

ECONOMIC HISTORY

By the mid 13th century there were several wealthy farmers notably Walter of Chilliswood who had a virgate holding and a house in Taunton.¹ In 1327 the highest taxpayer was Nicholas of Chilliswood at 2s. North Trendle tithing including Trull village had only seven taxpayers, Dipford ten and Woodland 11.² However, in 1334 North Trendle had the highest assessment and Woodland the lowest although it had 16 taxpayers in 1333.³ Agricultural wealth was evident in 1524 when of 69 subsidy payers 13 were assessed at £10 or more in goods of whom two were assessed at £20 and one at £40.⁴ In 1581 North Trendle had fewer subsidy payers than the other tithings and Woodland paid the most tax although in 1641 the population of North Trendle and Dipford was higher than in Woodland.⁵ The rebuilding of most farmhouses in the 16th and 17th centuries indicates agricultural prosperity.⁶

There was some clothmaking but agriculture was the main employer until the 20th century. Trull's popularity as a residential area, continuing the earlier development of neighbouring Wilton, saw a large influx of people whose work and business was in Taunton including factory workers by 1921 after bus services were introduced.⁷ In 2026 most working people in Trull commuted to Taunton. Queen's College was the largest employer in the parish.

AGRICULTURE

Medieval agricultural production was governed by the bishop of Winchester's Taunton manor. There was some shared meadow but no evidence for open arable fields. Farmsteads

¹ Hunt, *Medieval Customs*, 39, 60.

² Dickinson, *Kirbys Quest*, 149-51.

³ TNA, E 179/169/6; R. E. Glasscock, *Subsidy of 1334*, 264—5.

⁴ TNA, E 179/169/180.

⁵ Webb, *Tudor Subsidies*, 101, 119; Howard and Stoate, *Prot. Returns*, 119. The 1461 Trull subsidy is missing.

⁶ Above, intro.

⁷ TNA, RG 15/11221.

were dispersed throughout the parish either singly or in groups of two or three, presumably enabling them to share plough teams.⁸

Middle Ages

The mid 13th-century parish comprised 63 copyhold tenements held by 62 tenants. The largest were the two whole virgate holdings, later Batts and Chilliswood, the commonest were the 25 half-virgate and 18 ferling holdings. Only five tenants held less than 5 a. Seven estate labourers, including one woman, each had a 5-a. holding and a ninth share in 1½ a. of oats, the lord having the rest. The bedel and ploughman received a pound of wheat each, the use of the lord's plough, pasture for a cow and pannage for three pigs. Other estate workers recorded were the dairymaid, smith and forester. Total recorded arable was c.954 a., which with the Cerney freehold, closely equates to the 1,084 a. recorded in 1842.⁹

Labour services comprised ploughing, sowing, harrowing, mowing, reaping, carrying, ricking and threshing. They were particularly onerous as the demesne arable lay in the far north-east of the parish. The men of Woodland in the south were allowed to pasture the horses on which they rode to work with the lord's oxen or on the stubble. They received wheat and oats for their labour instead of the wheat and rye given to other tenants. One half-virgate and one 5-a tenant had to act as messengers but the latter was spared any other work. The tenant of the Chilliswood virgate also acted as messenger and ploughed up to four days but did no other work. He needed permission to sell young stock or arrange his daughter's marriage. One tenant of only 2½ a. had to reap 4 a. and come to mowing and haymaking.¹⁰

Tenants were punished for bad work, damage by livestock and cutting trees.¹¹

⁸ SHC, T/PH/win 1209—10, 1246—8; above landownership.

⁹ Hunt, *Medieval Customs*, 38, 58-62; SHC, tithe award.

¹⁰ Hunt, *Medieval Customs*, 38, 58-62.

¹¹ SHC, T/PH/win 1251-2.

The demesne arable comprised 129 a. at Puryhay and Loscombe, later Liscombe, east of the Sherford stream, rotated between fallow, oats and wheat. By 1300 their pasture was sold and from 1323 small parcels were let as overland until by 1412 it was all farmed out. The 15 a. of demesne meadow at Trull moor in the north-west was mown by custom in the 1290s and its winter pasture sold. Although some mowing continued until 1410, its summer pasture was farmed by the 1330s and small plots were let as overland by 1400. The demesne pasture, Oxenlease or Hillfurlong, now the site of Queens College, was similarly let out by the 1430s.¹²

In 1300 six estate workers were recorded for two of the tithings and a bedel, ploughmen and oxherds were shared with Bishops Hull parish. Rent was possibly lost during the Black Death and there were no buyers for hay and straw, but vacant tenancies were immediately filled and heriots paid. Despite the loss of demesne there were eight workers in 1471, although the eighth was later described as the lord's messenger.¹³ They still owed two weeks work annually in 1555, presumably outside the parish.¹⁴

1500-1800

Arable still dominated and grain tithes of Cerney and Hamwood were farmed out for £7 1s. 4d. in the 1530s when tithes and offerings of the rest of the parish were valued at £6 9d.¹⁵ The church obtained thatching reed from Hamwood farm in the 1540s and grew grain on its own land.¹⁶ A large barn, possibly 16th-century, survived at Steart until the 1960s and a large 18th-century barn was built on fields near Comeytrowe.¹⁷ Trull moor, partly inclosed by 1566, was

¹² SHC, T/PH/win 1291-2, 1300-2, 1323-4, 1334-5, 1400-1, 1411-12, 1433-4; DD/SP/71 [North Trendle].

¹³ SHC, T/PH/win 1300-2, 1348-9, 1453-4, 1471-2; DD/SP/71 [Dipford].

¹⁴ SHC, T/PH/win 1555-6.

¹⁵ TNA, SC 2/169/8; *Valor Eccl.* I, 170.

¹⁶ Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accounts*, 246-303

¹⁷ Som. HER 40637; SHC, A/DIF/116/233; A/CBA/21.

hedged closes by 1622, which probably led to the eventual creation of Overlands later Hoveland farm.¹⁸

By the 1530s some smaller holdings were held with larger farms and in 1566 there were 32 half-virgate holdings and, excluding cottage and overland holdings, 54 people held 66 tenements. Four tofts or house sites were recorded. Tenants still owed service as manorial officers and some works. Ten holdings in Woodland tithing owed carrying duties, one in Dipford the duty of lord's messenger, 25 in Dipford and North Trendle each owed a day's work and one owed two day's work. The seven estate workers' holdings paid many times their rent for commuted works but four had been absorbed into larger farms.¹⁹ By 1615 the dayne men, those who still owed a day's work, were required to work a six-hour day annually repairing river banks in Taunton.²⁰

John Smythe of Hamwood left 94 sheep to his daughter-in-law in 1576 and in 1593 his son left cows, plough oxen and wheat.²¹ Over half a farmer's wealth was usually in cattle, mainly for cheese production, and grain in the early 17th century although farmers in 1680 and 1684 had large flocks of sheep.²² Oxen were still used for ploughing and two were owed as heriot in 1626.²³ In 1716 and 1723 wealthy farmers had oxen but also horse plough tackle and collars and one farmer had three looses or pigsties.²⁴ In 1787 331 stone of flax was produced in the parish and possibly processed at a flax shop on Trull Green.²⁵

¹⁸ SHC, T/PH/win 1544-5; DD/SP/71 [North Trendle]; DD/SP/10 [Hull hundred]; DD/DP/37/5; tithe award.

¹⁹ SHC, T/PH/win 1538-9, 1544-5; DD/SP/71.

²⁰ SHC, DD/SP/22/15.

²¹ SHC, T/PH/win 1348-9; TNA, PROB 11/51/261, 11/58/319, 11/81/471.

²² SHC, DD/SP/1600s/7, 1640/19, 1648/39, 1667/25, 1679/51, 1680/57, 1684/119, 135, 141, 1687/19; TNA, PROB 4/21032.

²³ SHC, DD/SP/29 (1626), DD/SP/1684/135, 141.

²⁴ SHC, DD/SP/1716/9, 1723/48.

²⁵ SHC, Q/RLh/63; tithe award.

The Bakers of Hamwood, one of the wealthiest farming families, rebuilt their farmstead in the mid 17th century in red brick.²⁶ In 1684 widowed Mary Baker left her own estate in Devon to provide £1,000 to each of her daughters.²⁷ Two large late 17th or early 18th-century farmbuildings at Trull Green farm indicate substantial investment.²⁸ As smallholdings were absorbed into larger farms in the 18th century farmsteads were converted into labourer's cottages including Higher Dipford and nearby Gilbert's.²⁹

A 121-a. leasehold in 1783 included covenants not to plough orchard, meadow or old pasture, to use well-rotted dung from Taunton, presumably horse manure, and to live in the farmhouse.³⁰ In the 1780s and 1790s an unnamed farmer bought livestock at fairs for fattening, sowed turnips after wheat and cut rough grass left after grazing cattle for hay. Milk and cider were tithed.³¹

1800-1900

In 1801 William Blake of Cutsey farm had a lime-burning agreement with a company at Pickeridge Hill, Corfe, presumably because he used large quantities having enlarged his 67-a. farm to include Reaphay, Harper's and one of the Lipe Hill farms and by 1842 he had 278 a.³² In 1804 there were seven farms over 100 a., the largest being Hamwood (229 a.) and the Whitmash's Comeytrowe (275 a.), eight of 50 to 100 a., ten of 20 to 50 a. and two under 20 a.³³ The greatest change came in the 1820s with the splitting up of the two Whitmash farms and the bankruptcy of Robert Buncombe of Gatchell's resulting in the redistribution of over

²⁶ Above, intro.

²⁷ TNA, PROB 11/370/160; PROB 4/10202.

²⁸ Som. HER, 40647-8.

²⁹ Above, intro, sett.

³⁰ SHC, DD/MT/25/2/44.

³¹ SHS, DD/CT/39; D/P/tru/24/19-21.

³² SHC, DD/CT/24, 37; tithe award.

³³ SHC, DD/CT/22-3.

600 a. into existing farms and new holdings.³⁴ Comeytrowe House became the centre of a farm with a new barton.³⁵ In 1841 there were 90 resident agricultural labourers but a shepherd was the only specialist.³⁶

In 1842 almost half the parish was still arable, probably due to its fertile marl over red sandstone, but there were 676 a. of meadow and 280 a. of pasture. There were many large farms, few smallholdings and blocks of land with no farmstead, presumably held with farms in neighbouring parishes. Of six farms over 100 a., two were over 200 a. namely Cutsey (278 a.) and Hamwood (229 a.). There were nine farms of 50 to 100a, 12 of 20 to 50 a and eight under 20 a. Some fields had been enlarged since 1804 but farms often had dispersed fields.³⁷ The Pitminster, Trull, Corfe and Angersleigh Agricultural Society was established in 1842 and hosted competitions and scientific lectures and was still meeting in 1866.³⁸ In 1851 60 male and female labourers were employed permanently on farms and Cutsey then had 336 a.³⁹

In the 1850s Cutsey farm produced fatstock, wheat and barley, spending 7s. an acre on ploughing.⁴⁰ In 1867-9 Thomas Blake of Cutsey invested in a large house, incorporating the best rooms of the old, and a model farmstead designed by John Watson of Torquay and built by Call and Pethick of Plymouth in red brick at a cost of c.£6,000. There were two-storey parallel ranges of cattle pens with feed shutes, manure pits and lofts over linked by a cross range to the north backed by a three-storey mixing room and threshing barn with boiler house and tall chimney. The yard also contained a dairy, cart shed and pigsties. Equipment included a Clayton and Shuttleworth threshing machine and 6 h.p. engine, a tubular boiler by

³⁴ SHC, DD/BR/ehp/26; DD/HC/18/4/27; DD/KIT/2/5; tithe award.

³⁵ SHC, DD/KIT/7/11.

³⁶ TNA, HO 107/959.

³⁷ SHC, DD/CT/22-3, 25; tithe award.

³⁸ SHC, DD/CPHS/27.

³⁹ TNA, HO 107/1922.

⁴⁰ SHC, DD/CT/38.

Howard Brothers of Bedford and a mill by Amies and Barford of Peterborough. A hydraulic ram provided water.⁴¹ By 1881 Cutsey had absorbed Georges and Steart farms and covered c.420 a. necessitating farmyard extensions in 1885.⁴² In 1875 the farm was breeding Devon longwool sheep with 20 rams.⁴³ The farm was prized for its rich grass in 1897 when 6 months grazing for 280 animals was worth £334.⁴⁴ Other farms improved at the same period included Comeytrowe House, where a pond and iron launder powered an overshot wheel at a new mill house, and Chilliswood and Hamwood, where horse engine houses were added to barns.⁴⁵

In 1876 half the returned arable was under wheat and the rest was mainly under fodder roots, beans and barley. Livestock comprised 90 horses, 334 cattle, half dairy, 1,869 sheep and 160 pigs.⁴⁶ In 1890 the number of holdings between 20 and 50 a. had fallen to three but there were 12 under 5a.⁴⁷ By 1896 only 690 a. of arable was returned of which a third was wheat and almost a third was under roots, although there were fewer animals.⁴⁸

Allotments

There were allotments on glebe south of the church by 1873 when some were lost to the new school but the vicar let the remaining land in 16 plots.⁴⁹ Tenants were not to sublet, sow corn or cultivate except with a spade.⁵⁰ Twenty-eight allotments were recorded in 1890.⁵¹ Others managed by the Trull Allotment Association were established c.1900 on Comeytrowe Road west of Trull Green but were lost in 1938 for housing development.⁵² The glebe allotments were

⁴¹ SHC, DD/CT/32; A/DSW/23; Som. HER 40367.

⁴² SHC, DD/X/TLL/1; DD/CT/28, 73.

⁴³ SHC, DD/CPHS/24/4.

⁴⁴ SHC, DD/CT/31.

⁴⁵ Som. HER 32498, 40631; SHC, tithe award.

⁴⁶ TNA, MAF 68/486

⁴⁷ SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/3/14.

⁴⁸ TNA, MAF 68/1626

⁴⁹ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/8, 23/62.

⁵⁰ SHC, DD/DP/200/5.

⁵¹ SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/3/14.

⁵² SHC, D/PC/tru/1/1/1 (1938).

sold in 1958 to expand the school and build a new village hall and recreation ground.⁵³ They were replaced in 1959 by land in Trull Meadow, which remained allotments in 2026.⁵⁴

1900 to present

Despite the late 19th-century improvements traditional cob and thatched farmsteads survived like Dipford, a dairy and sheep farm in 1904 with cattle stalls for 30.⁵⁵ The parish had 1,249 a. of grass and 852 ½ a. of arable in 1905.⁵⁶ In 1906 horses had increased to 79, there were 592 cattle, 1,235 sheep, 79 horses and 23 pigs. Wheat remained the dominant crop.⁵⁷ A new farmstead called Claremont was built west of Queen's College in the 1900s but it was occupied by labourers in 1911 and demolished for housing c.1972.⁵⁸ In 1909 the county council declined an offer of land for smallholdings as there was no demand.⁵⁹ In 1910 Hamwood was well-farmed with a granary and cowstalls for 47. Farthings was a relatively new 30-a grass dairy farm with piggeries. By contrast Budleigh in the extreme south had poor arable and rushy, boggy land. Higher and Lower Comeytrowe had extensive stabling, cowstalls, piggeries and fowl houses. Cutsey was still using its boiler house but there was no reference to water power on farms.⁶⁰

In 1916 only eight farms were over 100 a. and 20 were under 10 a. Of 2,211 a. grass covered 1,597 a., mostly permanent pasture, yet there were 99 horses and only a few more cattle and sheep than in 1906.⁶¹ At Dipford farm in 1918 23 dairy cattle, 14 pigs and 43 poultry were sold with dairy equipment and seed potatoes.⁶² The following year Herswell

⁵³ SHC, WBF/20/472/7; C.W. Green, *A short history of Trull school* [Trull, 1997], 25.

⁵⁴ SHC, D/PC/tru/1/1/1 (1959).

⁵⁵ SHC, DD/SAS/C2273/1/P2/2.

⁵⁶ Statistics supplied by then Bd of Agric. 1905.

⁵⁷ TNA, MAF 68/2196.

⁵⁸ TNA RG 13/2273; RG 14/14216; SHC, C/GP/HF/343.

⁵⁹ SHC, A/BNK/4/90.

⁶⁰ TNA, IR 58/82663; MAF 32/156/285.

⁶¹ TNA, MAF 68/2766

⁶² SHC, A/BVG/1.

with Coxes accommodated more than 70 cattle, a large piggery and two poultry houses.⁶³ By the 1920s accommodation land for butchers was available.⁶⁴ In 1936 there was an increase in pigs to 826 and poultry to 7,630 including turkeys and ducks.⁶⁵

In 1941 at least five Trull farms had tractors and most had an engine in the yard but there were still 65 horses. Cutsey used a turbine and a ram for water power. Few farms recorded outside labour although some used casual workers. Most farms were A-rated, Budleigh was classed as C because of its poor land and buildings and three farms were rated B for lack of labour, poor land or inability to transition from livestock breeding to arable farming. At least 120 a. of grassland had been ploughed, mainly for wheat. Three farms were growing vegetables for human consumption, seven produced potatoes and Higher Comeytrowe produced 11 a. of flax for linseed. Higher Comeytrowe also had a dairy and had ,amalgamated with Farthings. Some farmers had additional land outside the parish. The returns included 824 cattle, 458 sheep, 616 pigs, one goat and 3,592 poultry.⁶⁶

After the war new barns and cattle accommodation were built, the Cutsey farm estate was broken up and fertile arable and orchard was sold for future development.⁶⁷ In 1946 two land army workers and eight prisoners of war were still on farms. From 1943 to 1956 there was a steady increase in cattle from 853 to 1,056, in pigs from 97 to 936 and poultry from 2,499 to 11,952. There were 42 regular workers in 1956 but that included family members.⁶⁸ The Grants of Hamwood c.1950 began producing well-matured cheese, which was locally renowned in the later 20th century.⁶⁹ In 1957 there was a plant nursery at Comeytrowe and in

⁶³ SHC, D/P/tru/7/2.

⁶⁴ SHC, DD/AY/162; D/P/tru/7/2.

⁶⁵ TNA, MAF 68/3809

⁶⁶ TNA, MAF 32/156/285.

⁶⁷ SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/505, 525; 24/2/396; DD/SAS/C2273/1/T51, 3; DD/KW/1945/49, 1946/43.

⁶⁸ TNA, MAF 68/4066, 4177, 4547.

⁶⁹ Hallam, *Trull*, 46.

the 1980s at Chilliswood.⁷⁰ In 1965 Higher Dipford was a 57-a. dairy farm, which used rye and kale to feed hens and saddleback pigs producing organic pork, eggs and dairy products until 1988 or later.⁷¹ In 1984 a new Cutsey farmstead was built across the road specialising in breeding Devon cattle.⁷²

Arable declined steadily and barley was the main crop but grown on under 200 a. In the 1980s pig and sheep production recovered after falling in the 1970s but poultry production halved, possibly as housing development encroached on smallholdings.⁷³ By the 21st century the few remaining farms were beef, Hamwood farm was the only dairy farm and a poultry unit was lost to the Orchard Grove development.⁷⁴

Orchards

Orchards produced apples and pears from the 1540s and the parish paid bounties for bullfinches to protect fruit in the 1570s when apples were grown on church land.⁷⁵ Many 17th and 18th-century farmers made cider and in 1657 an orchard was considered desirable for a clergyman.⁷⁶ In 1719 Reaphay farm had a nursery of young fruit trees and in 1749 an orchard of 'choice fruit' was valued at £200.⁷⁷ A 121-a. farm at Sweethay in 1783 included 13½ a. of orchard, not to be ploughed, and by 1805 there were 16 a.⁷⁸ It had a large cider press, apple mill and horse gin.⁷⁹ At Budleigh several orchards were planted although one had been grubbed out by 1804.⁸⁰ Golden Peartree Close south of Comeytrowe and Cherry Orchard at Liscombe, recorded in 1842, were probably ancient orchard sites but only the latter was still

⁷⁰ Kelly's *Dir. Taunton* (1957), p. 330; C.W. Green, *Trull and Staplehay* [Trull, 1993], 79.

⁷¹ SHC, DD/WI/293/10/1; E. Byford and E. Holloway, *Sampling Somerset* (Chiselborough, 1988), 44.

⁷² TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 81.

⁷³ TNA, MAF 68/4998, 5498, 6025.

⁷⁴ cutseyfarm.co.uk; TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 84.

⁷⁵ TNA, E 321/3/18; SHC, Q/SR/64/115; D/P/tru/4/1/1.

⁷⁶ SHC, DD/SP/1634/136, 1679/51, 1684/135, 229; D/P/tru/23/54.

⁷⁷ SHC, DD/CT/32; DD/SP/1749/34.

⁷⁸ SHC, DD/MT/25/2/44, 27/1/15.

⁷⁹ SHC, DD/RLM/48/371, 393; A/DSW/2594-9.

⁸⁰ Som. HER 37944, 37946; SHC, DD/CT/22-3

orchard. There were then 137 a. of orchard but some had been cleared by the 1880s.⁸¹ By 1906 there were only 27½ a. but that increased to 107 a. in 1916.⁸² Virtually all were lost to housing from the mid 20th century. The Orchard Grove estate used apple names for its streets.

Woodland

Woodland tithing and Hamwood, Comeytrove, possibly tree combe, Budleigh, Sweethay, Cutsey and Reaphay may indicate old woodland clearance. Chilliswood farm may result from early clearance of part of Chillewardiswood.⁸³ The remainder's beech mast was sold 1302, its bark in 1341, its pasture for a substantial rent from 1335 and by 1376 its pasture and mast were farmed out.⁸⁴ Although the lessee was forbidden to cause waste the rent was reduced from 1411 possibly because of further clearance.⁸⁵ Small plots of overland in Dipford tithing from the mid 14th century were possibly cleared from the wood including Hurtishay.⁸⁶ In 1538-9 a Dipford tenant was forbidden to cut trees and hedges except for house repair and Chilliswood wood was last recorded c.1582.⁸⁷

Hamwood was largely cleared well before the mid 13th century when Hamwood was a surname.⁸⁸ Part survived and like Chilliswood was largely beech whose mast was sold 1301-2. By 1324 poplar croppings and brushwood were sold and 15 affers were pastured there.⁸⁹ Pasture and pannage for pigs when there was beech mast were sold throughout the 14th century but by 1400 loppings and underwood were rarely sold.⁹⁰ The office of

⁸¹ SHC, tithe award; OS Map 1:10560, LXXX. SE (1889 edn); LXXIX. NE & NW (1891 edn).

⁸² TNA, MAF 68/2196, 2766.

⁸³ SHC, T/PH/win 1300-1; Hunt, *Medieval Customs*, 42.

⁸⁴ SHC, T/PH/win 1301-2, 1334-5, 1340-1, 1437-9.

⁸⁵ SHC, T/PH/win 1400-1, 1411-12, 1423-4.

⁸⁶ SHC, T/PH/win 1348-9, 1471-2; DD/SP/71 [Dipford].

⁸⁷ SHC, T/PH/win 1538-9; DD/SP/72, f. 193d.

⁸⁸ Hunt, *Medieval Customs*, 38, 42.

⁸⁹ SHC, T/PH/win 1301-2, 1324-5.

⁹⁰ SHC, T/PH/win 1334-5, 1360-1, 1376-7, 1386-7, 1400-1.

Hamwood woodward had lapsed by the later 15th century when oaks were cut for use at Taunton castle or the mills, but only wheel timber by 1519. By the 1470s livestock was excluded from the wood, which was gated, 'to save the spring', presumably the source of the Galmington stream, but pasture was farmed there in 1528-9.⁹¹ The church used Hamwood timber in 1529-30 but later got it from West Buckland.⁹²

Part of Hamwood was later replanted as in 1566 the wood comprised 30 a. of 10-year old thorn, holly and maple underwood and 200 young oaks.⁹³ In 1578 700 oaks in the wood must be neither felled nor 'decapitated'.⁹⁴ Two men paid 10s. each for part of the wood c.1579. Tenants owed pannage but it was simply a customary fixed payment by that date.⁹⁵ In 1678 the 30-a wood, excluding timber trees was let to Mary Baker of Hamwood with permission to grub up the underwood. Leases continued until 1837 or later but by then there was little timber.⁹⁶ Oak and elm woodland at Cerney recorded in the early 16th century may have originally been part of Hamwood.⁹⁷ Zaney copse (½ a.) and Hamwood copse (3a.) survived in 1842, the latter reduced from over 15 a. in 1805. A further ½ a. south of Hamwood farm was cleared after 1842. Zaney copse was absorbed into Cutsey covert planted before 1881 on former arable fields.⁹⁸

In the 14th century there was alder wood by Loscombe and Puryhay, presumably adjoining the Sherford stream, whose banks are still well-wooded.⁹⁹ In the north-east an area, now built up, is still known as Wild Oak, some of Queen's College playing fields were

⁹¹ SHC, T/PH/win 1410-12, 1423-4, 1426-7, 1440-1, 1448-9, 1471-2, 1484-5, 1516-19, 1528-9.

⁹² Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accounts*, 256, 263.

⁹³ SHC, D/SP/71 f. 67.

⁹⁴ SHC, DD/SP/3 (1578).

⁹⁵ SHC, DD/SP/71 (Woodland), 331; tithe award.

⁹⁶ SHC, DD/CH/125/5.

⁹⁷ TNA, SC 2/169/8.

⁹⁸ SHC, DD/CT/23; T/PH/sro/11; tithe award; DD/CT/28.

⁹⁹ SHC, T/PH/win 1324-5.

formerly Oak Fields and an ancient oak in Trull meadow was a village landmark.¹⁰⁰ At Herswell farm c.1775 hedgerow ash, elm, oak and poplars were mapped, The Grove having been cleared, probably much earlier. A sawpit field was recorded nearby.¹⁰¹ The parish was woody with fine elms in 1780s but only 9 a. of woodland remained in 1842.¹⁰² In the mid 19th century maiden oak, ash and elm and pollard oaks were sold on Budleigh farm and oak and elm trees at Cutsey and Herswell farms, possibly former hedgerow trees as many field hedges were removed at that period.¹⁰³ Batts Park had valuable trees and some survived clearance in the 1930s.¹⁰⁴ The creation of Cutsey covert raised woodland to 11½ a. in 1905, which mostly survives.¹⁰⁵

INDUSTRY, TRADES AND CRAFTS

Quarrying

Old quarries were noted in 1842 and one near Castleman's Hill was occasionally used in the 1900s. Comeytrowe's gravel pits, disused by 1889, were probably for road repair and its claypits for marl.¹⁰⁶

Cloth

In 1379 three weavers and three 'artificers' were taxed in two tithings.¹⁰⁷ The parish clerk was a weaver in 1577 and a man had four looms, but no cloth or yarn, in 1678.¹⁰⁸ In 1614

¹⁰⁰ SHC, DD/SP/211; A/DQO/418/15.

¹⁰¹ SHC, DD/CT/22.

¹⁰² McDermott and Berry, *Rack's Survey of Som.* p. 285; SHC, tithe award.

¹⁰³ *Taunton Courier* 4 Feb. 1857, 7 Dec. 1864, 12 Feb. 1873; BNA accessed 19 May 2026; SHC, DD/CPHS/25; DD/CT/22; tithe award; OS Map 1:10560, LXXIX. NW (1891 edn).

¹⁰⁴ SHC, D/T/M/7/5; below, soc. hist.

¹⁰⁵ Statistics supplied by then Bd of Agric. 1905.

¹⁰⁶ SHC, tithe award; OS Map 1:10560, LXXX. SE (1889 edn); LXXIX. NE & NW (1891 edn); VCH office, Trull draft text 1900s.

¹⁰⁷ C.C. Fenwick, *The Poll taxes of 1372, 1377 and 1381*, 440; Woodland is missing.

¹⁰⁸ SHC, D/D/Cta/B/56; DD/SP/1678/68.

Joan Jennings, soapmaker, was accused of making soap on Sundays, probably for cleaning new cloth.¹⁰⁹ Fields called Rack House near Daw's Green and Rack Stead near Trull Green indicate cloth dressing.¹¹⁰ A woman accused of stealing lace in 1617 claimed to have made some.¹¹¹ In 1650 wick yarn was stolen whilst drying outdoors.¹¹² In the early 18th century sergeweaving employed a few people some of whom moved to Taunton, where later textile workers were employed.¹¹³

Malting

In the 1630s malt was possibly made in the parish, barley was grown locally and farms in 1682 and 1716 had malthouses and malt chambers, but no malt.¹¹⁴ A maltster was recorded in 1841.¹¹⁵

Butchery and Leather

A Trull butcher had a stall at Wellington in 1627 and two butchers were recorded in 1619.¹¹⁶ Butcher William Dare (d. 1748) had a personal inventory worth £400 and lands and houses worth c.£2,700.¹¹⁷ There were up to three butchers in the 19th century and one butcher's shop was in business from 1900 to 1980 or later.¹¹⁸

Slaughterhouses were recorded at Trull Green in 1845, given up by 1871, at Dipford in the 1850s and on Church Road c.1900-10.¹¹⁹ In 1931 a slaughterhouse was built at

¹⁰⁹ SHC, D/D/Ca/184, f. 92B/56.

¹¹⁰ SHC, tithe award.

¹¹¹ SHC, Q/SR/29/97.

¹¹² SHC, Q/SR/82/135-6.

¹¹³ SHC, D/P/tau.m/13/3/6 (1702); D/P/tru/23/75; TNA, RG 11/2364; RG 13/2273.

¹¹⁴ SHC, Q/SR/62/78-9; DD/SP/1687/19, 1716/9.

¹¹⁵ TNA, HO 107/959.

¹¹⁶ SHC, Q/SR/59/34; Q/RLa/33.

¹¹⁷ SHC, DD/SP/1749/34.

¹¹⁸ TNA, HO 107/1922; SHC, DD/WI/293/10/1; A/AGH/1/243.

¹¹⁹ SHC, DD/VL/2/3; DD/52/1; DD/IR/T/27/3; Hallam, *Trull*, 23.

Comeytrowe House for the Baker family and in 1950 an egg-packing station was added.¹²⁰ In 1954 the business moved to a new slaughterhouse in Lipe Hill Lane with facilities for cattle, sheep, pigs and tripe making. By 1957 they had butcher's shops throughout Somerset. The egg-packing plant at the house processed over half a million eggs a week by 1966 when it was destroyed by fire.¹²¹ By 1980 the Bakers also slaughtered poultry, processed meat and made pies, employing up to 200 people across the entire business, but closed down c.1986.¹²² In 2026 the large abattoir site was semi-derelict.

A fellmonger took an apprentice in 1680.¹²³ Tanner Edmund Gaylard had hides, skins and bark worth c.£45 in 1684.¹²⁴ Cutsey farm supplied bark to tanners in 1840 presumably from felling hedgerow trees.¹²⁵

Other trades

A man was named le Crockere in the mid 13th century.¹²⁶ Comeytrowe had a smith in 1340.¹²⁷ In 1682 a blacksmith had tools but no horseshoes.¹²⁸ His brother, a gunsmith, was accused of making a gun and pistols for John Trenchard of Taunton among others c.1681.¹²⁹ In 1721 a blacksmith took an apprentice from Culmstock, Devon in 1721.¹³⁰ Smithies were rated in Woodland tithing in the 1820s and in North Trendle in 1833.¹³¹ By 1841 four smiths worked in the village and at Daw's Green.¹³² The village smithy, in the terrace east of Honiton Road, was kept by a woman between 1891 and 1911 behind her grocery shop. It

¹²⁰ SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/252, 521.

¹²¹ SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/605; DD/WI/152/10/1; *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), p. 350.

¹²² SHC, A/AGH/1/343; *Business Dir.* (1983), 68; *Western Gaz.* 16 Jan. 1987: BNA accessed 27 May 2026.

¹²³ SHC, D/P/tau.ja/13/6/1.

¹²⁴ SHC, DD/SP/1684/52

¹²⁵ SHC, Q/SR/508/94.

¹²⁶ Hunt, *Medieval Customs*, 61.

¹²⁷ SHC, T/PH/win 1340-1.

¹²⁸ SHC, DD/SP/1682/36.

¹²⁹ *Cal. SP Dom.* 1683, p. 357

¹³⁰ SHC, D/P/tru/23/75.

¹³¹ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/6, 26, 14/1/4.

¹³² TNA, HO 107/959.

closed in 1936.¹³³ Daw's Green smithy closed after 1921 but the house is called The Forge.¹³⁴

There was a wheelwright at Dipford between 1866 and 1902 and in 1921 two wheelwrights and an apprentice.¹³⁵

In 1925 the Shire family opened a garage on Church Road, selling petrol out of cans. In 1927 Stanley Shire opened the Corner garage with petrol pump and a taxi and it remained open as Owl repair garage in 2026. In 1936 his brother Arthur, who ran a garage in the former smithy, moved to a purpose-built garage on Honiton Road. In 2026 it handled car sales and repairs but shared the premises with other businesses.¹³⁶ From c.1975 a large motorway service station in the south of the parish employed local people.¹³⁷

A builder died in 1831 and the number of building workers, mainly carpenters and masons, rose to 23 in 1841 and 28 in 1881.¹³⁸ There were building firms in the village and at Comeytrowe in 1957.¹³⁹ Increasing population provided work for shoemakers, dressmakers and tailors and by 1881 there were 16 dressmakers and 24 laundresses.¹⁴⁰

RETAIL AND SERVICES

A shop near Trull Green, recorded from 1804, was probably a baker's, there were four bakers in 1841 and at least one for the rest of the century.¹⁴¹ Women kept one or two grocer's shops in the later 19th century, three shopkeepers were recorded in 1861 and a shop at the village

¹³³ SHC, tithe award; DD/CH/136/2; TNA, RG 12/1873; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894, 1902); TPAG, New story of Trull, 117.

¹³⁴ TNA, RG 15/1121.

¹³⁵ *P.O. Dir. Som.* (1866); *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1902); TNA, RG 15/11221.

¹³⁶ SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/386, 1097; DD/WI/293/10/1.

¹³⁷ SHC, A/AGH/1/343.

¹³⁸ SHC, DD/ED/1831/238; TNA, HO 107/959; RG 11/2364.

¹³⁹ *Kelly's Dir. Taunton* (1957), p. 331.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, HO 107/1922; RG 11/2364.

¹⁴¹ TNA, HO 107/959; SHC, DD/VL/2/3; Q/RJ/35/27; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1894).

smithy remains open as Trull Stores.¹⁴² In the 1930s Beatrice Shire kept a dairy and general shop at her son's Corner garage, a delicatessen and café in 2026.¹⁴³ By 1947 there was the general shop on Honiton Road, the post office and a butcher.¹⁴⁴ In c.1960 a pair of shops was built in Church Road. Travelling shops sold bread, fish and dairy produce in 1979.¹⁴⁵

A postwoman was recorded in 1881 and a sub-post office was kept from 1883 in Honiton Road.¹⁴⁶ A wooden office was provided there in 1908 and in 1911 it was run by a father and daughter who employed a telegraph messenger. It was rebuilt in stone in 1965 and in 2026 was a hairdresser and printshop. The post office moved into Church Road c.1972 and into Trull Stores in 2015.¹⁴⁷ An undertaker was recorded in 1921 and a chimney sweep and car hire were available in 1947. A mobile library visited in 1979.¹⁴⁸ By the 2020s there was a hairdresser, a Pilates studio, a café and a dry cleaners in the village.

Alys beer brewer donated beer worth 2s. 8d. to the church c.1532.¹⁴⁹ The Harris family were licensed tipplers c.1608 and kept the Dolphin, last recorded in 1619.¹⁵⁰ In the later 17th century two alehouse keepers were licenced but in 1696 a man kept a disorderly house and sold liquor despite losing his licence and two other alehouses needed to be suppressed.¹⁵¹ In the mid 18th century six people were convicted for selling alcohol without licence.¹⁵² Thereafter no licences were issued in the parish but two Pitminster beerhouses were near the village.¹⁵³

¹⁴² TNA, RG 9/1613; RG 11/1873; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1861).

¹⁴³ *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1939).

¹⁴⁴ SHC, A/AGH/1/343; DD/WI/293/10/1.

¹⁴⁵ SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/732; A/AGH/1/343.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, RG 11/1873; *Kelly's Dir. Som.* (1883, 1894).

¹⁴⁷ TNA, RG 14/14216; SHC, DD/WI/152/10/1, 293/10/1; Green, *Trull and Staplehay*, 22.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, RG 15/11221; SHC, A/AGH/1/343.

¹⁴⁹ Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accounts*, 264.

¹⁵⁰ SHC, Q/SR/3/115; Q/RLa/1 (1609), 33, 34/3 (1618).

¹⁵¹ SHC, Q/RLa/19/1; Q/SO/8, f. 319.

¹⁵² SHC, Q/SR/316/3/22, 324/2/39, 331/3/37.

¹⁵³ TNA, HO 73/8.