yard but the dovecot, 16th-century barn and the 19th-century gateways to the yard survive.⁶⁹ By 1777 land on Grabbist hill and in Carhampton had been added to the farm, which was rented for £234.⁷⁰ In 1781 the farm had no plough oxen but four horses, more cattle and fewer sheep and produced more corn and 30 a. of hay.⁷¹ In 1797 ten people competed for the farm lease and by 1800 the rent had risen to £360.⁷²

⁶⁴ Ibid. P15/16.

⁶⁵ Ibid. DD/L 1/23/1.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 1/4/12.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 1/32/34/2.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 1/21/4, 1/25/10.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 1/10/35A, 1/33/49/47; *ibid.* tithe award

⁷⁰ Ibid. DD/L 1/10/35C.

⁷¹ Ibid. 1/32/34/2.

⁷² Ibid. 1/10/32, 1/30/28b/1.

By contrast most farms were small. In 1760 the two largest farms on Staunton manor were just over 60 a. and one of those lay outside the parish. The rest were between 25 a. and 35 a. There were no shared fields. In 1773 there were potato gardens and one farm had a limekiln from which any tenant might buy lime for 3s. a hogshead and the cost of burning it.⁷³

In 1762 inclosed marshland was let, Henry Fownes Luttrell undertaking to repair the ditches, fences and gates and to clean the outditches against the salt marsh.⁷⁴ In the 1760s he obtained surrenders of at least 63 pasture rights in the Dunster marshes including Coleborough adjoining the old haven from tradesmen, a Minehead mariner and innkeepers who had presumably been letting their rights.⁷⁵ In the 1780s the marsh was described as 500 a. of rich common.⁷⁶ Some land may have been added to Lower Marsh farm, which covered 160 a. in Dunster and Carhampton when it was rack rented in 1780.⁷⁷ By 1790 when John Fownes Luttrell bought Higher Marsh it was divided between four holdings in Dunster and Carhampton but had a large farmhouse built in 1775 on a former orchard and garden. Luttrell created a single Higher Marsh farm, which covered 69 a., half arable, in 1810.⁷⁸ He also bought properties in St Thomas Street or Rattle Row, which had each been burdened with a day's harvest work for their landlord who lived at Bicknoller on the Quantocks.⁷⁹

Through his agent William Gale, Luttrell, farmed his land around Dunster from 1784 as Dunster Castle farm. Three labourers were employed and casual labour taken on at busy times, men at 1s a day for mowing and bark ripping, women at 6d for weeding, harvest, apple picking and turnip pulling. The farmyard housed pigs,

⁷³ Ibid. 2/17/97.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 1/25/10.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 1/4/12, 1/24/6.

⁷⁶ Ibid. A/AQP 8/17.

⁷⁷ Ibid. DD/L 1/5/18.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 1/10/35 A, 1/10/35C, 1/33/51.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 1/24/8.

poultry, game fowl, horses and spaniels and pointers, presumably for hunting.⁸⁰ In the 1820s William Gale's widow Mary claimed that he was owed money but the Luttrell family found errors in the accounts kept by William and his father George Gale, partly due to the Luttrell habit of receiving rent directly. William also had his own business selling malt and hops between 1782 and 1792.⁸¹

Farming in the 19th century

In 1801 of 284 a. of arable, peas, potatoes and turnips covered 56 a. and the rest was equally divided between wheat and barley.⁸² Despite the decline in local industry agriculture employed only 115 people in 1801 and fewer than half the families in Dunster in 1811 and 1821.⁸³ Small farmers were said to have become labourers or emigrated. The over supply of labour kept wages down despite the high price of wheat.⁸⁴ At Higher Marsh a water-powered threshing machine was installed c. 1810, said to be worth £10 a year to the farmer who was prosecuted for removing it at the end of his tenancy.⁸⁵ Priory farm's rent rose to unsustainable levels and the farmer was distrained for arrears in 1816. He stocked much of his land with other people's cattle in addition to 38 of his own.⁸⁶

Of 812 a. not owned by Luttrell the early 1830s, 600 a. belonged to Sir Thomas Acland,⁸⁷ 275 a. was arable, 378 a. meadow, 123 a. pasture, 20a. orchard, 23 a. garden and 71 a. coppice. The arable was most valuable growing wheat and barley. The pasture produced on average each year 30 lambs, 57 fleeces and grazing for 27

⁸⁰ Ibid. 1/5/17.

⁸¹ Ibid. 1/4/13.

⁸² Home Office acreage returns (HO 67), (List and Index Soc. 190, 1982), 200.

⁸³ Census.

⁸⁴ J. Savage, History of the Hundred of Carhampton (1830), 384.

⁸⁵ SHC, DD/L 2/42/12.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 1/30/28b/2.

⁸⁷ The acreages do not add up. Rectorial tithes were let with Higher Marsh farm, the accounts were mixed up, the vicar let his tithes and the accounts were said to be unintelligible.

sheep, and the milk of three cows. Orchard was reckoned to produce 40 bags of apples per acre and gardens 80 bags of potatoes an acre.⁸⁸ In 1840 of 2,883 a. John Fownes Luttrell owned 1,703 a. half of it classed as common land. The total common was 1,186a. including Croydon Hill (557 a), Staunton Common (141 a.), Callins Hill at Staunton (18 a.) and Marsh (124 ½ a.), Alcombe (159 a. and 3 ½ a.) and Ellicombe (47 a.) Commons. Arable covered 600 a., grass 820 a., and wood 277 a. Farms were small although some such as the Priory had land in neighbouring parishes. The Luttrells farmed their land in Carhampton from the late 18th-century farmstead with and three yards north of the castle, mostly now converted to housing. The largest holding was Thomas Oatway's combined Priory and Higher Marsh farms, which covered over 170 a. in the parish. Oatway had taken over Priory farm in 1817 after the previous tenant failed and Higher Marsh in 1824. Other significant farms although much smaller were Avill (64 a.) and John Burcombe's farm at Staunton (59 a.); other farms were under 30 a. Lime was quarried and burnt at Alcombe and two farmers were in partnership as lime merchants in the 1850s.⁸⁹

The Williton and Dunster Association, formed in 1838, encouraged agricultural work and in 1850 gave rewards to the best ploughman and the longest serving female farm worker and held sheep shearing contests. Although the Dunster shows gave prizes for Exmoor sheep there was little interest locally in improved dairy cattle as pedigree shorthorns needed better food and lodging. Arable farmers fattened steers and heifers from Exmoor and good cart horses were bred on the marshes.⁹⁰ Priory farm continued to be one of the best in the area, largely arable but with a breeding flock of 94 sheep. In 1856 the livestock and crops still on the farm at Michaelmas were worth over £850 excluding a crop of wheat sold for £200. Italian

⁸⁸ TNA, IR 18/8554.

⁸⁹ SHC, tithe award; *Ibid.* DD/L 1/30/28b/4, 2/42/12; *London Gaz.* 1 Apr. 1858, p. 1706.

⁹⁰ T. D. Acland and W. Sturge, *The Farming of Somerset* (1851), 22—3.

rye grass was sown and 30 a. of meadow had produced 45 tons of hay. Cattle bought in for fattening were worth up to £22 each indicating the value of beef rearing at this period.⁹¹ Several cattle dealers lived in the parish in the mid 19th century and two fatstock markets were held in the town annually.⁹² By 1839 veterinary surgeon William Curtis was working in Dunster.⁹³

In 1851 60 agricultural labourers were recorded in Dunster, mostly living in the West Street area, and 37 in the rest of the parish. In 1861 and 1871 there were a similar number besides plough boys, shepherds, carters, dairy workers and cattle dealers. Only in the 1880s did the figure halve and in the 1890s it halved again.⁹⁴ Many labourers were underemployed as only about half were recorded as farm employees in 1861 and by 1881 only a handful of the 90 recorded labourers were permanently employed on farms. The largest of the six farms recorded in 1861 was Higher Marsh with the Priory (260 a.) farmed by an uncle and nephew who appear to have held one farmstead each. The other farms measured 50 a. to 82 a.⁹⁵ By 1867 Higher Marsh farm had a hay machine, winnowing machine and corn drill,⁹⁶ employed a boy of nine to scare birds and many women at busy times haymaking, harvesting, turnip hoeing and weeding for 5s an acre. Eight men earned men 8s and three pints of cider a day with other perquisites but not cottages, working from 6 am to 5 pm in summer and from 7.30 am in the winter, the women started at 8 am. Another farmer employed a girl for birdscaring, four or five women around the house and two married women who came when wanted such as to help with the threshing

⁹¹ SHC, DD/X/OTW 2.

⁹² Below, markets and fairs; *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); TNA, RG 9/1602.

⁹³ *Robson's Com. Dir. London and Western Cos* (1839); TNA, HO 107/1920.

⁹⁴ TNA, HO 107/1920; *ibid.* RG 9/1602; RG 10/2350; RG 11/2354; RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* RG 9/1602; RG 11/2354.

⁹⁶ SHC, DD/X/OTW 2.

machine. Carhampton labourers got an extra 2d a day. Younger farmers only gave perquisites to the old hands but the men preferred cider to extra wages.⁹⁷

In 1866 the last piece of common saltmarsh (124 a.) was inclosed, the larger allotment going to the Luttrells, including the vicar, Sir Thomas Acland, and a few others who still had a total of 103 burgage rights there. Traditionally nine ewes and a ram could be pastured for each burgage, which would have meant a flock of 1,500 sheep in the Middle Ages. By 1822 it was said only three burgage holders exercised their claims. The tenant of Higher Marsh was given a rent reduction of £20 for surrendering his rights. The common lay along the west side of the river Avill and a tributary stream was diverted on inclosure.⁹⁸ By 1871 the size of farms, except Higher Marsh, had increased, probably by taking in former common especially in Marsh, and smallholdings. Alcombe Cross farm then covered 139 a., 166 a. in 1881, and the others between 80 a. and 100 a.⁹⁹ There had been a small increase in arable by the later 19th century, accounted for by the growth of fodder crops such as turnips and mangolds of which c. 100 a. were grown. Amounts of corn were similar to those of 1801. The main livestock were sheep and lambs but up to 200 head of cattle were kept and there were 47 working horses on farms in 1886. Numbers of farmers and smallholders fell from 50 in 1876 to 34 by 1896 but arable remained unchanged and the dairy herd had increased to 128 and there were 310 other cattle. More pigs were kept, possibly as a by-product of dairying.¹⁰⁰ In 1899 management of Alcombe Hill and Alcombe Marsh commons was taken over by Minehead Urban District Council

⁹⁷ Report of the Royal Commission on Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture (Parl. Papers 1868—9 (4202), xiii, 442—3.

⁹⁸ TNA, MAF 1/764; SHC, DD/X/OTW 2; DD/L, box 290, survey 1822; Savage, Hist. Hundred Carhampton, 377—8.

⁹⁹ TNA, RG 10/2350; RG 11/2354.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. MAF 68/59, 486, 1056, 1626.

for public access and recreation and old rights, except those of the lord of the manor, were extinguished.¹⁰¹

The Luttrells continued to manage their home farm from the Castle converting an 18th-century house on Castle Hill into a farmhouse with extensive early 19th-century farmyard attached. Their stock was worth over £4,000 in 1880 including over 1,000 sheep and 100 cattle. The castle dairy, opposite the farmhouse and rebuilt in the same style, produced milk, cheese and butter for the household and a surplus for sale. In 1887 the produce was worth c. £270. In 1888 half the animals were sold including pedigree Exmoor Horn, descended from stock bred by the Quartleys of Molland, noted livestock breeders in the early 19th century, and the Dunster herd of Devon cattle bred on the estate for several generations.¹⁰²

Farming after 1900

In 1905 arable covered only 364 a. and woodland had increased to 401 a. but most of the parish was under grass (1,115 a.).¹⁰³ Few farms were larger than 100 a. in 1910 and there were 12 smallholdings under 5a. There was a rise in the production of oats at the expense of wheat and the acreage under fodder crops had increased.¹⁰⁴ Alcombe marsh was good pasture, well drained, but a cattle and arable holding at Alcombe suffered damage from 'ground game'. Avill (102 a.) was a good farm although it included some very rough hill pasture. Ellicombe farm, formerly Middle Ellicombe, had absorbed Row farm to cover 169 a. The farmyard at Row remained in use and a pair of workers' cottages had been built at Ellicombe. Alcombe Cross farm had three cottages and a substantial farmyard and the largest farm, Higher Marsh (300 a.), had

¹⁰¹ SHC, A/AGC 35/6.

¹⁰² SHC, DD/L, boxes 261, 284.

¹⁰³ Statistics supplied by then Bd of Agric. (1905)

¹⁰⁴ SHC, DD/IR T14/4; TNA, MAF 68/2196.

four. Higher Marsh was exceptionally good despite problems caused by the sea and having Dunster station close by was an advantage. Most of Dunster's farm buildings were old, some in poor repair. Ellicombe had a slaughterhouse, Higher Marsh and Avill had waterwheels and Avill also had a thatched stone barn, granary, hurdle and reed lofts and a disused timber crane, disused.¹⁰⁵ Several parcels of marsh were sold in the early 20th century. Somerset County Council bought some for smallholdings and took long leases on part of Higher Marsh farm and on a yard and buildings at Marsh, which were divided into three dwellings each let with between 20 a. and 36 a. of land.¹⁰⁶

By the 1930s many smallholdings had been lost and there were 6 farms over 100a. All crops had declined but 26 a. was under fruit, vegetables and daffodils. Food production increased during the Second World War and farm labour nearly doubled. By 1943 horticultural and orchard crops covered 62 a., fruit, potatoes and vegetables produced at Avill were sold in Minehead, and there were 261 a. of corn, mainly wheat, and 105 a. of fodder. Cattle numbers rose to 475, pigs to 150 and poultry to over 1,500 but sheep numbers fell from over 1,000 before the war to 854 and there were 19 goats. Crop production, except for wheat, remained high in 1946 but sheep numbers declined further. Bacon and ham were produced at the castle farmyard and the dairy made butter and cream for the castle and for sale.¹⁰⁷

In the 1950s the Luttrell estate was broken up but Geoffrey Luttrell farmed over 1,000 a. and most of the Dunster properties sold were small. The family moved to the Quantocks where they bred cattle but retained the tenancy of the Home farm, recently built on the Lawns in Carhampton parish replacing the castle farmstead,

¹⁰⁵ TNA, IR 58/82372—5.

¹⁰⁶ SHC, C/C39/7; 42/6/6; *ibid.* A/BNK 3/29.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, MAF 68/3809, 4066, 4177; SHC, A/AOA 1; *The Book of Dunster* (2002), 117—19.

which became an estate yard.¹⁰⁸ In 1956 arable production remained high but barley was the dominant crop covering 241 a. in 1966 but grasses were used for grazing. Few fodder or horticultural crops were produced. Livestock numbers increased to 608 cattle, 270 pigs, 3,705 sheep and 1,054 poultry. Although farm sizes had not changed since the 1930s, between 1966 and 1976 arable declined, employment halved, the sheep flock shrank to 152 animals and pigs and poultry disappeared. Dairying predominated with 655 cattle kept and four specialist dairy farms. In 1978 it was said that much good quality agricultural land had been lost to housing and by 1986 there were only 11 farms in the parish.¹⁰⁹ In 1988 a large fruit and salad farm in Marsh Street was cleared for houses.¹¹⁰ Most of the western marshes, reclaimed with so much care in the 18th and 19th centuries, were occupied by Butlin's holiday camp.

PARKS AND WARRENS

Dunster parks

The topography of the Dunster area and its wood pastures made it ideal for deer parks. The great park across the Avill valley, mainly in Carhampton parish, is a creation of the 18th century. The earlier park was the Hanger,¹¹¹ now Old Park, possibly created in the early Middle Ages on undulating ground north of the Castle between the river and the back of the High Street properties from which it was separated in the early 14th century by a ditch.¹¹² It was extended before 1366 into the New Park, probably the Lawns, in Carhampton.¹¹³ Leaping Bar Plot, south of castle, indicates there was a

¹⁰⁸ SHC, A/BQD 1; *ibid.* DD/NA 15; *ibid.* Exmoor oral archive: J. Luttrell.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, MAF 68/4547, 4997, 5497, 6024; Report for Dunster Joint Interim Local Plan (1978), 26.

¹¹⁰ SHC, D/PC/du 1/2/9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* DD/L P14/3

¹¹² *Ibid.* P8/2/53, 63; *ibid.* tithe award.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* DD/L P17/1/40.

leapgate to keep the deer in the park and Hangargate near the castle was recorded in the Middle Ages.¹¹⁴ There were gates or doors in the western boundary for which users paid fees to the Luttrells.¹¹⁵

Father and son Robert and Ralph Venator served Reginald de Mohun, presumably as huntsmen, in the early 13th century¹¹⁶ and in 1281 the bishop of Bath and Wells was allowed 20 live deer from Dunster.¹¹⁷ In 1355 John de Mohun complained that a group of local men had broken into his parks and warrens including Dunster.¹¹⁸ Pasture in the park was an important source of income and in 1391 a 40s stipend was paid to parker and in 1407 meadow in Newpark was sold.¹¹⁹ A tenant in 1412 was required to inclose land called Stabelhayes and Fishpool in hangar, wooded by 1425, and make two leapgates for the lord.¹²⁰ In 1421 the vineyard, orchard, garden called Puryhay and the Newpark all described as in Hanger Park were in hand and four gates were made in Hangar in 1425.¹²¹ Possibly the medieval park was regarded as an attractive place to walk or ride and enjoy the site of deer and other animals grazing rather than as merely a hunting arena.¹²² It was 101 a. of wood and pasture with wild beasts in 1430¹²³ but by 1553 only 72a of which 20 a. was in Dunster containing 50 fallow deer.¹²⁴ A shoulder of every deer killed was due as tithe in 1582.¹²⁵

The Luttrells set a high value on their park in the later 16th century, maintaining paling, a lodge with glazed windows, possibly that built in 1419 and

¹¹⁴ Ibid. tithe award; *ibid.* DD/L P10/3/1; P11/3.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. DD/L 1/4/11.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. DD/WO 25/6; DD/L P8/2/4.

¹¹⁷ *Cal. Close*, 1279—88, 143.

¹¹⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1354—8, 231.

¹¹⁹ SHC, DD/L P9/4, P10/1, P17/3/1.

¹²⁰ Ibid. P17/3/1.

¹²¹ Ibid. P11/3—4.

¹²² Ibid. P10/3/1; 11/3.

¹²³ Ibid. P1/29.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 1/23/1b.

¹²⁵ Ibid. P14/6.

which suffered ‘fretting’ with water in the 1550s, and reinforcing the river bank, reinforced with oak planks, stakes and trees.¹²⁶ The Luttrells gave permission to others to hunt deer in the park although John Sydenham seems to have abused his permission in 1583 removing the paling to let the cattle out before killing red deer.¹²⁷ In 1597 two men were imprisoned and fined £100 each for killing deer in the park.¹²⁸ In 1651 the park was valued at £120, half the value of the demesne in Dunster parish.¹²⁹ It is not clear if any deer remained. In 1716 it was rack rented for 10 years and was divided into large fields including the east and west Lawns.¹³⁰ It was pasture and meadow in the 19th century and a polo field was created on the Lawns in the early 20th century.¹³¹

It was replaced in 1755 by the New or Great Park, made by enclosing land in Carhampton parish¹³² but paling was maintained between the two parks.¹³³ After rutting the deer were moved from Marshwood park. It was said that the inhabitants of the area assisted by lining the route.¹³⁴ The expense of maintaining the parks was high. In 1773 guttering to drain the park cost c. £37, women were employed picking stones and carrying dung in the park, and paling on one occasion took 22,720 nails.¹³⁵ However in 1780 640 sheep and 89 bullocks grazed the Lawn and in the 1790s selling grazing in the park earned over £150 a year.¹³⁶

In the new park the deer increased and over 100 fawns were marked each year in the 1780s. There were continued problems with poaching although pheasant

¹²⁶ Ibid. P1/16/6; P14/6.

¹²⁷ TNA, E 326/7114; G. F. Sydenham, *A History of the Sydenham Family* (1928), 387—93.

¹²⁸ SHC, DD/L P14/39.

¹²⁹ Ibid. P3/12.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 1/25/10.

¹³¹ Ibid. tithe award; Som. C.C., HER.

¹³² SHC, DD/L 1/21/3; below, Carhampton.

¹³³ SHC, DD/L 1/4/12, 1/32/34/4.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 1/21/3; Maxwell Lyte, *History of Dunster II*, 346.

¹³⁵ SHC, DD/L 1/4/12, 1/21/3.

¹³⁶ Ibid. 1/4/12, 1/5/17.

shooting was the main problem in the 1830s.¹³⁷ By the mid 20th century the fallow deer herd was said to number 1,000 or more with many lost through bad fencing or destroyed to protect new plantations created in the park in the 1950s and 1960s.¹³⁸

Staunton and Alcombe parks

Leigh Park was recorded on Staunton manor in 1353¹³⁹ and the name survived in 1840 when a small park carved out of Staunton common, possibly a replacement, was fields.¹⁴⁰ The priory's park at Alcombe was let in 1448¹⁴¹ and may have been near Alcombe Common where Little Park was recorded in 1840.¹⁴²

Dunster warren

Conygar Hill rabbit warren must have been unsatisfactory, so close to Dunster's arable fields and gardens. Under a charter of Reginald de Mohun in 1250s burgesses might kill any rabbit causing nuisance provided they brought the skin to the castle.¹⁴³ Rabbits were said to have been eradicated from the hill by 1266 but it was still a warren in 1321 and rabbits were taken there and in the park in the 1420s. In 1412 the warrener was accused of taking hares.¹⁴⁴ In 1622 George Luttrell agreed to ditch and hedge the hill and provide a gate to the road for lessees.¹⁴⁵

The new warren, on flat ground between the marshes and the sea known in the 13th century as East Marsh,¹⁴⁶ was established by 1582 when tithe rabbits were

¹³⁷ Ibid. 1/5/18.

¹³⁸ TNA, CRES 35/4547, 4720.

¹³⁹ Cal.Inq. Misc. III, p. 41.

¹⁴⁰ SHC, tithe award.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. DD/L P 8/2/198.

¹⁴² Ibid. tithe award.

¹⁴³ Ibid. DD/L P8/1.

¹⁴⁴ Maxwell Lyte, Hist. Dunster I, 280; SHC, DD/L P8/4, P8/2/44, P11/2, P17/3/1, P37/10; TNA E326/10712.

¹⁴⁵ SHC, DD/L P11/4, P13/10, P15/18.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. DD/WY 26/29b.

demanded.¹⁴⁷ In the 17th century a freshwater stream to the haven divided the marshes from the warren but high tides flowed up and sometimes flooded the warren, possibly driving the rabbits into Cole Burrows, or Coalborough, where the ground was higher. In 1603 they were taken there by the burgesses of Dunster despite occasional attempts to declare it part of the warren.¹⁴⁸ The warren bank was by 1715 repaired by the twelve occupiers of Alcombe marsh who remained responsible for repairing the bank and wall, originally 8 ft high, until the early 20th century and from 1858 until 1925 held regular meetings.¹⁴⁹ The deep rhynes around the marshes presumably kept the rabbits from causing damage.¹⁵⁰

By 1746 the warren was rack-rented with a house and stables for £9 rising to £12 and 40 couple of rabbits. A former tenant was said to have reduced the number of rabbits.¹⁵¹ In 1778 the tenant held the warren rent free in return for managing the brickyard then established at the west end and in 1795 it was let with the fishery.¹⁵² In 1799 the warren was ‘as thickly inhabited as a Chinese province’.¹⁵³ The 1,672 rabbits killed in 1791—2 were probably from the warren.¹⁵⁴ In 1840 it covered 96 a. from the Minehead boundary to the mouth of the Avill.¹⁵⁵ In 1861 the lessee employed a resident warrener who was also a fishmonger.¹⁵⁶ Since 1893 much of the warren has been occupied by Minehead golf links and the rest divided. In 1910 apart from the golf clubhouse there were several cottages on the site. In 1912 a tearoom was built and before 1942 a bathing pool.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. DD/L P14/6.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. DD/WY 26/29b; DD/L 1/28/23/63.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. DD/L, 1/4/12, 1/32/45, box 288, bdle 10.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. tithe award.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. DD/L 1/4/11, 1/5/16, 1/6/19, 1/10/35B; 2/36/3.

¹⁵² Ibid. 1/7/26, L 1/32/46; below, this section, fishery, brickyard.

¹⁵³ R. Warner, *A walk through some of the Western Counties of England* (1800), 81.

¹⁵⁴ SHC, DD/L 2/48/23.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. tithe award.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, RG 9/1602; *PO Dir. Som.* (1866).

¹⁵⁷ TNA, IR 58/82372; OS Map 1:10560, XXXV. NW. (1904 edn.); SHC, DD/L, box 288.

FORESTRY

Dunster forest was recorded in 1220 but much of woodland lay in neighbouring parishes, mainly Carhampton.¹⁵⁸ There was sufficient wood on the estate in 1421 for a woodward who had a house and 24 a. free of rent for his service.¹⁵⁹ On Avill manor wood was let in the 1470s but in 1476 sales of wood raised £21 increasing to over £23 in 1477 when coppice wood was hedged.¹⁶⁰ In 1553 Rockwood in Alcombe manor covered 37 a. and contained oak aged between one and 16 years. The woodward had sold 2 ½ a. of 20-year old wood and the tenants had fuel rights. Wolsyngton (8a.) and Hawcombe (29a) contained young wood sold at 6 or 7 years old.¹⁶¹ The Luttrells let coppice at Grabbist and Culvercliffe in 1700.¹⁶² In 1757 Henry Fownes Luttrell had a new timber yard with sawpit at the castle and by the 1770s large amounts of wood were cut for the castle, partly for firewood. In 1777 heath was drawn to the Castle in large quantities and 610 faggots were made.¹⁶³

The park trees were probably kept partly for landscape value and in 1758 blubber was rubbed on them, presumably to protect them from damage from grazing animals.¹⁶⁴ In 1765 large oak, elm and beech were offered to the Admiralty.¹⁶⁵ Bark from the coppices at Conygar and from the park was sold for tanning but the cost of stripping the bark was half the sale price.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁸ Close R. (Rec. Com.), I, p. 418; SHC, DD/L P10/1; below Carhampton.

¹⁵⁹ SHC, DD/L P11/3—4.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, SC 6/968/2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* LR 2/269.

¹⁶² SHC, DD/L 1/29/24/18.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* 1/28/22/9, 1/32/34/4.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* L 1/4/12.

¹⁶⁵ TNA, ADM 106/1139/220.

¹⁶⁶ J. Thirsk, ed. The Agrarian History of England and Wales, V (1), 388; SHC, DD/L 1/4/13.

Only 277 a. woodland was recorded in 1840¹⁶⁷ but after planting in the extreme south of the parish around Croydon Hill the acreage rose to 401 ½ in 1905.¹⁶⁸ The decline in the local charcoal and tanning trade led to oak coppice being replaced by conifers from the 1870s. The Dunster Castle estate planted Broadwood Bottom in 1873 with fir, Croydon Hill with Sitka spruce and Scots pine in 1921—2, and Conygar Hill about the same time with several varieties including sweet chestnut and Corsican pine. In 1910 wood on the Dunster castle estate was valued at over £11,600. By 1950 900 a. on Croydon hill were let to the Forestry Commission and in 1952 Dunster Forest covered c. 2,000 a. in Dunster and adjoining parishes of which 700a. were wooded and another 700 were ready to be planted. Large blocks of conifers were planted between 1951 and 1955 for felling in the late 1990s but in the 1970s and 1980s there were objections to conifer plantations replacing deciduous woodland around Avill. In 1985 the 1,489 a. of Dunster estate woodland, mainly outside the parish, employed 12 men and made a profit of over £25,000.¹⁶⁹ The estate had at Marsh Street, run as Eonit Ltd, and by Loxhole bridge, just over the boundary in Carhampton parish, usually employing four men. In the 1930s the main business was making the chalets for Dunster Beach and during the Second World War electric saws and hoists were installed.¹⁷⁰ The Loxhole sawmill remains in business but the Marsh Street site was replaced by housing in the 1980s.¹⁷¹

FISHING

The Luttrells strongly asserted their right to fishing in and all fresh waters in the manor and around the coast, although in 1484 Avill manor had a new fish weir next

¹⁶⁷ SHC, tithe award.

¹⁶⁸ Statistics supplied by the then Bd. of Agric., 1905.

¹⁶⁹ TNA CRES 35/4720; *ibid.* F 43/118; SHC, DD/L, box 292/22; DD/NA 15; D/PC/du 1/2/7.

¹⁷⁰ TNA CRES 35/4720; Book of Dunster, 98, 100.

¹⁷¹ SHC, D/PC/du 1/2/9.

the sea.¹⁷² In the late 14th century freshwater fishing was kept in hand presumably to supply the castle household¹⁷³ and in the 15th and 16th centuries there were several cases of illegal fishing.¹⁷⁴ Salmon entered the Avill to spawn but by the early 19th century the young were diverted into irrigation channels. Mullet were taken in the Haven in the 1820s.¹⁷⁵

Fresh and salted fish were an important commodity in the market and for the castle. Thirteen dozen fish from Dunster were shipped to Poole in the early 15th century probably for onward shipment to Sir Hugh Luttrell in Harfleur who often requested local fish to be sent to him. A 1419 shipment included a pipe of salmon, a pipe of scallops, 220 hake, four casks of herring, eight saltfish and 13 ½ dozen ling and mullet.¹⁷⁶ Fishermen from Marsh regularly supplied the castle where live fish were kept, presumably in the fishpool in Hanger park, some for gifts.¹⁷⁷

Fishweirs had been established by the 12th century when William de Mohun gave a Dunster fishery to the priory and by 1266 there were four on Dunster manor. Work on weirs was part of the labour service owed by tenants.¹⁷⁸ Fishermen were recorded in the 13th and 14th centuries¹⁷⁹ and fishweirs or fishing stakes at sea and nethangs, stakes at high water, were let in the late 15th century for 7s 6d. If they were let at the later rate of 3d each there may have been 30 weirs, although in the 14th century they were worth more.¹⁸⁰ In 1469 a man was accused of selling a sturgeon caught in his weir instead of taking it to the lord according to ancient custom.¹⁸¹ One tenant took three named fishing stakes in 1521 and another a weir c. 1570 for 11 good

¹⁷² TNA, SC 6/968/4.

¹⁷³ SHC, DD/L P9/2/2.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. P8/7

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 1/10/32; Savage, *Hist. Hund. Carhampton*, 380.

¹⁷⁶ SHC, DD/L P1/16/6, 20.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. P11/1, 3; P37/7

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. P8/4; *VCH Som.* II, 399.

¹⁷⁹ SHC, DD/L P8/2/1, 18, 79.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. P11/1, 3, P13/2/1, P13/3/1; *VCH Som.* II, 399.

¹⁸¹ SHC, DD/L P8/7.

dishes of fish and the chief fish, presumably sturgeon.¹⁸² By 1795 the right of fishery on Dunster and Minehead strands was let with the warren¹⁸³ and in the mid 19th century the warrener was a fishmonger and laver dealer and in 1871 employed a fisherman and woman to mend nets who both resided at Warren House.¹⁸⁴ The house was divided into cottages by 1910 but still carried fishing rights.¹⁸⁵

Surviving weirs usually comprise a V-shaped bank composed of large boulders in the intertidal mud. Some have posts to support netting or wattles. The weir arms are over 100 foot long and at the apex a sluice allows water out but traps fish on the outgoing tide. At least ten survive alongside Dunster beach.¹⁸⁶ The stakes or nethangs took the form of a crescent or triangle of wooden stakes driven into the foreshore about 4 or 5 ft. apart and remained in use in the early 20th century. The rows of stakes or 'hangs' were up to 500 ft long and nets hung on them caught fish as the tide receded. In the mid 19th century sprats were the main fish taken in stake nets in the autumn. The catch was said to be worth £10,000 a season and a ton a day went to Taunton market where poor families preserved them for later use. Herring were also plentiful in stake nets in the autumn and winter at the same period. Green eels were taken during the spring tides.¹⁸⁷

MILLS

The little river Avill drove a surprising number of corn and fulling mills in the Middle Ages. Dunster was a market for corn and it is likely that the mills also served a wider area than the parish. In 1604 there was a dispute over diverting the millstream from

¹⁸² Ibid. P8/2/234; P14/8.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 1/32/46.

¹⁸⁴ Savage, *Hist. Hund. Carhampton*, 379; *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); TNA, RG 10/2350.

¹⁸⁵ TNA, IR 58/82372.

¹⁸⁶ Som. CC, HER.

¹⁸⁷ *VCH Som*, II, 399, 401

the Whirlpool or Hurlypool near Avill, which supplied three grist mills and at least one tucking mill with two stocks.¹⁸⁸ By the early 18th century the owners or occupiers of possibly eleven mills had to maintain the headweir, recorded in 1519, and many people were responsible for cleaning the leat. Regular rivalry over water led to litigation.¹⁸⁹ In the 1780s the river ran six grist mills, an oil mill and two fulling mills.¹⁹⁰ Today the surviving watermill, in the care of the National Trust, produces traditional stone ground flour.

Corn Mills

Avill. In 1086 the Avill manor mill at paid 20d.¹⁹¹ The pond and dam were recorded in 1323. In 1333 the office of miller was granted to Walter le Percher for life for 3s a year and the toll of corn and malt. The new mill recorded in 1340 may have been the rebuilt corn mill or a fulling mill.¹⁹² In 1440 Avill mill was farmed out for 20s and repairs rising to 26s 8d by 1476 but the manor spent £8 on repairs.¹⁹³ A Dunster carpenter cut oak and crab apple to make a cogwheel for the mill in the mid 16th century.¹⁹⁴ The miller was expelled from the parish in 1667, reason unknown.¹⁹⁵ Suit of mill by manor tenants was enforced in the 16th century¹⁹⁶ and in the 1740s when the tenants had to clean the leat at Whitsuntide.¹⁹⁷ In the late 18th and early 19th century the miller tried to raise the headweir to hold back water but the Luttrells claimed that they commanded the water and that the Bonnington stream delivered

¹⁸⁸ SHC, DD/L P15/4.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 1/29/27/18.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* P19/6; *ibid.* A/AQP 8/17.

¹⁹¹ VCH Somerset, I, 503.

¹⁹² TNA, E 326/9678, 9689—90.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* E 326/9718; *ibid.* SC 6/968/2

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* REQ 2/127/12.

¹⁹⁵ SHC, D/P/du 13/2/1.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, REQ 2/127/12; SC 2/198/1.

¹⁹⁷ Ravenhill and Rowe, Maps and Surveys, 7—8.

ample water for Avill mills. The mill, adjoining Avill farm, was kept by the Escott family in early 19th century but apparently went out of use c. 1841.¹⁹⁸

Dunster mills. In 1086 William de Mohun's manor included two mills, which paid 10s.¹⁹⁹ In 1279 they were worth £2 13s 4d²⁰⁰ but in 1309 they were let for £16.²⁰¹ Driven by a millstream called Tymber in the late 13th and early 14th century, they probably stood on the east side of West Street and appear to have been separated only by a cottage in 1348. In 1356 the new mill was recorded further east, possibly on the present site.²⁰² From the 1370s the two sets of corn mills, known as the Over and Lower or Nether mills, were let for £10 a year.²⁰³ In 1387 a bridge was rebuilt to serve three mills and the millweir was repaired in 1396.²⁰⁴ In 1427 a second mill, called New mill was added to the Nether mill by William Person, the tenant, but later both were later rebuilt under one roof. William built three more mills on the same site c. 1440, possibly extra sets of stones under one roof.²⁰⁵

The manor grist mills continued to be farmed out²⁰⁶ and in 1620 the rent was £80, implying that they were very profitable, and miller Nicholas Hill was to grind malt for the Luttrell household but was allowed a wainload of hay, pasture for two loading horses and herbage of land near the mills.²⁰⁷ His successor Ralph Hill (d.

¹⁹⁸ SHC, DD/L 1/29/27/18; Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir. (1830); SHC, tithe award; TNA, HO 107/936.

¹⁹⁹ VCH Somerset, I, 501.

²⁰⁰ SHC, DD/L P1/1.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* P8/2/34.

²⁰² *Ibid.* D/P/du 23/4; DD/L P8/2/26, 48, 81; P15/16.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* DD/L P9/2/1, P10/2, P11/1, 4.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* P9/3—4.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* P10/4/3, P18/3—4, P20/38/1; Maxwell Lyte, Hist Dunster, I, 327.

²⁰⁶ SHC, DD/L P14/6; 1/1/1.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* P15/16.

1667) seems to have invested his profits in six silver spoons.²⁰⁸ The Higher mills were last recorded in 1650²⁰⁹ and their site is unknown.

By the late 17th century there was a malt mill at the Lower mills, also used for shelling oats and clover, but it was converted into a fulling mill before 1721. By then the rent of the corn mills was falling and they were let usually to innkeepers. In 1719 the rent was £48 including the malt mill, barn, stables, 11 a. of arable and the herbage of Henstey wood.²¹⁰ The mills were driven by separate wheels.²¹¹ They were let for £22 c. 1740 and despite expensive repairs they were in a poor state by the 1770s they were in disrepair and received low offers of rent. One report stated that Dunster was ‘a little country place it is nothing of a flour mill country’ and that the previous tenant sank a lot of money in the mill, which was over-rented. The Luttrell agent refused to accept that £25 was a fair rent and a new house and stable were provided. The mills were let to William Mills of Bristol for £50 a year, reduced for the expense of grinding dogs’ meat for the Luttrells. Henry Fownes Luttrell was concerned with their appearance, regarding the mill complex as decorative because it was viewed from the park against the tor. An elaborate gateway and bridge were provided to link the park, mill and south drive to the castle. The mills were virtually rebuilt in 1779—80 under one roof but with two overshot wheels and two sets of new French millstones. Milling started in spring 1780 but the rent remained unpaid in 1781. After further work in 1782 John Bryant took over the mill and made further improvements before moving to Curdon mills, Stogumber c. 1800.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Ibid. DD/SP 1667/30.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. DD/L P3/12

²¹⁰ Ibid. 1/29/27/18, 21.

²¹¹ Ibid. 1/4/11; 1/29/27/18.

²¹² Ibid. 1/4/12—13, 1/7/26, 1/10/33, 1/29/27/18; C. Stuart ‘Dunster Castle Mill’, National Trust Studies, 1981, 152—4.

After an attempt to let the mills to a Pembrokeshire corn factor, the Harvey family rented them from 1801 to 1875. In 1816 the Luttrells spent over £150 on maintenance and over £47 on flour and grinding wheat and barley.²¹³ Robert Harvey in the 1830s was the sole miller in Dunster, a corn merchant, a maltster, a Lloyd's agent and a shipowner.²¹⁴ However, a valuation in 1838 declared that his trade had been injured by several sets of new flour mills in neighbouring parishes.²¹⁵ At some date the machinery was adapted to allow one wheel to drive two sets of stones increasing the mill's output to c. 1 ½ tons a day although only one pair was used for wheat flour. By the early 20th century the mill stood idle, despite the £40 rent, reduced from £60 in 1910, because the lessee's other mill at Minehead was more convenient when most grain was imported. The mill was popular with artists but worked only once a week in the 1930s. In 1940 it was repaired and a bakery added to help the war effort, after the war it ground animal fodder but in it closed. The National Trust acquired it and it was restored by tenants in 1979 as a working mill, producing stone-ground flour, its machinery driven by twin water wheels. The stables and waggon house were converted into a café.²¹⁶

Ingram mills. Two new grist mills with two water wheels replaced the former Cleeve abbey tucking mill before 1600.²¹⁷ George Luttrell, no doubt concerned at the effect on his own corn mills diverted his millstream to prevent the new mills working and litigation ensued. The mills with a house in West Street were let in 1608 by Edward Cottell of London, owner of former Cleeve lands, to a miller who was required to put

²¹³ SHC, DD/L 1/4/13, 1/29/27/26; Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir. (1830); SHC, tithe award.

²¹⁴ Robson's Com. Dir. London and Western Cos (1839).

²¹⁵ SHC, DD/L 1/29/27/18.

²¹⁶ TNA, IR 58/82375; Maxwell Lyte, Hist Dunster, I, 328; Stuart 'Dunster Castle Mill', 155—6.

²¹⁷ Below, this section (fulling mills).

a pair of stones in the lesser mill and make it fit to grind corn.²¹⁸ Known as Cottles mills in 1650 and 1700, they stood at the lower end of West Street opposite the almshouses.²¹⁹ Robert Hosegood converted the mill house into a tucking mill before 1705 when he sold the property to Dunster clothier John Smith. In 1713 John's widow Mary was accused of diverting water from the millstream reducing the flow to the Luttrell mills. Mary's son John Smith, also a clothier sold the mills to Nathaniel Ingram, clothier, in 1739. By 1763, when Henry Fownes Luttrell bought them from his family, the tucking mill was a bunting mill for sifting bran from flour.²²⁰ Known as late Ingram Mills they were rented out for £15 with a fuller's rack on Grabbist. As trade declined the rent fell to £8 by 1778 but the tenant was still unable to pay. In 1783 alterations to the mills and house, including raising the roof, cost £130 but they were not recorded after 1832 although standing in 1840.²²¹

Other corn mills. The Staunton mill pool recorded in 1341 appears to have been at Lower Staunton on the Long Combe stream running through Alcombe village.²²² A watermill was recorded on Staunton Fry manor from 1353,²²³ and two in the early 18th century, although by 1735 one was ancient and decayed.²²⁴ They were recorded as tenement names but there were no mills in 1760.²²⁵ The farmer at Lower Ellicombe had a mill but it was disused by 1675 when the corn chamber was a lumber room.²²⁶

²¹⁸ SHC, DD/L P15/4; 1/23/1a; Maxwell Lyte, Hist Dunster, I, 300.

²¹⁹ SHC, DD/L P3/12; DD/L 1/27/19/2; 1/29/27/1.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 1/29/27/1—8, 19—20; 1/32/37.

²²¹ *Ibid.* 1/4/12; 1/7/26, 1/24/6, 1/29/27/18; *ibid.* Q/REI 8/3; *ibid.* tithe award. Later replaced by houses, one called Grist Mill.

²²² SHC, DD/L P16/2.

²²³ Cal. Inq. Misc. III, p. 41; TNA CP 25/2/35/240/32 Hen. VIII Hil.; CP 25/2/207/40 & 41 Eliz I Mich.

²²⁴ TNA, CP 25/2/1056/7 Geo. I Mich.; SHC, DD/L 2/16/93.

²²⁵ SHC, DD/L 1/7/25; 2/16/91, 93, 97.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* DD/SP 1697/10.

Fulling or tucking mills

The first recorded fulling mill belonged to Dunster manor in 1279 when it was worth 13s 4d, half the value of a corn mill.²²⁷ It was worth the same in 1330 although the value of the corn mills had increased over fivefold.²²⁸ It is not clear where it was sited but the Tucker and Cross families held a fulling mill at Frackford under Grabbist hill in the 15th century at the same rent. In 1493 John Cogan agreed to build a new stone and tile house at the mill and by 1529 it was let with the Middle rack.²²⁹ By 1495 another fulling mill had been built at Frackford.²³⁰

At least three other fulling mills were built before 1410 probably along the millstream in West Street, the southern end of which may have been the early 15th-century Tucker Street.²³¹ One 18 ft. square was built next to the Higher corn mills c. 1404 but the 4s rent fell to 2s in 1410 when the Cleeve abbey tucking mill had two the mill by Higher mills needed rebuilding in 1422.²³² Trade had recovered by the middle of the century and Robert Tucker built a new mill east of the castle c. 1450, possibly the More fulling mill under the tor let in 1516.²³³ A tucker built a new fulling mill at Avill manor before 1476²³⁴ and by 1609 there were two.²³⁵ In 1491 an order was made banning the mills from working on Sundays and two men were fined for disobeying. At least two mills were let with racks on Grabbist.²³⁶

By the late 1550s a tucking mill was decayed with the loss of 26s 8d rent,²³⁷ probably that rebuilt with two stocks before 1588²³⁸ and let to fullers between 1617

²²⁷ Ibid. DD/L P1/1.

²²⁸ Ibid. P1/2.

²²⁹ Ibid. P10/4/3, P11/1, P18/1, 3—4, P19/2, P19/8/4.

²³⁰ Ibid. P19/4.

²³¹ Maxwell Lyte, Hist Dunster, I, 298.

²³² SHC, DD/L P9/2/1; P10/1, P10/4/3; P11/1; P12/1; P15/4; Maxwell Lyte, Hist Dunster, I, 297.

²³³ SHC, DD/L P 9/4, P10/5, P15/5/1, P18/4, P19/6.

²³⁴ Ibid. P5/55.

²³⁵ TNA, CP 25/2/325/6 Jas. I Hil.

²³⁶ SHC, DD/L P13/1, P19/8/4, 7.

²³⁷ Ibid. P14/6; 1/1/1.

and 1633 for £6 13s 4d and water out of the mill leat when it could be spared.²³⁹ They lay near the Luttrell Lower grist mills²⁴⁰ and may be where two fullers milled cloth for the Luttrells between 1737 and 1742.²⁴¹ However, a decayed fulling mill was recorded in 1625.²⁴² John Hossum, clothier leased a fulling mill from Francis Luttrell in 1682. It remained in the family until c. 1760 and was rebuilt before the 1720s but in 1746 was said to be of no value because trade was bad.²⁴³ The mill was last recorded in 1780.²⁴⁴ The Hossum family also owned a fulling mill, which appears to have been taken down before 1733 when the site was sold.²⁴⁵

Several fulling mills worked from the late 17th to mid 18th century before gradually falling out of use. John Burnoll, clothier, leased Frackford house with the mill site in 1682 and rebuilt the business. By the early 18th century the house had two workshops, a second house divided into three dwellings, and two fulling mill and was held with Rack Close, although the close was dropped from a new lease in 1735.²⁴⁶ The mills went out of use, probably before 1795, and were ruins by 1830.²⁴⁷ Between the 1680s and 1720s Joan Terrell²⁴⁸ owned a fulling mill near the Luttrell malt mill. Cloth had to be taken out of the mill when the malt mill was working because of water shortage and customers were lost. The conversion of the malt mill to another fulling mill and the widening of the mill leat before 1721 had not improved matters and it may have gone out of use.²⁴⁹ The Ingram family had a fulling mill with their grist mill

²³⁸ Ibid. P14/29.

²³⁹ Ibid. P15/10, 19, 29

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 1/26/15/29; 1/33/49.

²⁴¹ Ibid. 1/4/11.

²⁴² Ibid. P32/101/3.

²⁴³ Ibid. 1/4/11, 1/6/19, 1/7/23, 26; 1/26/14—17, 1/29/27/24, 2/33/6.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. 1/10/35C; 1/33/47, 49; Maxwell Lyte, *Hist Dunster*, I, 301.

²⁴⁵ SHC, DD/L 1/6/29; 1/24/5.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. 1/26/14/5, 1/26/15/18, 1/26/16/6, 1/33/49.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 1/35/7/39; Savage, *Hist. Hundred Carhampton*, 383

²⁴⁸ TNA, CP 25(2)/795/4 Jas. II East.

²⁴⁹ SHC, DD/L 1/29/27/18.

until 1778 or later.²⁵⁰ A later 18th-century map shows mills and other buildings between West Street and Dunster corn mills, which had gone probably by 1822 and certainly by 1840.²⁵¹

The number of mills in the area supported millwrights like the early 18th-century Wareman family but in 1848 James Court, millwright, was bankrupt.²⁵²

INDUSTRY

Cloth

Leland stated in the 1540s that the town of Dunster made cloth and broadcloths called ‘dunsters’ were recorded in the early 17th century but the trade had its ups and downs and its size is unknown.²⁵³ Local sheep, and later Welsh wool, sustained an industry that must have employed many people from carders and spinners to weavers and finishers and even retailers and garment makers. Wool and yarn weighed in the market profited the lord who by the 1530s also took profits from the sale of narrow cloths.²⁵⁴ From the 15th century the Luttrells let racks on the Castle Tor and Grabbist hill, 14 in 1487, on which fulled cloth was dried and stretched to the legal measure of 5ft by 46 ft.²⁵⁵

In 1266 three burgesses, two women, were weavers and dyers, tuckers and fullers were recorded throughout the Middle Ages.²⁵⁶ The two shops in Gallox street in 1399 may have been for weaving²⁵⁷ and orders were made against including flock in 1467 or impurities found in local cloth in 1495.²⁵⁸ In 1492 dyers were ordered not

²⁵⁰ Ibid. 1/10/35C.

²⁵¹ Ibid. 1/9/29, 1/10/35A (map); box 290, survey bk 1822; *ibid.* tithe award.

²⁵² Ibid. DD/L 1/29/27/18; *ibid.* Q/AP 88/4; *London Gaz.* 28 Apr. 1848.

²⁵³ Maxwell-Lyte, *History of Dunster* I, 297, 300.

²⁵⁴ SHC, DD/L P2/9/4.

²⁵⁵ Maxwell-Lyte, *History of Dunster* I, 299, 300; SHC DD/L P1/1/1; P13/2/1.

²⁵⁶ SHC, DD/L P8/2/1, 81, P8/4, P9/5, P11/2, P13/2/1; DD/S/WH 66; TNA, REQ 2/127/12.

²⁵⁷ SHC, DD/L P8/2/66.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. DD/L P1/27/1, P8/4, P12/4, P 13/1; *Cal. Pat.* 1558—60, 21.

to dispose of 'woadwater' before 8 pm.²⁵⁹ Cloth was traded locally, some for the Castle household, which also bought imported Brabant cloth in 1430,²⁶⁰ but most would have been exported probably by local merchants through Minehead or Bridgwater. Tuckers, who finished cloth, were often wealthy men who employed several workers. Robert Keper (d. 1516) left his children 10 pairs of shears, woad, and silver.²⁶¹ Shears were valuable and in 1533 a Dunster tucker left his best pair to Dunster church and another to Old Cleeve church.²⁶² Tucker John Cocks of New Street was attacked in his house in 1520 by several people, including a spicer who destroyed his shearboard and cloth. Another tucker working nearby tried to keep the peace. Cockes or a namesake built the tucking mill at Avill.²⁶³ He had several properties in Dunster, which passed to his son Edmund.²⁶⁴ Even the vicar benefited by renting out fulling tools in 1513²⁶⁵ and in 1547 a Dunster priest, Thomas Schorwin, was a vestment maker and supplied a set of black vestments to the vicar of Morebath.²⁶⁶ Alcombe manor included a burgage with a yarn barton in 1553.²⁶⁷

Clothiers were not recorded until the 1550s²⁶⁸ but 25 were noted during the next hundred years including members of the Worth and Lampard families.²⁶⁹ In 1571 Richard Worth left £6 13s 4d for the use of beginners in cloth-making in the borough.²⁷⁰ Most traded in wool put out for spinning and weaving but some clothiers were finishers like Robert Gough (d. c. 1573) who distributed money and shears to his

²⁵⁹ SHC, DD/L P11/2, P13/1.

²⁶⁰ TNA, C 1/295/66; SHC, DD/L P1/17/2, P12/2.

²⁶¹ F. W. Weaver (ed.), Somersetshire Wills, 1501—1530 (Som. Rec. Soc. 19), 180—1.

²⁶² Weaver, Wells Wills, 77.

²⁶³ SHC, DD/WO 34/3/2; above, mills.

²⁶⁴ SHC, DD/L P14/1.

²⁶⁵ H. C. Maxwell-Lyte (ed.), Register of Bishop King (Som. Rec. Soc. 54), p. 160.

²⁶⁶ Book of Dunster, 25.

²⁶⁷ TNA, LR 2/269

²⁶⁸ Cal. Pat. 1554—5, 358.

²⁶⁹ E. A. Lewis, Welsh Port Books 1550—1603 (1927), 131—8, 158, 221—3; SHC, DD/L P14/29, 34; P15/9, 31; D/P/du 2/9/2; TNA, PROB 11/55, 152—3, 155, 228, 247.

²⁷⁰ F. A. Crisp, Abstracts of Somersetshire Wills, II, 81.

workmen. His property included a dyehouse at the Townsend, which he left to his daughters.²⁷¹ George Howe, clothier, leased a double fulling mill he had built and three racks in 1588.²⁷² In the 1580s c. 4 annual shipments of Welsh wool came from Milford for Dunster clothiers, two received 1,150 stone of wool in 1586—7.²⁷³ In 1602 Andrew Worth imported 250 stone of wool. He had a dyehouse near Gallox Street in 1617.²⁷⁴

Two weavers were recorded in the 1590s and at least nine in the early 17th century. One widow left her husband's loom to his apprentice and sons followed their father's trade,²⁷⁵ but by the late 17th century many weavers had a second trade. A weaver died without looms in 1680²⁷⁶ and two worsted combers had left the town before 1667.²⁷⁷ In 1631 a yeoman was accused of working as a fuller never having been apprenticed²⁷⁸ and the trade declined with racks and fulling mills falling out of use.²⁷⁹ Late 17th-century fullers seem to have been poorer. One died in 1669 with a workshop containing five pairs of shear and had a warping bar and two spinning wheels. Another in 1671 had a rack, furnace, press and shears.²⁸⁰ A family of feltmakers in West Street had a warehouse near the market in the mid 17th century.²⁸¹

The late 17th century revival in trade appears to have been in sergemaking. Weavers worked in the Gallox and west street area and mills and racks came back into

²⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/55.

²⁷² SHC, DD/L P14/29.

²⁷³ Lewis, *Welsh Port Books*, 131—8, 158.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 221; SHC, DD/L P15/9.

²⁷⁵ SHC, DD/L P14/35, 91, P15/23/1, P15/37, 2/31/2; D/P/du 2/9/2; DD/S/WH 13; DD/SP 1635/68, 1645/44; D/D/Ct A22; *ibid.* Q/SR 41/38; TNA, PROB 11/152, 155; A. J. Webb, *Somerset Wills II* (Som. Rec. Soc. 94), 366.

²⁷⁶ SHC, DD/SP 1666/2, 62; 1680/30; Q/SR/89/79.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* DD/L 1/29/25/1.

²⁷⁸ E. H. Bates-Harbin (ed.), *Quarter Sessions Records, 1625—39* (Som. Rec. Soc. 24), 164.

²⁷⁹ SHC, DD/L P3/12, P15/52; 1/33/48/3.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.* DD/SP 1669/2, 1671/13.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* DD/L P15/47, 52—3.

use.²⁸² A widow was described as a spinster in 1713 but spinning wheels do not occur in inventories, possibly they were lent out by clothiers.²⁸³ In 1719 there were 17 racks rented by 15 people but by 1746 there were only five, by 1757 three and by 1764 only one.²⁸⁴ The clothiers of this period were independent clothworkers rather than capitalists like the two involved in the Monmouth rebellion or the two who stole gamecocks in 1710.²⁸⁵ Stephen Fox died in 1688 with a rack and shears but worth less than £45.²⁸⁶ Six clothiers aged 24 to 50 who gave evidence in a mill dispute in 1721 were clearly fullers.²⁸⁷ The decline of the Wilkins family of clothiers probably mirrors others. The will of Francis Wilkins (d. 1653) was proved in the Canterbury prerogative court, one son was a mercer and a grandson a clothier but the latter had to mortgage his property and survived by marrying a wealthy yeoman's daughter. By the later 18th century their sons had left the business and the property was in ruins.²⁸⁸ The Hossums had by the end of the 18th century turned to joinery, plumbing and innkeeping and clothier Nathaniel Ingram's son had turned to carpentry by 1763 after the family had been forced to mortgage their property and convert their tucking mill.²⁸⁹

By the 1770s it was said that only kerseys were made but wool was no longer imported and the cloth trade was almost finished by the 1780s.²⁹⁰ A glowing picture of trade in yarn and shipments to Bristol in a 1796 advertisement was probably a desperate attempt by the Luttrells to let two fulling mill, two dwellings, dyehouses

²⁸² Ibid. Q/REI 22/3; *ibid.* DD/L 1/26/14/5, 1/26/16/11, 1/27/19/7, 12—14, 32; 1/29/25b/18—20; above, mills.

²⁸³ SHC, DD/SP 1713/42.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.* DD/L 1/7/23, 26, 1/10/35B.

²⁸⁵ W. M. Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels, 1685* (Som. Rec. Soc. 79), 49, 68, 89, 191; SHC, Q/SR 255/9.

²⁸⁶ SHC, DD/SP 1688/36.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* DD/L 1/29/27/18.

²⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/200, 228, 247, 363; SHC, DD/L 1/7/23, 1/23/3, 1/27/19/16, 1/28/23/2.

²⁸⁹ SHC, DD/L 1/5/18, 1/29/27/1, 1/30/29, 2/32/5; above, mills.

²⁹⁰ *A New Display of the Beauties of England* (1776 edn.), II, 323; SHC, A/AQP 8/13; *ibid.* DD/L 1/10/35C.

and workshops.²⁹¹ Mary Blake of Frackford House, clothier, dealer and chapwoman, was declared bankrupt in 1801 and another merchant, dealer and chapman in 1808.²⁹²

A stockingmaker in 1830 may have been Dunster's last textile worker but a woolstapler was based there in 1841.²⁹³

Tailors had shops in the market place until at least the 1720s but the Luttrells patronised London tailors and in the early 19th century even ordered items to be sent to Dunster by coach.²⁹⁴

Leather

The meat market provided large quantities of skins for tanning. Medieval butchers, including those from outside Dunster, were presented for not bringing skins to market with their meat and it was illegal to buy skins before they reached the market.²⁹⁵ A currier was recorded in the 13th century and a skinner in 1348.²⁹⁶ In 1405—8 calfskins from the castle were tanned for Sir Hugh Luttrell.²⁹⁷ In 1414 John Dyke was accused of washing hides in the millstream and regular orders against polluting water with skins and the appointment of leather sealers in 1619 implies a considerable tanning industry.²⁹⁸ It is not clear where the recorded tanning vats and bark stores were but in 1681 three people were accused of washing sheepskins in the river near Marsh.²⁹⁹ A tanner went bankrupt in 1816, and the owner of Alcombe tanyard, built with a bark

²⁹¹ SHC, DD/L 1/32/46.

²⁹² Ibid. Q/REL 8/3I; *ibid.* DD/L 1/29/25b/26; London Gaz. 14 Apr. 1801, p. 414, 13 Jun. 1809, p. 821.

²⁹³ Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir. (1830)

²⁹⁴ Cornwall RO X473/198 [A2A]; SHC, DD/SP 1695/14; DD/L P15/46, 1/6/19.

²⁹⁵ SHC, DD/L P12/1.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* P8/2/12, 77.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* P37/7.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.* P11/2, P12/4, P13/3/1, P14/22, P15/7/1, P15/13, 1/23/1b.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 1/32/36; DD/SP 1683/80.

mill shortly before 1817, in 1825.³⁰⁰ The yard continued in use west of the village until 1901 or later.³⁰¹

Glovers were recorded in the 13th century³⁰² and in the early 17th century.³⁰³ Cordwainers and shoemakers had two standings in the market in 1650.³⁰⁴ A shoemaker died in 1684 with over 6 dozen shoes for men and women besides 51 hides, four calfskins, powdered wax, thread and gum and was owed over £35.³⁰⁵ The house of the Elstone or Hopper family of cordwainers in 1717 was probably typical of a successful townsman's house at the period. The rooms went by their old names but the hall was furnished as a dining room, with a chimney place full of plates, and the buttery as a kitchen. Other refinements included a dozen pictures, looking glass, coffee and syllabub cups, mint glasses, flower boxes and black cane chairs. Besides the workshop there was a back house equipped for one room living possibly for an employee.³⁰⁶ The prosperity of shoemakers possibly mirrored that of the cloth trade. The Morkham family made and maintained shoes and clothing for the Luttrell's servants in the 18th and early 19th centuries.³⁰⁷ By 1851 Alcombe had eight boot and shoemakers and Dunster 14 with two apprentices.³⁰⁸ During the 1850s two migrated with their families to South Wales to work as shoemakers there.³⁰⁹

Saddlers were recorded in 1417 and 1487.³¹⁰ In 1755 there was a saddlery in the shambles³¹¹ and there were two by 1830.³¹² In 1851 one had three apprentices but

³⁰⁰ Ibid. DD/WO 62/7/2; DD/L 1/23/3, 2/1/1; London Gaz. 11 May 1816, p 888, 25 June 1825, p. 1118.

³⁰¹ SHC, tithe award; TNA, RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262.

³⁰² SHC, DD/S/WH 66; DD/L P8/2/7; DD/S/SN 1.

³⁰³ Ibid. D/D/Ca 235; DD/SP 1635/40; D/P du 2/9/2; E. H. Bates-Harbin (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, 1646—60 (Som. Rec. Soc. 28), 36.

³⁰⁴ SHC, DD/L P3/12.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. DD/SP 1684/50.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. DD/L 1/25/10.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. 1/4/13, 2/47/16.

³⁰⁸ TNA, HO 107/1920.

³⁰⁹ TNA, RG 9/4035; RG 11/5328.

³¹⁰ SHC, DD/L P8/2/147; DD/HCK 9/1/16.

went bankrupt before by 1858 and moved to Neath in South Wales and the other lived with his mother, a baker in West Street in 1851 before migrating to Geelong, Australia, for five years and later moving to Newport, South Wales.³¹³ Hunting and polo provided work for a Dunster saddlery until the mid 20th century when Edgar Dyer maintained saddles and harness for 100 horses, although his father had supplied the needs of 500.³¹⁴

Mining and Quarrying

In 1707 a dyer and a merchant from Watchet obtained a licence to search for minerals in Alcombe. Five men worked mines there between November 1713 and June 1714 at a cost of over £24 before the workings were abandoned.³¹⁵ In 1748 a Tavistock miner bought the right to mine for 21 years under a tenement in Dunster where there was supposed to be copper ore³¹⁶ but does not seem to have found any. However, in 1756 an agent from the Quantock copper mines and a Taunton tobacconist took a 31-year lease of copper mining rights on Staunton manor in return for a ninth share of the metal. A mine was worked in 1760 but was not recorded again until 1808 when a Cornish mine captain arrived. Copper samples from Staunton were sent to Swansea early in 1809 but in September work stopped the venture having cost £500.³¹⁷ The revival of mining in the Brendon Hills and Exmoor probably accounts for the presence of a civil engineer and mining agent in 1851 and an iron miner and ore haulier in 1861.³¹⁸

³¹¹ Ibid. DD/L 1/26/17/4.

³¹² Ibid, 1/24/8.

³¹³ TNA, HO 107/1920; RG 9/1602, 4085; RG 11/5262; London Gaz. 17 Dec 1858, p. 5467.

³¹⁴ SHC, DD/X/PTD 1.

³¹⁵ Ibid. DD/L 1/4/11; H. Binding, History of Alcombe (1973), 3.

³¹⁶ SHC, DD/L 1/25/10.

³¹⁷ Ibid. 2/17/97—8.

³¹⁸ TNA, HO 107/1920; RG 9/1602.

Lime was quarried at Alcombe and Staunton, for agricultural and building use by 1760 and the quarries were extended in the later 19th century to supply the building trade as Alcombe and Minehead grew.³¹⁹ The 19th-century Coniger Hill quarry was re-opened in the early 20th century and worked using with heavy machinery until the 1960s.³²⁰

Brickyard

The brickmakers recorded in 1725 and 1757³²¹ possibly worked at the northern end of the warren close to the boundary with Minehead, where a new kiln was built with shelves for pantiles and a thatched lincay in 1757. It was fired at first by furze but after 1758 by Welsh coal brought from Minehead quay, 560 bu. in 1759 when running the yard cost Henry Fownes Luttrell £238. Many of the products were used on the Luttrell's estates.³²² Between 1758 and 1773 over 260,000 bricks and c. 280,000 hollow and plain tiles were sold but 117,000 bricks, 45 ½ loads of batts and over 130,000 tiles were used on the estate. By 1777 over half the production was taken by the estate but despite that and the difficulties getting brickmakers to run the yard it was profitable and produced crest tiles, squares, kiln bars and squares for malting and gutter bricks.³²³ The tenant of the warren was forgiven his rent in 1778—9 for looking after the brickworks, presumably because it was out of use.³²⁴ Production had revived by 1785 when materials were supplied to building work in Minehead. Over the next ten years c. 150,000 bricks and 190,000 tiles were produced, two thirds of the bricks and over half the tiles for sale, although there seems to have been some difficulty in

³¹⁹ SHC, DD/L 2/17/97; tithe award; OS Map 1:10560, XXXV. SW. (1890 edn.); TNA, RG 13/2262.

³²⁰ SHC, tithe award; OS Map 1:10560, XXXV. SW. (1902 edn.); *Book of Dunster*, 97—8.

³²¹ SHC, DD/L 1/5/16.

³²² *Ibid.* 1/4/12—13.

³²³ *Ibid.* 1/31/30/1—9, 23, 32.

³²⁴ *Ibid.* 1/7/26, 1/10/33.

getting payment for tiles.³²⁵ Brick tax paid in the late 1790s indicates production of c. 38,000 bricks a year.³²⁶

In 1813 William Turner, a Bridgwater brickmaker, agreed to work the yard for £1 10s a week and 16s for each moulder or tileman he employed.³²⁷ Before 1840 it was taken over by the Cornish family. Despite producing over 37,000 bricks, 12,000 pantiles, and other goods the yard made a slight loss. Minehead took two thirds of the bricks and more than three quarters of the tiles. The work was seasonal with clay digging in spring and brick and tile production running from August to December which may be why only one brickmaker was recorded in 1851.³²⁸ In 1861 Samuel Cornish employed three workers at the Warren and in 1881 three members of the family were at work there.³²⁹ A wood distilling works was built north of the brickyard before 1872 when it was let to two Minehead chemical manufacturers. It had gone out of use by 1888 and the brickyard appears to have ceased working by 1910³³⁰ probably because of competition from the better sited Victoria brick and tile works at Alcombe, which opened in 1897 on a 4-a. site. A row of cottages was built and a claypit opened. In 1901 the 13 employees resident at Alcombe included an engine driver, a stoker and brick and tilemakers. The yard supplied Minehead but brick and tile was also shipped to Ireland and around the English coast. In 1910 the yard, run by John Marley, covered 14 a. between the Minehead and Porlock roads and was valued at over £1,200 including offices, brick kiln with chimney, three brick drying sheds, clay house, tile house, tile store, engine house and chimney, stabling and four-bay waggon shed. The average royalty in 1910, 1s 6d on every 1,000 bricks made beyond the first million,

³²⁵ Ibid. 1/31/30/10—13.

³²⁶ Ibid. 1/4/13.

³²⁷ Ibid. 1/31/30/19.

³²⁸ Ibid. tithe award; TNA HO 107/1920.

³²⁹ TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 11/2354.

³³⁰ SHC, DD/L 1/31/31/41; DD/IR T/14/4; OS Map 1:10560, XXXV. NW. (1888 edn.).

implies a production of 3,227,000 bricks a year.³³¹ In the 1930s c. 24 men were employed at the yard, which closed c.1947.³³²

Pottery

Potter and Crocker surnames occur between 1266 and 1375 and Crockkerlane in 1417, implying the existence of a medieval pottery.³³³ A pottery was built at the warren, presumably beside the brickworks, in 1758, George Gale, Luttrell's agent, having visited the Bristol pottery, and a potter was employed. In 1759—60 a kiln was built in the old park behind the Luttrell Arms at a cost of over £31. Tools were bought and a house was built in 1760 for John and Ruth Mogg who received £46 for goods made and fired but in 1761 James Norris from Crock Street in Donyatt took over what was described as a coarse ware pottery. It was not profitable; £50 was received for goods sold between November 1759 and December 1762 and in 1761 the business made a loss. In 1765 the pottery was advertised again without success.³³⁴ The kiln, later lined with brick, has been conserved and is reputedly the oldest surviving in England.³³⁵ It may have been preserved as a feature in the landscape, known as the Bell house, when the rest of the buildings were demolished and the ground raised as part of mid 19th-century alterations to the Luttrell Arms.³³⁶

³³¹ SHC, DD/L 1/31/30/42; TNA, IR 58/82372; RG 11/2354; OS Map 1:10560, XXXV. NW. (1904 edn.); H. Binding and D. Stevens The Book of Minehead with Alcombe (2000), 122.

³³² Photo in possession of Mr Purvis, Porlock; H Binding and J Greenhow, Minehead in old picture postcards, (Zaltbommel, Netherlands 1985), 76.

³³³ SHC, DD/L P8/2/78, 145, P8/4, P9/2/1.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* 1/4/12, 1/31/30/14; SDNQ, XXII, 274.

³³⁵ Som. CC, HER.

³³⁶ D. Dawson and O Kent, "‘Animated Prospect’ – An 18th-century Kiln at the Pottery House in the Old Park, Dunster, Somerset" in J. Finch and K. Giles (eds) Estate Landscapes: design, improvement and power in the Post-medieval landscape (Woodbridge, 2007); SHC, tithe award.

The Dunster pottery was started in 1959 by George Fishley whose family had been potters in North Devon since 1865 and continued until 1971 or later when there was a second pottery in High Street.³³⁷

Chandlery

By the 18th century a large chandlery stood on the corner of West and Gallox Streets, comprising house and workshops. In 1834 the chandler and soapboiler there was prosecuted for polluting the millstream and the cisterns fed from it with effluent from two candle shops and a soap house. He turned his house into an alehouse called the Bridge End alehouse in 1849 and the chandlery appears to have been given up.³³⁸

Malting

The first recorded maltster was Charles Crockford in 1715 who probably worked the malthouse east of High Street built in 1719.³³⁹ Maltsters appear to have been wealthy men perhaps because a malthouse was an expensive investment. A burgage in West Street was converted to a malthouse shortly before 1756 when it was sold to Henry Fownes Luttrell who let it with the lower mills.³⁴⁰ A malthouse in High Street was let in 1778 when Vincent Phillips bought one, and rented another for £10 a year. In 1782 he bought the High House, now known as the Nunnery, which had been converted to a malthouse with kiln.³⁴¹ In his will of 1799 he gave clothes and £5 each to his three labourers and £20 and his best suit to his servant if he would assist with disposing of

³³⁷ www.studiopottery.com accessed 11 Nov 2009; SHC, D/PC/du 1/2/5; *ibid.* C/ENPR 14/24.

³³⁸ SHC, DD/L 1/5/18, 1/24/5; DD/SAS PR 482/2; DD/CCHJ, box 1; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852—3); *PO Dir. Som.* (1866); TNA, RG 9/1602.

³³⁹ SHC, DD/X/RMN 17; DD/L 1/4/11/4, 1/27/19/12, 1/33/49; Devon RO, 1148M/add 1/59.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.* DD/L 1/4/12, 1/7/25, 1/10/35C, 1/24/6.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* 1/7/26, 1/10/35C, 1/24/7, 1/29/25a 7—8; box 296/2.

the malt stocks.³⁴² Malting was seasonal and workers had to find alternative work in the summer.³⁴³ An Avill mealman described himself as a maltster when he died in 1806 with property in several parishes and able to leave £2,100 to his children.³⁴⁴ At least four malthouses were in use c. 1830. The owner of the three malthouses formerly belonging to Vincent Phillips went bankrupt in 1825, when two of the malthouses were untenanted.³⁴⁵ The miller took on the Middle malthouse but the general decline in trade may have led to a fall in demand for malt.³⁴⁶ The tenant of the High Street malthouse went bankrupt in 1833³⁴⁷ and by 1834 the Nunnery malthouse was a joinery and another was a private house and a draper's shop.³⁴⁸ Malthouses in West Street, High Street, and Alcombe were recorded in 1840 but may not all have been in use.³⁴⁹ In 1861 maltsters boarded for the malting season but by 1871 malting seems to have been given up.³⁵⁰

Metalwork

In 1304 John le Plumer was recorded.³⁵¹ There was probably a blade mill in 1376,³⁵² ruinous by 1429, and a forge in new Street in 1391.³⁵³ Prosperous blacksmith Robert James (d. 1687) kept 17 cwt of iron besides red iron and steel³⁵⁴ and another supplied quarry tools in 1700.³⁵⁵ More unusual were Dunster's 18th-century female blacksmiths, Betty Southwood of St George's Street and Jane Deverell who supplied

³⁴² Ibid. 2/34/8.

³⁴³ Ibid. DD/CCHJ, box 1.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. DD/WO 11/3/5, 35/20/9.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. DD/L 1/24/8; *London Gaz.* 25 June 1825, p. 1118; *Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir.* (1830).

³⁴⁶ *Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir.* (1830); SHC, tithe award.

³⁴⁷ SHC, DD/CCHJ, box 1; *London Gaz.* 24 Dec. 1833, p. 2377.

³⁴⁸ SHC, DD/L, box 296/2.

³⁴⁹ Ibid. tithe award.

³⁵⁰ TNA, RG 9/1602, RG 10/2350.

³⁵¹ *Cal. Pat.* 1301—7, 232.

³⁵² SHC, DD/L P9/2/1, P10/2.

³⁵³ Ibid. P9/4, P11/1, 4, P18/3.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. DD/SP 1687/46

³⁵⁵ Ibid. Q/SR 216/4.

the metalwork for Dunster mills in the 1780s.³⁵⁶ There were smithies next to the Luttrell Arms, south of West Street, and in Alcombe in 1840 employing were six smiths at Dunster and three with a boy in Alcombe in 1851.³⁵⁷ There was an iron foundry in Water Street in the 1860s.³⁵⁸

Maurice the pointmaker was recorded in 1514,³⁵⁹ goldsmith Simon Pembroke worked in Dunster before 1549 when he was pardoned for making false coin,³⁶⁰ and goldsmiths at work in 1663 and 1705 were probably making silver spoons and other domestic wares.³⁶¹ A jeweller advanced money on a mortgage in 1829³⁶² and jewellers and watchmakers were recorded throughout the 19th century.³⁶³ A gunsmith in 1676 was followed in the trade by his son.³⁶⁴ There were tinsmith workers in 1861 and a cutler in 1881.³⁶⁵ During World War II local women were employed on lathes and milling machines in the Luttrell Arms garages producing military components.³⁶⁶

Building trades

Dunster craftsmen served a wide area of West Somerset like John Way who agreed to repair Nettlecombe Court in 1565 and John Hole who was asked to estimate for work at Nettlecombe church.³⁶⁷ In 1700 the shop of George Clark contained formers, compasses, planes and adzes,³⁶⁸ and Thomas Goad, who hanged himself in 1797, had a well-furnished house, a stock of Dutch oak and elm, coffin furniture and working

³⁵⁶ Ibid. DD/L 2/34/8 [will of George Rawle]; above, mills.

³⁵⁷ SHC, tithe award; TNA, HO 107/1920.

³⁵⁸ PO Dir. Som (1866); London Gaz. 14 Aug. 1868, p. 4540.

³⁵⁹ SHC, DD/L P 8/2/233.

³⁶⁰ Cal. Pat. 1548—9, 246.

³⁶¹ Book of Dunster, 27—8; SHC, Q/SR 103/15, 235/3.

³⁶² SHC, DD/L 1/24/8.

³⁶³ TNA, HO 107/1920; RG 9/1602; RG 11/2354.

³⁶⁴ SHC, DD/SP 1676/52; D/N/tau.mst 1/1/7.

³⁶⁵ TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 11/2354.

³⁶⁶ Book of Dunster, 99.

³⁶⁷ SHC, DD/WO 49/6, 54/11/48.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. DD/SP 1699/12.

tools.³⁶⁹ The Rawle family of masons and carpenters built bridges in the park, at Frackford and at Marsh where the names of father and son William and George were inscribed in 1772. William built the warren brick kiln in 1757, his son George built the Coniger Tower and the Luttrell Arms, and grandson Richard worked on Dunster mills in 1802. They acquired and rebuilt property in Dunster. George's son Samuel became famous as a landscape engraver.³⁷⁰ Edward Foyle, glazier, had a house built in High Street in the early 17th century. Another glazier was involved in the Monmouth rebellion³⁷¹ but survived and died in 1725 in possession of sheet lead, the only evidence of his trade apart from money owed to him.³⁷²

The growth of Alcombe and Minehead and some recovery at Dunster itself in the later 19th century provided work for 18 carpenters and 13 masons in Dunster and three carpenters and five masons at Alcombe in 1851 and 12 plumbers, glaziers and painters in 1881. By 1883 one plumber was also a gasfitter, bell hanger and hot and cold water engineer. In 1889 an inventor of gas stoves, cooking and heating apparatus was based at Alcombe. By 1901 the number of building workers had risen again to 21 in Alcombe and 42 at Dunster.³⁷³ By the 1920s the Luttrell estate ran the Dunster Trading and Transport Company, which among other interests manufactured ice and bacon and built beach chalets for Dunster Beach in the 1930s and the Minehead lido.³⁷⁴ Priory barn was used as a carpenter's workshop in the mid 20th century supplying new wheels and other parts for the restoration of Dunster mills.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ Ibid. DD/L 1/5/18.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. 1/4/12—13, 1/31/30/23, 1/32/45, 1/33/51, 2/34/8; DNB.

³⁷¹ SHC, DD/L P15/24; DD/SP 1666/38; Wigfield (ed.), The Monmouth Rebels, 1685 (Som. Rec. Soc. 79). 161.

³⁷² SHC, DD/SP inv. 1725/20.

³⁷³ TNA, HO 107/1920; *ibid.* RG 11/2354; RG 13/2262; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1883, 1889).

³⁷⁴ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923); Book of Dunster, 106.

³⁷⁵ SHC, DD/X/PTD 1.

Other crafts

William the fletcher lived in Dunster in the 13th century.³⁷⁶ Hankyn or Henry Clocmaker was recorded in 1380.³⁷⁷ Two men produced clocks in the 18th century,³⁷⁸ the Letteys were watchmakers and jewellers in the 19th century³⁷⁹ and a watchmaking business survived into the 21st century.³⁸⁰ A bow maker was recorded in 1744³⁸¹ and a peruke maker in 1799.³⁸² In 1901 a golf club maker lived at the new golf links.³⁸³

MARKET AND FAIR

Dunster Market

In the medieval and early modern period Dunster market town was relatively accessible from many coastal and Exmoor communities than to other places. The large castle household encouraged traders to bring produce and fine cloth and supplied the market with by-products from its slaughterhouse and kitchen fat.³⁸⁴ Ports at Dunster and Watchet, and later Minehead encouraged a market in fish, cloth and products coming from or attractive to traders from Wales and Ireland. The fortunes of the extensive coastal fishing industry and of local cloth making were probably closely tied to those of the market and its employees would have created a demand for food. Dunster market was one of the most important in the area until the 18th century.³⁸⁵

³⁷⁶ Ibid. DD/L P8/2/4.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. P9/5.

³⁷⁸ J. K. Bellchambers, *Somerset Clockmakers* (1968), 71.

³⁷⁹ *Pigot & Co. Nat. and Com. Dir.* (1830); *Som. Co. Gaz. Dir.* (1840).

³⁸⁰ SHC, A/AGH 1/133; *ibid.* C/ENPR 14/24.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.* Q/SR 312/132.

³⁸² *Ibid.* DD/L 2/34/8.

³⁸³ TNA, RG 11/2262.

³⁸⁴ SHC, DD/L P37/10.

³⁸⁵ A painting by Ivan Lapper of the market as it might have looked in 1500, based on court records, is in the Dunster TIC.

The market was in existence by 1222 when a new market at Watchet was suppressed to protect it³⁸⁶ and c. 1240 when Tetton men were freed from toll³⁸⁷ but in 1253 Reynold de Mohun secured a charter for a Monday market, possibly changing its day, and granted freedom from toll to fishermen and cornmongers, and on transactions of 12d or less.³⁸⁸ The castle household purchased locally such items as white bread and wheat for frumenty in 1424 and 5,852 gallons of ale bought in 1425—6.³⁸⁹ In the late 13th century Dunster brewers had to supply 24 gallons each at a low price to the castle but in the early 14th that was reduced to 4 with the rest supplied at the market price.³⁹⁰ By the 18th century the castle bought large quantities of hops and malt and produced its own drink.³⁹¹

By the 14th and 15th centuries regulation of the market indicates its importance. In 1405 the borough elected aletasters, breadweighers and two ‘officers of poor victuals’. Butchers were prosecuted for selling meat outside the shambles or not bringing the hides and skins to market with the meat.³⁹² Traders were accused of buying grain in the market before opening hours and raising the price or using illegal measures. Traders came from a wide area. In 1467 a Watchet baker refused to have his bread weighed and another sold underweight in the 1490s, when much meat and fish was also overpriced, in 1478 men from Bilbrook and Milverton sold bad victuals, in 1481 five people were accused of selling bad herring and in 1486 a Porlock man dumped fish garbage under the shambles.³⁹³

³⁸⁶ Close R. (Rec. Com.), I, p. 527.

³⁸⁷ H. C. Maxwell-Lyte and T. S. Holmes (ed.), Cartularies of Bruton and Montacute Priors (Som. Rec. Soc. 8), p. 147. As Tetton is on the Quantocks, north of Taunton it does not seem likely that its farmers would have used Dunster market.

³⁸⁸ Cal. Chart. R. 1226—57, 431; SHC, DD/L P8/1, 3.

³⁸⁹ SHC, P1/16/30; 37/10.

³⁹⁰ Maxwell-Lyte, History of Dunster I, 278, 283.

³⁹¹ SHC, DD/L 1/4/13.

³⁹² *Ibid.* P9/5, 10/2, 11/2.

³⁹³ *Ibid.* P12/1, 3—4, P13/1.

In 1430 the market was worth 13s 4d a year to the lord, rising to 30s in 1458.³⁹⁴ Shamble rents brought in an additional 43s 4d in 1460, £4 by 1489 and £10 by the 1550s.³⁹⁵ By the 1480s the lord profited from yarn weighing in the market.³⁹⁶ In the late 16th century 44 people paid between 2s and 6s 8d for a standing in the shamble including a Minehead tanner and a Dulverton chapman.³⁹⁷ By the 1500s offences such as overpricing and bad victuals were presented in the borough court by the keepers of the shambles. Fish came from Minehead and Carhampton, grain from Exford and Nettlecombe and bread from Cleeve, Stogumber and Milverton, 14 miles to the south-east. Even if all traders were dishonest the 13 bakers and 17 butchers fined in 1534—5 indicates a large amount of trade.³⁹⁸ In 1581 a butcher slaughtered and sold a bull in the market illegally, presumably livestock were normally slaughtered elsewhere.³⁹⁹ Welsh or Irish cattle imported through south Wales were brought to Dunster in the early 17th century.⁴⁰⁰ Their products were valuable; tanners owed larder silver to the market lessee in 1620 and in 1655 a Carhampton butcher wanted £100 to surrender his standing.⁴⁰¹ Local women brought butter for in 1675 an innkeeper found one of his napkins covering a Withycombe woman's butter in the market.⁴⁰²

However, grain was the staple commodity and heavily regulated. Its resale was forbidden and a Dunster man was prosecuted in the church courts in 1597 for taking wheat as security for a loan.⁴⁰³ In 1604 a Selworthy man was accused of buying corn at Dunster for resale at Molton and men from North and South Molton and Twitchen

³⁹⁴ Cal. Inq. p.m. XXIII, p. 288.

³⁹⁵ SHC, DD/L 1/1/1; DD/L 1/11/3; 13/2/1.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. P13/2/1.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. P14/32; P15/5/2.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. P13/1, P15/5/2. A life-size reconstruction of the market at this period is in Dunster TLC.

³⁹⁹ SHC, DD/L P14/22; *ibid.* Q/SR 102/59; 177/24—5.

⁴⁰⁰ Thirsk ed. *Agrarian History*, (1), 377, 381.

⁴⁰¹ SHC, DD/L 1/29/26/4, 1/33/48/3.

⁴⁰² Devon RO, 1148M/add 1/53; SHC, Q/SR 127/31; *ibid.* DD/L 1/6/19.

⁴⁰³ SHC, D/D/Ca 111.

in Devon were caught buying corn at Dunster for resale. A woman was accused of buying barley in the market before the ringing of the bell and before the poor were served.⁴⁰⁴ In 1613, a time of general dearth, people from Bridgwater, Weston and Stogursey were accused of buying up grain in Dunster market for resale and ten people for buying up barley for malting. In 1614 bakers came from Stogumber, including two men whose bread was insufficiently leavened, Nettlecombe and West Quantoxhead. In 1618—19 a corn dealer from Enmore east of the Quantocks and another from Staplegrove near Taunton were at the market.⁴⁰⁵

Clearly the market was still attracting people from a wide area. In 1618—19 four clothiers from Stogumber, people from Stogursey with bad victuals, a trader from Sampford Brett selling soap with illegal weights, two traders from Taunton, 20 miles away, with illegal measures, and a chapman from Bodmin had travelled to Dunster.⁴⁰⁶ That may be why magistrates ordered the mother of a bastard from Cutcombe to be whipped by one of her parish officers in Dunster market in 1618.⁴⁰⁷ The market was opened by the ringing of a bell and trading beforehand was an offence. It was agreed in 1605 that the clerks of the market should ring the bell at 11, presumably to allow time for traders coming a distance to be ready.⁴⁰⁸ It may also have allowed time for announcements. During the 1650s bans of marriage were published in the town on market days.⁴⁰⁹

The clerk of the market regularly checked weights and measures and in October 1616 found three women and a man selling by false yards, a man with illegal weight, and 12 tipplers selling by unlawful measures. The regularity with which such

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. DD/L P23/1b.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. P15/7/2.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. P15/7/2; *ibid.* Q/SR 29/12—13.

⁴⁰⁷ E. H. Bates, *Quarter Sessions Records, 1607—25* (Som. Rec. Soc. 23), 233.

⁴⁰⁸ SHC, DD/L P23/1b.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.* D/P/timb 2/1/1.

offences were presented implies that the fines were less than the illegal profits.⁴¹⁰ In 1669 there were 32 pecks and half pecks and 60 tubs and 42 trestles and 93 boards for stalls.⁴¹¹ In 1713 the clerks of the market were presented for not keeping the sealed measures in their own hands. By the mid 18th century the weights and measures kept in the town hall comprised 44 wooden measures, and 17 brass, lead and iron weights ranging from 4 ounces to half a hundredweight. In 1754 there were also an iron yard, a stamp to seal pints and quarts, an iron to burn pecks with a **P** and a hammer to mark leather with **D** and **L**.⁴¹²

A market cross was called the Corn Cross in 1693⁴¹³ and corn was still a major commodity in the 18th century.⁴¹⁴ In 1705 the area west of the market house was the oat market and the area to the north was the wheat market. In 1709 a Dunster farmer was accused of selling wheat to a dealer rather than in the market and it was later said that the market supplied great quantities of corn for export.⁴¹⁵ That trade may explain the large number of official peck measures and heavy iron weights kept for the use of the market.⁴¹⁶ A change in the nature of the market from general retail to farm stock and produce seems to have taken place. A man paid for the right to rail an area for bullocks and the cattle market was mentioned in the 1730s.⁴¹⁷ A bullock market was recorded in 1766.⁴¹⁸ Large quantities of yarn were still sold to west Somerset clothiers from as far away as Wiveliscombe in the early 18th century.⁴¹⁹

An innkeeper and a maltster leased the market for £50 a year in 1740 and undertook to collect up and secure the tubs and trestles and not to hold a market on

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. DD/L P3/13, P15/7/1; below, local govt.

⁴¹¹ SHC, DD/L 1/29/26/5.

⁴¹² Ibid. 1/5/16, 1/32/37—8, 43.

⁴¹³ Ibid. 1/23/3.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. 1/4/12.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. 1/26/15/5; *ibid.* Q/SR 253/4; *ibid.* DD/TB 19/2.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. DD/L 1/5/16.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. 1/26/16/7.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. 1/7/25.

⁴¹⁹ Savage, *Hist. Hundred Carhampton*, 381.

Good Friday but the receipts were under £70 a year and falling and one market lessee went bankrupt in 1755.⁴²⁰ Presumably shops selling grocery and drapery throughout the week served local needs. The market went into a steep decline and the little market shops built in the previous century were of no value by 1746 and had not been let for many years by 1777—8 when only one shop in the shambles was let.⁴²¹ Henry Fownes Luttrell complained in 1771 that people sold goods under pentices on their houses to avoid paying tolls for stalls.⁴²² In 1830 only a few butchers, poultry and butter women attended the market despite the new shambles and only in spring when farmers bought seed there had it ‘a childlike resemblance of what it once was’.⁴²³ In 1839 it was said the nearest market was Taunton.⁴²⁴ Two livestock markets were held in the street in winter from c. 1838 until the 1920s or later. Monthly cattle auctions on Priory green were begun c.1875 and cheap train fares were issued to encourage trade but after 1886 the sales moved to Williton.⁴²⁵

Market place and buildings. Only the Yarn market and the width of High Street, also called Chepyng⁴²⁶ Street in 1362 and 1412,⁴²⁷ mark the site of the market place. The shambles building was repaired in the 1420s when there was a talsey⁴²⁸ and payment of stallage indicates that market stalls were used.⁴²⁹ In 1448 a tenant was allowed to

⁴²⁰ SHC, DD/L 1/7/26, 1/29/26/6—7, 12.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.* 1/7/26, 1/10/35B.

⁴²² *Ibid.* 1/29/26/10. Many High St shops still have pentices although probably shallower than in 1771.

⁴²³ Savage, *Hist. Hundred Carhampton*, 385—6.

⁴²⁴ TNA, IR 18/8857.

⁴²⁵ SHC, DD/L, box 290; *Robson’s Com. Dir. London and W. Counties* (1839); *PO Dir. Som.* (1875); Binding, *Discovering Dunster*, 21; *Book of Dunster*, 31, 143.

⁴²⁶ From OE cheap meaning to barter.

⁴²⁷ SHC, DD/L P8/2/87, 173; P10/3/5.

⁴²⁸ Or tollbooth.

⁴²⁹ SHC, DD/L P11/1, 3.

erect a permanent building 24 ft by 12ft in the market place by the pillory, probably the new market of the 1450s but in 1497 called Ayshcombesplace after the tenant.⁴³⁰

A market cross was recorded south of the market in 1461, probably the High Cross recorded between 1583 and 1731 and also known as the Butter Cross by 1689. In the early 19th century it was moved to the north end of St George's Street.⁴³¹ The Corn Cross, north of the market house in 1705, was also known as the Corn House and may have been what is now called the Yarn Market.⁴³² The stock or weigh house with weigh beam was first recorded in the mid 16th century when it was let for 26s 8d to the borough bailiff. Charges of ½ d to 3d were charged for weighing yarn although the bailiff was charged with extortion for charging 'foreigners' higher rates, which he claimed was customary.⁴³³ In 1629 the bailiwick included the new hall for weighing yarn, out standings, coverage money and pitching pence in fair and market days, and rents of butchers' standings on the fair day but excluding in and shop standings.⁴³⁴

In the 17th century some stalls were converted to shops.⁴³⁵ In 1620 there were 46 standings and three shops but 12 inclosed shops were recorded by 1657 some ofn an Upper Alley.⁴³⁶ In 1649 a new tenant was to repair the locks and bolts on a shop or warehouse formerly two standings. A shop in the market was rented for 20s in 1650 when 28 shambles were let for a total of £19 12s. A butcher's stall in 1651 included planks, cleaving stock and iron hooks. There were two shoemakers' and five linendrapers' standings, which brought in a further £4 12s a year and unspecified standings for casual letting. The shoemakers' standings were shops by 1717. These conversions were next to the town hall but others occurred within the shambles

⁴³⁰ Ibid. P1/27/1; P11/3; P12/3; P13/2/1.

⁴³¹ Ibid. P1/27/1, P15/5/3, P15/49; 1/26/16/3, 1/29/25a; above, intro.

⁴³² SHC, DD/L 1/26/15/5, 1/26/14/20, 1/28/23/636, 1/31/31/7.

⁴³³ Ibid. P14/10/1, P14/23/2, 4, P15/5/3. P15/43; 1/1/1.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. P15/22.

⁴³⁵ Ibid. P15/20, 23, 30.

⁴³⁶ Ibid. 1/33/48/3; DD/TB 43/1..

including a tailor's shop and a feltmaker's warehouse at the southern end. In 1652 a linendraper from Bishops Lydeard was allowed to convert three standings between a passage and a seamstress' standing into a 25-ft. shop in 1652 when the partition between standings and shops was recorded.⁴³⁷ However, as early as 1707 some shops were converted to dwellings.⁴³⁸ In 1721 the shambles was altered possibly to accommodate houses and tailors' and barbers' shops. In the 1720s a new house taken out of the shambles had three lower and four upper rooms and a tailor built a shop there 28 ft. by 7 ft. in 1726. In 1760s a new barbers shop there was taken down, possibly to build another.⁴³⁹

By the 1780s the Butter Cross and the shambles were regarded as encumbrances.⁴⁴⁰ In 1825 the long range of shops, shambles and town hall in the middle of High Street were demolished. The wooden town hall, recorded from 1629, adjoined the shambles and was used to store measures and weights.⁴⁴¹ A new butchers' market was built east of the street and was still used in 1840.⁴⁴² It had a reading room upstairs and by the 1870s was a parish hall.⁴⁴³ Now two houses it still bears the 1825 entrance keystone.

The iconic Yarn Market at the north end of High Street, said to have been built in 1609, was probably recorded in 1629 as the new hall for weighing yarn and replaced the old weighhouse, which appears to have become a lockup and by 1732 a pigsty.⁴⁴⁴ The present name is relatively modern and in the 18th and 19th centuries was known as the market cross or the market house and also the corn house as in 1800

⁴³⁷ Ibid. DD/L P3/12; 15/42, 44, 46—7, 51; 1/6/19.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. 1/26/15/17.

⁴³⁹ Ibid. 1/4/11, 1/7/26, 1/10/32, 1/26/16/1, 1/33/49.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. A/AQP 8/14.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. DD/L P14/30, P15/23/1; 1/6/19; 1/23/3, 1/26/15/5; above this section.

⁴⁴² Savage, Hist. Hundred Carhampton, 381; SHC, tithe award.

⁴⁴³ Book of Dunster, 31, 143.

⁴⁴⁴ SHC, DD/L P15/22, 30; 1/32/38.

when its windows were broken in a disturbance. It was let in the 1770s with the tub house, shambles, markets and fairs.⁴⁴⁵ A painting of c. 1800 shows people sat or standing with their backs to the perimeter wall presumably with their goods in front of them.⁴⁴⁶ It is octagonal with a large overhanging roof supported by pillars in the centre and round the circumference, which is also marked by wood or stone sills around a cobbled floor. The roof, containing eight windows and a lantern, may have been reconstructed in 1647, the date on the weathervane. It has been restored many times, notably in the 1950s when the windows were glazed, and is a scheduled ancient monument.⁴⁴⁷

Fair

There are few records of the fair. It existed by 1355,⁴⁴⁸ a piepowder court was occasionally recorded in the late 14th century and in 1398 the Pentecost fair brought the lord a profit of 9s 2d.⁴⁴⁹ In the 1530s the fair was held on Whit Monday.⁴⁵⁰ Tolls for horses and sheep recorded in 1583 could have applied to the fair or the market.⁴⁵¹ In 1596 a Welshman died during a fight with watchmen at the fair.⁴⁵²

The livestock fair was probably held at the north end of High Street where properties had the right to erect sheep pens in fair time in the 17th and 18th centuries and hurdles were kept at the Ship.⁴⁵³ In 1770 there were 133 old and 117 new boards for the fair. Three lottery promoters and sellers of silver, books, brass, hardware,

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 1/28/23/61, 1/29/26/11, 1/32/46.

⁴⁴⁶ F. Nicholson, *The Yarn Market and Dunster Castle*, reproduced in National Trust guide *Dunster Castle* (1978)

⁴⁴⁷ TNA, WORK 14/3143; Som. CC. HER.

⁴⁴⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1354—8, 231.

⁴⁴⁹ SHC, DD/L P9/4, P14/8.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.* P14/8; E. H. Bates, 'Leland in Somersetshire', *PSAS* 33, 37.

⁴⁵¹ SHC, DD/L P15/5/3.

⁴⁵² *Acts of P.C.* 1595—6, p. 410.

⁴⁵³ SHC, DD/L 1/5/16, 1/26/13/2, 1/33/49.

earthenware, bread, confectionary, lace, fruit, and clothing had c. 50 standings around the shambles, in front of inns and along Middle Street in 1767 but most livestock remained unsold. The fair was already in decline as there were 250 boards for stalls in 1770. Standings and toll receipts had halved by 1789 and halved again by 1804.⁴⁵⁴

A painting of c. 1800 shows a few sheep on the east side of High street and people gathered around the shambles and Yarn Market. That may represent the fair or the market.⁴⁵⁵ The last recorded traditional fair was in 1819 when seven standings offered toys, confectionery, millinery, punch and 'luck in the bag'. The only livestock were bullocks but only 31 out of 145 were sold.⁴⁵⁶ A travelling fair pitched under Conyger hill in the 1860s and the Dunster Show, started in 1838, is now held every August on the Lawns north of the Castle.⁴⁵⁷

TRADE AND SERVICES

Merchants

Dunster merchants recorded from the early 13th century included Isaac, who owned part of the site now occupied by the Luttrell Arms,⁴⁵⁸ as did later merchant Patrick Everard.⁴⁵⁹ Everard's contemporary William Taillour had invested in land in several parishes by 1375 but owed over £160 to a Bristol merchant.⁴⁶⁰ Richard Willy, merchant, stood surety for the Somerset and Dorset subsidy collector in 1466.⁴⁶¹ Presumably Dunster merchants were exporting cloth and grain. However, Thomas

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. 1/29/26/12.

⁴⁵⁵ F. Nicholson, *The Yarn Market and Dunster Castle*.

⁴⁵⁶ SHC, DD/L 1/29/26/12.

⁴⁵⁷ *Book of Dunster*, 47; Binding, *Discovering Dunster*, 21.

⁴⁵⁸ C. E. Chadwyck-Healey (ed.), *Somersetshire Pleas c. 1200—1256* (Som. Rec. Soc. 11), p. 305; SHC, DD/L P8/3/62.

⁴⁵⁹ SHC, DD/L P1/4/2, P1/10/4, P8/2/129, 142.

⁴⁶⁰ VCH Som. office, Pole MS 2909; TNA, C 131/205/13.

⁴⁶¹ *Cal. Fine R.* p. 18.

Upcot (d. 1504) bought 50 measures of steel from a Taunton merchant and in his will left two shipments each of 10 tons of iron, four bales and six pipes of woad, salts, goblets, a gilt crucifix and several sets of coral beads.⁴⁶² Later mercantile business seems to have moved to Minehead and few merchants are recorded at Dunster.⁴⁶³

Retailing

During the middle ages most retailing took place in the market and shambles where transactions were open and goods and measures could be checked.⁴⁶⁴ However, bakers may have had shops to supply the daily needs of residents.⁴⁶⁵ In 1631 three husbandmen were accused of working as bakers never having been apprenticed.⁴⁶⁶ The 'Cornershop' at the south end of High Street, by 1650 known as the Cage, was recorded in 1390⁴⁶⁷ and a shop window c. 1569.⁴⁶⁸ The small shops converted from market stalls in the 17th century were probably mainly workshops used by shoemakers and other craftsmen.⁴⁶⁹ In 1631 a cooper leased a shop with a room over amounting to a third of a burgage.⁴⁷⁰ In 1650 ten people paid shop rents of up to £3 a year to the borough and some High Street properties later included shops.⁴⁷¹

Chapmen were in business from the 15th century⁴⁷² and haberdashers and linendrapers from the 16th and 17th centuries. Drapers offered many kinds of cloth from canvas to India taffeta, also silver and other lace, ribbons, thread, tape,

⁴⁶² TNA, C 1/321/51; Weaver, Som. Wills, 1501—1530, 60—1.

⁴⁶³ TNA, E 134/10 Jas I/Mich 28.

⁴⁶⁴ Above, market; SHC, DD/L P10/2.

⁴⁶⁵ SHC, DD/L P3/14; P9/5.

⁴⁶⁶ Bates-Harbin (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, 1625—39, 164.

⁴⁶⁷ SHC, DD/L P9/4, P11/1, 3; 1/26/16/3.

⁴⁶⁸ TNA, REQ 2/127/12.

⁴⁶⁹ SHC, DD/L P14/30, P 15/41; above, market.

⁴⁷⁰ SHC, DD/L P15/27.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.* P3/12; 1/33/49.

⁴⁷² Cal. Close, 1447—54, 516; SHC, DD/SP 1637/23; DD/L 1/26/14/18.

trimmings and pins.⁴⁷³ Mercers were recorded from the 15th to 19th centuries⁴⁷⁴ including John Wright the younger (d. 1679) who ran a large general store, occupied a ten-roomed mansion called the Cross House and was worth £1,260. He stocked mercery worth £192, woollens, linens, Manchester wares, haberdashery, stockings and bodices, nails and shot, powder, tobacco, grocery, and salt. He left black cloth for mourning priced at 12s. a yard, almost as much as a maid's annual wages.⁴⁷⁵ In the 1760s Fanny Bradley, a milliner who also sold muslin, gauze, lace, ribbons and feathers, recorded her daily takings. At first she took up to £3 a day in the shop and sometimes much more, as well as supplying, altering and trimming hats and caps, but by the end of 1768 shop takings had fallen to a few shillings and often nothing. The reason for the shop's failure and closure is not known but this was the period when the cloth trade and the market were in decline and demand for non-essentials probably fell.⁴⁷⁶

By the mid 19th century there was a wide variety of goods and services and many pentices, low roofs extending across the fronts of buildings covering a stall or counter, appear in drawings of High Street. In 1840 it was said that with the wool trade lost Dunster depended on supplying the retail trade of the neighbourhood.⁴⁷⁷ Significantly one of the commonest complaints to the borough court at this period was about delivery waggons obstructing the streets.⁴⁷⁸ In 1830 ten grocers, drapers and general shopkeepers were recorded, when there were only four at Minehead,⁴⁷⁹ and three tea dealer were in business by 1840.⁴⁸⁰ Craftsmen often had shops, presumably

⁴⁷³ SHC, DD/SP 1669/8; DD/L P14/21; *ibid.* T/PH/sty 1; TNA, PROB 11/200.

⁴⁷⁴ *Cal. Pat.* 1422—9, 442; TNA, REQ 2/127/12; *ibid.* PROB 4/9120; Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, DR5/824; SHC, DD/CCHJ, box 1; DD/L P3/12; 1/29/25b/26; DD/SP 1713/25; DD/X/BT 3.

⁴⁷⁵ TNA, PROB 4/10554; PROB 11/363; SHC, DD/L 1/29/25b/15, 1/27/19/12.

⁴⁷⁶ SHC, DD/L 2/42/14.

⁴⁷⁷ *Som. Co. Gaz. Dir.* (1840).

⁴⁷⁸ SHC, DD/L 1/32/39.

⁴⁷⁹ *Pigot & Co. Nat. and Com. Dir.* (1830).

⁴⁸⁰ SHC Q/RDd 35; *ibid.* DD/CCHJ, box 1; *Som. Co. Gaz. Dir.* (1840).

run by their wives and by 1851 many traders and craftsmen had apprentices and domestic servants. There were specialists such as a confectioner and a tripe dealer. James Locke tailor, draper, grocer, tea dealer and general shopkeeper moved from Truro to Dunster and by 1858 to Bristol where he went bankrupt. He returned to Dunster to work as a tailor. The largest business was that of William Symons in High Street. He was a draper and grocer, chemist, inventor, stamp distributor, insurance and banking agent, the only banking facility then available in Dunster, employed six people in his business, including three male and female assistants and an apprentice who lived in, and two domestic servants but c. 1860 moved to London as a scientific instrument maker.⁴⁸¹ Alcombe was beginning to share in the growth of Minehead and although a Cutcombe farmer who set up business there as a grocer, draper, butcher and cattle dealer went bankrupt before 1845 but by 1851 there were two shops, two public houses and a wide range of services.⁴⁸²

One of Dunster's most famous shopkeepers was Samuel Ell, son of a Bedfordshire labourer who came to Dunster and worked as a druggist in a draper's shop in 1851. His first attempt to set up shop led him into bankruptcy in 1870 but his second chemist's shop served Dunster until the early 20th century.⁴⁸³ He was also dispenser to the hospital⁴⁸⁴ and invented Elca sauce made from laver before 1866, a marmalade served in the House of Lords and a chilblain liniment. His rival Edward Withycombe was a draper, grocer, chemist and tailor and employed eight staff. In 1861 there were 23 shops in Dunster including bakers and butchers and three at

⁴⁸¹ Pigot & Co. Nat. and Com. Dir. (1830); Som. Co. Gaz. Dir. (1840); Slater's Dir. Som. (1852—3); PO Dir. Som (1859); London Gaz. 1 Oct. 1858, p. 4348, 24 July 1860, p. 2752; TNA, HO 107/1920; ibid. RG 9/99, 1602, RG 10/2350.

⁴⁸² London Gaz. 28 Feb. 1845, p. 247; TNA, HO 107/1920.

⁴⁸³ London Gaz. 9 Dec 1870, p. 5735; TNA, RG 9/1602, RG 13/2262; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1906)

⁴⁸⁴ Below, soc. hist., hospital.

Alcombe⁴⁸⁵ but later the balance of retailing shifted in favour of Minehead and by 1901 there were only c. 13 shops in Dunster, mainly general stores and fewer specialists, but eight at Alcombe whose post offices had acquired banking facilities. The surviving Dunster stores included Ridler's, the largest with five resident assistants and the Dunster Supply Stores near the church kept successively by the Amors and Parhams until the 1970s selling hardware, boots, clothing, groceries and paraffin, which they delivered by waggon to the Exmoor villages.⁴⁸⁶ By 1906, apart from fresh food retailers there were only five shops recorded in Dunster but 30 in Minehead.⁴⁸⁷

The later 20th century saw tea and gift shops for tourists replacing the general stores. In 1947 nine shops supplied local needs including a radio shop⁴⁸⁸ and a gas showroom, but by 1950 a cabinet maker's workshop had been converted to an antique shop and by 1971 there were three antique and 12 gift shops. A grocer's shop at Marsh survived until the 1980s.⁴⁸⁹ In 1971 25 retailers employed 25 full-time and 16 part-time staff but two opened only in the tourist season and even the five food shops obtained a third of their trade from tourists while for many shops it was all. In 1978 a butcher's shop became a café and two shops changed into craft galleries. By 1979 there was only one general food store, a chemist, a newsagent, and a watchmaker. The remaining ten shops sold gifts and antiques to tourists and nine were not open all year.⁴⁹⁰ In the late 1980s a row of shops designed to appeal to tourists visiting the adjacent information centre replaced the Dunster Steep petrol station⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁵ PO Dir. Som. (1866); *The Homeland Handbk: Minehead, Dunster and District* (c. 1910), p. xxxviii; *Book of Dunster*, 42; TNA, RG 9/1602.

⁴⁸⁶ TNA, RG 13/2262; SHC, A/BCC 3/2/4; *Book of Dunster*, 88—93; *Somerset Life*, Jan. 2002, 12.

⁴⁸⁷ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906).

⁴⁸⁸ SHC, A/AGH 1/133.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.* DD/X/PTD 2; D/PC/du 1/2/9; *ibid.* A/AGH 1/133; TNA, CRES 35/4549.

⁴⁹⁰ SHC, C/ENPR 14/24; D/PC/du 1/2/8; *ibid.* A/AGH 1/133.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* D/PC/du 1/2/7, 9.

and by the early 21st century several high-class specialist shops had opened to cater for visitors. A large number of restaurants, cafes and teashops interspersed with tourist shops line High, Church and West Streets.

Alehouses, inns and hotels

In 1379 33 men and women were accused of selling ale without a sign, rising to 40 in 1380, and 6 tavern keepers broke the assize one of whom forfeited 12 gallons of old ale.⁴⁹² Most of the people, 86 in October 1406, presented for brewing offences were probably producing for their own use but in the 1530s up to 14 alesellers had no sign at their doors.⁴⁹³

The earliest named public houses were Jeollestavern and Trottstavern belonging to William Dodesham in 1436, the George in 1463 and the Wynseseller c. 1500.⁴⁹⁴ In 1555 William Edwards and his wife Elizabeth were licensed to keep a tavern and sell wines.⁴⁹⁵ In the early 17th century the two aletasters presented alehousekeepers for not sending for them to check their ale and measures or for selling short.⁴⁹⁶ George Prolle and his wife were accused of keeping entertainment and drinking at their alehouse in service time in 1606.⁴⁹⁷ In the 1620s many widows and wives of butchers and weavers appear to have kept alehouses. In 1630 there were 13 in Dunster and one at Alcombe.⁴⁹⁸ Some inventories of the period include large quantities of wine and in 1657 there were 17 innkeepers.⁴⁹⁹ In 1686 Dunster's inns had 37 guest beds and stabling for 74 horses and in 1687 there were 22 licensed victuallers

⁴⁹² Ibid. DD/L P9/5.

⁴⁹³ Ibid. P10/2, P31/2; 13/3/1.

⁴⁹⁴ E. Green, (ed.), Feet of Fines 1399—1485 (Som. Rec. Soc. 22), 89; SHC, DD/L P8/2/208, P15/5/1.

⁴⁹⁵ Cal.Pat. 1554—5, p. 54.

⁴⁹⁶ SHC, DD/L 1/23/1B; *ibid.* Q/SR 3/28.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.* D/D/Ca 151.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Q/RLa 2, 3, 33.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.* DD/SP 1635/65; 1646/74; 1646/89; *ibid.* Q/RLa 4, 7.

in Dunster and one at Alcombe.⁵⁰⁰ The Castle Tavern, east of High Street, opened c. 1630 when it was let to vintner Henry Cripps (d. 1635) who was accused of selling French wine by the quart. He had wine, sack and claret worth over £104, a large quantity of linen and tableware including candlesticks and salts. His chambers were furnished with tables and chairs as well as beds and one was called the Mermaid chamber. There were 13 rooms and stables. By 1686 it was a private house possibly reflecting a decline in wine drinking.⁵⁰¹

There were usually 20 inns until the early 18th century, many adjoining each other on High Street, but in the 1740s the number fell to 12, possibly reflecting the decline in the market and cloth trade, and to 9 by 1789.⁵⁰² Among the losses were the Bell in West Street near the church by 1653, which closed in the 1720s,⁵⁰³ the Fleur de Lys only recorded in 1731⁵⁰⁴ and the Four Acorns only in 1766,⁵⁰⁵ the Pack Saddle or Pack Horse near the market place, converted into a private house between 1735 and 1748,⁵⁰⁶ the Angel, west of High Street, burnt down before 1747 and replaced by houses c. 1749,⁵⁰⁷ the 17th-century Three Pigeons at Marsh, which had closed by 1752⁵⁰⁸ and is now known as the Thatched Cottage, the White Hart also called White Horse, closed by 1768 when it was sold to Henry Fownes Luttrell who demolished it,⁵⁰⁹ the Swan open by 1680⁵¹⁰ south of High Street with a cooperage, dilapidated in

⁵⁰⁰ TNA, WO 30/48; SHC, Q/RLa 22/1.

⁵⁰¹ Cal. SP Dom. 1634—5, p. 237; SHC, DD/L P15/25, 40, 46; 1/26/14/14; DD/SP 1635/65; 1646/74; 1646/89.

⁵⁰² SHC, Q/RLa 22/3, 6, 15; DD/L 1/10/35.

⁵⁰³ TNA, C 54/3719, no. 27; SHC, DD/L P15/50; 1/7/23, 1/28/23/44, 1/33/49.

⁵⁰⁴ SHC, Q/SR 299/31.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Q/REI 8/3.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.* DD/L 1/30/28a/19—27; DD/DP 8/3.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.* DD/L 1/10/35; 1/26/16/12.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.* Q/RLa 22/1; *ibid.* DD/SAS C/59/23; DD/SP 1685/32; DD/L 1/10/35. Now known as the Thatched Cottage.

⁵⁰⁹ SHC, DD/L 1/17/63; 1/31/31/37; DD/X/HK 6; *ibid.* Q/RLa 22/1.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.* D/P/du 4/1/2.

1771⁵¹¹ and demolished before 1781,⁵¹² the Moore family's Half Moon west of High Street in 1639, closed and demolished before 1775⁵¹³ and the Rose and Crown, High Street, beside the castle approach, which closed c. 1770.⁵¹⁴ The Eagle or Spread Eagle open in High Street between the 1760s and 1790s had closed by 1816⁵¹⁵ and the Admiral Vernon, immediately south of the Ship with a large yard and stables in 1777 was last recorded in 1832 and its site now forms part of the Luttrell Arms.⁵¹⁶

Among the survivors were the Red Lion, at the south end of the shambles in 1652 but later moved to a large house east of High Street,⁵¹⁷ which remained open until⁵¹⁸ 1854 but closed shortly thereafter,⁵¹⁹ the George, a large house east of High Street recorded in 1665 but possibly that of 1463, which though 'ancient and decayed' in 1789 survived until 1873 when it was largely demolished,⁵²⁰ and the Glove inn, a large house west of High Street open by the 1650s but given up by 1738,⁵²¹ was re-let in the 1740s as the Horse and Crooks and remained open until c. 1901⁵²² after which it became a short-lived private hotel.⁵²³ The Old Castle, formerly the White Lion, west of High Street north of the Angel, was open by 1675 and remained open despite the innkeeper being charged with keeping a disorderly house in 1809⁵²⁴ and having his uppingstock or signpost in the street removed. Uppingstocks were declared a nuisance in the 1730s but survived into the 1800s. The inn was last recorded in 1818 when a prisoner was kept there for nine days and it was a private house and draper's shop in

⁵¹¹ Ibid. DD/L 1/4/12, 1/24/6, 1/27/19, 1/28/21/8, 2/32/4; ibid. Q/REI 8/3; Q/RLa 22/3, 6.

⁵¹² Ibid. DD/L 1/17/63, 1/29/25/32; 1/33/47.

⁵¹³ Ibid. 1/29/25/6—22, 2/41/9.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. 1/24/5—6; 1/26/15/24; ibid. Q/RLa 22/3.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid. DD/L 1/7/26; 1/8/27; 1/10/34, 35C; ibid. Q/REI 8/3.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. DD/L 1/10/35; 1/28/23/61; ibid. Q/REI 8/3. Named after Edward Vernon d. 1757.

⁵¹⁷ SHC, DD/L P15/47.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. 1/7/25, 1/10/35C, 1/24/6, 2/31/2.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. 1/30/29; ibid. Q/RLa 22/21; ibid. tithe award; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852—3).

⁵²⁰ SHC, D/P/du 4/1/2; DD/L P8/2/208; 1/4/14, 1/7/23, 25—6, 1/24/8, 1/29/24/18, 1/30/29/38; DD/CH 120/2; ibid. Q/REI 8/3; *London Gaz.* 30 Aug. 1859, pp. 3256—7; TNA, RG 10/2350.

⁵²¹ SHC, DD/L 1/4/11; 1/33/49; ibid. Q/RLa 4, 7, 22/3.

⁵²² Ibid. DD/L 1/4/11, 1/7/25—6, 1/10/35; 1/30/29/38; *Som. Co. Gaz. Dir.* (1840); TNA, RG 9/1602.

⁵²³ TNA, RG 13/2262; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906); H. Binding, *Discovering Dunster*, 23.

⁵²⁴ Devon RO, 1148M/add 1/53; SHC, Q/SR 127/31; ibid. DD/L 1/5/18, 1/6/19, 1/7/26, 1/23/2—3.

1840.⁵²⁵ Business may have transferred to the Castle, sometimes called the Old Castle, south of Church Street, licensed by 1828 but closed c.1840.⁵²⁶

The Ship, recorded from 1653,⁵²⁷ was a large house covering three medieval burgages north-east of High Street.⁵²⁸ In 1735—6 Richard Phelps painted a new sign, which was pulled down by a rival landlord.⁵²⁹ The Ship's rent fell from £18 in 1756 to £4 13s 2d in 1763.⁵³⁰ In ruins by 1777, it was rebuilt, extended and licensed in 1779 as the Luttrell Arms⁵³¹ a high-class hotel and posting house with a dining room, two parlours, seven bedchambers and stabling.⁵³² By 1839 it was 'much extolled by visitors and commercial gentlemen' and a staging post for coaches to Bristol and Taunton.⁵³³ By 1871 six resident staff besides the hotel keeper and his family looked after guests and their servants.⁵³⁴ The hotel sent a carriage to meet every train after the railway reached Dunster,⁵³⁵ hired out horses and carriages and sold mineral waters, wines and beers in bulk.⁵³⁶ By 1910 it was one of the most valuable properties in Dunster although the bathroom had been converted to a housemaids' store and several bedrooms had no fireplace.⁵³⁷ In 1923 it was extended to provide a carving room and china pantry and had its own garages.⁵³⁸ In 1950 when it passed out of Luttrell ownership it had 21 bedrooms, four bathrooms and could seat 50 at dinner. There were still ten loose boxes.⁵³⁹

⁵²⁵ SHC, DD/L 1/27/19; 1/32/38, 43, 2/48/25; box 296/2; *ibid.* Q/REL 8/3.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.* Q/RLa 22/22; Q/RSf 1; *ibid.* tithe award; Pigot & Co. Nat. and Com. Dir. (1830); Som. Gaz. Dir. (1840); TNA, HO 107/936.

⁵²⁷ TNA C 54/3719, no. 27; SHC, D/P/du 4/1/2; DD/L 1/7/23.

⁵²⁸ SHC, DD/L 1/25/10, 1/7/22; 1/33/49.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.* 1/4/11, 1/30/29/42.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.* 1/7/26; 1/30/29/43.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.* 1/4/12.

⁵³² *Ibid.* Q/REL 8/3; *ibid.* DD/L 1/5/18, 1/30/29/41.

⁵³³ Robson's Com. Dir. London and Western Cos (1839).

⁵³⁴ TNA, RG 10/2350.

⁵³⁵ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1883).

⁵³⁶ SHC, D/P du 2/8/11.

⁵³⁷ TNA, IR 58/82374.

⁵³⁸ SHC, D/R/wil 24/1/35.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.* DD/X/PTD 2.

The oldest part of the present building was probably built by Richard Luttrell who bought three merchants' houses on the site in 1442 and 1443. The main section is of three storeys with a central two storey gabled porch probably of the 1620s. Early features include window and door openings, and former rear hall with oak framed windows through two floors and an arch-braced roof, previously hidden by a plaster ceiling. Early 17th-century plasterwork survives in two rooms.⁵⁴⁰

Second only to the Ship in taxable value and burgage rights was the Three Cups east of High Street. It was a large inn with two courtyards, managed by the Allercotts until 1796 when they sold it to John Fownes Luttrell as a private house. It was revived by the Hossum family but closed again after 1832 and its largest courtyard was demolished before 1840.⁵⁴¹ Similar attempts were made to revive the Three Mariners north-east side of High Street, which closed before 1759 but was reopened by the Leigh family and closed again after 1813.⁵⁴²

Several new public houses were licensed in the 1830s and 1840s but some were short-lived. In 1837 five beerhouse licenses were issued for Dunster and two for Alcombe.⁵⁴³ They included the Bristol Arms, in West Street, kept by a carrier in the 1840s but given up by 1851,⁵⁴⁴ the Stag's Head, also in West Street, which remained open until c. 1910 despite a recommendation to close it in 1904,⁵⁴⁵ and possibly the Coach and Horses, set up as a rival posting house to the Luttrell Arms, but closed after 1840,⁵⁴⁶ and the New Inn near the Methodist church by 1841.⁵⁴⁷ In the 1860s the New Inn was moved, probably to the former Bristol Arms, a 15th-century house

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid. DD/L P8/2/52—3, 61—2, 112, 121—3, 141, 184—5; Maxwell Lyte, *Hist. Dunster II*, 332—3.

⁵⁴¹ SHC, DD/L 1/10/35A, 1/24/6, 1/27/19—20, 2/33/5, 7; *ibid.* Q/REI 8/3; *ibid.* tithe award.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.* DD/L 1/7/25—26, 1/10/35; 1/30/29/20—2.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.* DD/SAS PR 483/2.

⁵⁴⁴ *Co. Gaz. Dir. Som.* (1840); TNA, HO 107/936, 1920.

⁵⁴⁵ SHC, tithe award; *ibid.* D/PS/du 3/1; *ibid.* QS/LIC 1; TNA, IR 58/82374; *Co. Gaz. Dir. Som.* (1840); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1906—39).

⁵⁴⁶ *Co. Gaz. Dir. Som.* (1840).

⁵⁴⁷ SHC, tithe award; *Slater's Dir. Som.* (1852—3); TNA, HO 107/936; RG 9/1602.

partly rebuilt in the 19th century, and the original building was demolished. In the later 20th century its name was changed to the Stag's Head and it remains in business.⁵⁴⁸ A tallow chandler licensed the Bridge End, near his workshops on the corner of West and Gallox Streets, in 1849.⁵⁴⁹ In the early 1870s it was renamed the Foresters Arms, had nine bedrooms, bar, tap, clubroom and skittle alley by 1910, and remains in business.⁵⁵⁰ The Dunster Castle Hotel in High Street opened in the later 20th century and remains in business.

At Alcombe the London Inn near the tollhouse was a shop by 1840.⁵⁵¹ The Red Lion beerhouse, open by 1786, had a clubroom by 1816 and a malthouse in 1840 but closed c. 1922.⁵⁵² The Britannia beerhouse was probably open by 1851 and by 1910 had a skittle alley and a dubious reputation but was remodelled and enlarged in the 1920s and remains in business.⁵⁵³

Tourism

Dunster's tourist trade has a long history but despite welcoming genteel visitors the Luttrells were not happy about local people using their grounds; in 1719 a man was paid to watch for people heading for the Castle Tor on Sundays and to keep the gates shut.⁵⁵⁴ The Luttrell Arms was created with tourists in mind in 1779. Guests were allowed onto a terrace in the old park and might have gate keys for the castle woods

⁵⁴⁸ SHC, DD/CH 129/12; DD/PS/du 3/1; DD/V/Wlr 3.19; TNA, RG 9/1602; RG 10/2350; OS Map 1:10560, Som. XXXV. SW (1890 edn).

⁵⁴⁹ SHC, DD/SAS PR 482/2; DD/CCHJ, box 1; Slater's Dir. Som. (1852—3); PO Dir. Som. (1866); TNA, RG 9/1602.

⁵⁵⁰ TNA, RG 10/2350; *ibid.* IR 58/82374; PO Dir. Som. (1875); SHC, D/PS/du 3/1; D/R/wil 24/1/47.

⁵⁵¹ SHC, tithe award; London Gaz. 28 Feb. 1845, p. 247.

⁵⁵² SHC, DD/L 1/10/34; 2/20/113; *ibid.* Q/RLa 22/21; *ibid.* tithe award; TNA, IR 58/82372; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923).

⁵⁵³ TNA, HO 107/1920; *ibid.* RG 9/1602; *ibid.* IR 58/82372; PO Dir. Som. (1866); H. Binding, Exmoor Century (2001), 5.

⁵⁵⁴ SHC, DD/L 1/5/16.

and pleasure grounds any day except Sunday.⁵⁵⁵ By the early 20th century the Luttrells allowed paying visitors into the castle during the holiday season. The Festival of Britain pageant gained national media coverage and increased visitors to Dunster, which was also a popular day out from the new holiday camp in Minehead. In the later 20th century a number of private hotels opened to encourage tourists to stay including the Yarn Market, Spears Cross and Dunster Castle hotels. By 1971 half of shop turnover came from the tourist trade and in 1988 42 establishments could offer 374 beds with an average occupancy rate of 141 days. Nearly a quarter of visitors were from overseas.⁵⁵⁶ The tourist industry continues to dominate Dunster's economy.

Transport services

In 1839—40 the Bristol Speculator coach called at Dunster three times a week in each direction, the Royal Mail left the Luttrell Arms for Taunton each morning at 8 am. returning at 5 pm, two carriers went weekly to Bristol via Bridgwater, Exeter via Dulverton and Tiverton, and Porlock and two went to Taunton every week.⁵⁵⁷ The coming of the railway reduced demand for long distance road carrying but hauliers and porters brought goods such as coal from the station and Minehead quay. A coachbuilder, wheelwrights, shoeing smiths and saddlers, two cab proprietors, and five coachmen at Alcombe, were in business in 1901 and 1, 2, 3 and 4-horse closed or open carriages were hired out by the Luttrell Arms. Carriage building at the Ball survived until the 1920s⁵⁵⁸ when the motor car was sufficiently established for the

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. 1/30/29/41; H. Binding, Discovering Dunster, 37.

⁵⁵⁶ SHC, DD/L, box 290; Report for Dunster Joint Interim Local Plan (1978), 51; Som. CC, Visitor Survey 1988.

⁵⁵⁷ Robson's Com. Dir. London and Western Cos (1839); Co. Gaz. Dir. Som. (1840).

⁵⁵⁸ TNA, IR 58/82735; RG 11/2354, RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262; SHC, D/P/du 2/8/11; Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923).

Luttrell Arms garage to supply a taxi service and petrol pumps. By 1950 there was a second garage in St George's Street.⁵⁵⁹

Professional services

Until the early 20th century Dunster was a local centre for public and private services and many professional men lived and worked there. In the later 19th century it had a hospital, magistrates' court and police station, and other facilities, which were later transferred to Minehead.⁵⁶⁰

Portrait painter Richard Phelps (d. 1785) also designed features for the castle grounds and a reredos for Dunster church. At his death he left 260 prints, 80 drawings and sketches of his own, 50 oil paintings and nine waste canvases, gold rings, silver plate and a quantity of walnut and mahogany furniture. His sons included Richard, a dancing master in Dunster, whose goods seized for debt in 1798 included two safes, virginals, a library of books and 93 paintings including six family portraits, possibly some by his father.⁵⁶¹ Artists James Vickery and John Savage lived at Alcombe in the 1890s.⁵⁶² The Luttrells employed local surveyors and architects including Charles Henry Samson who practised in Dunster in the 1860s and 1870s, possibly designing his own home, Belle Vue Villa in Alcombe, before moving to Taunton.⁵⁶³ Hairdressers were in business by 1840,⁵⁶⁴ by 1875 a watchmaker also offered photography and a herbalist practised in West Street in 1881.⁵⁶⁵ By the 1940s there were no professional

⁵⁵⁹ Kelly's Dir. Som. (1923); Book of Dunster, 150—1; SHC, DD/X/PTD 2.

⁵⁶⁰ Below, soc. hist.; local govt.

⁵⁶¹ SHC, DD/DP 59/6, 65/5—6.

⁵⁶² TNA, RG 12/1864; RG 13/2262.

⁵⁶³ Ibid. RG 10/2350; Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir (1830); Slater's Dir. Som. (1852—3); PO Dir. Som. (1875); Kelly's Dir. Som. (1906).

⁵⁶⁴ Som. Co. Gaz. Dir. (1840).

⁵⁶⁵ PO. Dir. Som. (1875); TNA, RG 11/2354.

services in Dunster, apart from medical⁵⁶⁶ but an estate agent was in business in 1971.⁵⁶⁷

There had been an excise office since the 1780s or earlier⁵⁶⁸ and by 1852 there were four insurance agencies although by 1866 at least two had moved from shops to private houses at Alcombe, as personal business became as important as commercial and Alcombe was the preferred home for professional men.⁵⁶⁹ In 1872 Badcocks Bank of Taunton, which had previously used an agent, established a branch in Withycombe's stores, High Street, on Fridays.⁵⁷⁰ Stuckeys took over Badcocks but maintained banking facilities in Dunster until the end of the century. In the 1930s Lloyds bank had a branch in Dunster and in the 1970s was joined by the National Westminster. They had with limited opening and later closed. The Post office, with savings bank facility, was based at a cabinetmaker's shop in 1872 when there were two daily postal deliveries and one on Sundays. By 1889 there was also a post office at Alcombe and a facility at Dunster station.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁶ SHC, A/AGH 1/133; below, soc. hist.

⁵⁶⁷ SHC, C/ENPR 14/24.

⁵⁶⁸ Pigot and Co. Nat. and Com. Dir. (1830); Robson's Com. Dir. London and Western Cos (1839); SHC, Q/REI 8/3.

⁵⁶⁹ PO. Dir. Som. (1866).

⁵⁷⁰ SHC, DD/DP 72/3.

⁵⁷¹ Morris and Co. Dir. Som. (1872); Kelly's Dir. Som. (1889—1939); SHC, A/AGH 1/133.