

SOCIAL HISTORY

Several large farmhouses are an indication of agricultural wealth in the post-medieval period and others have been demolished. Seventeenth-century farmers invested in livestock, land or loans rather than luxury goods but some wealthy farming women had plate, jewellery, books, linen, silk and even gilt leather hangings.¹ However, only one chest tomb survives, dating from the 17th century, and the earliest church memorial is dated 1633.² By the mid 18th century prosperous farmers, described as gentlemen, dominated the parish but although several accumulated farms no single family predominated.³

By the 19th century there were good non-agricultural houses in the village like Orchard Cottage with a water closet and a wine cellar in 1847.⁴ Thereafter substantial middle-class housing development increased female domestic servants from 46 in 1841 to 120 in 1891. There were 187 in 1939, many employed by Queen's College or as dailies. Coachmen, grooms and gardeners increased from 30 in 1881 to 40 by 1901.⁵

Families of up to 12 occupied small cottages in the later 19th century and some new terraced houses in Trull village only had three rooms.⁶ In 1911 there were 35 dwellings with fewer than five rooms and although overcrowding eased 16 dwellings still had three rooms or fewer in 1921.⁷ Only in 1923 were two local authority houses authorised and requests for more were refused.⁸ The failure to build more working-class housing left 49 people on the local authority waiting list in 1957, reduced to eight by 1976 as more houses were built.⁹ A

¹ Siraut, *Som. Wills*, 89; DD/SP/1600s/7, 1640/19; 1684/135; TNA, PROB 4/10202; PROB 11/146/20.

² SHC, D/D/Ct/T/36; DD/X/MDT/328.

³ SHC, Q/RJL/43; tithe award.

⁴ SHC, DD/SPY/15.

⁵ TNA, HO 107/959/25; RG 12/1873; RG 11/2364; RG 13/2273; RG 305/1/WOON, WOPH, WPWO.

⁶ TNA, RG 9/1613; RG 12/1873; above. intro.

⁷ TNA, RG 14/14216; RG 15/11221.

⁸ SHC, D/PC/tru/1/1/1(1919, 1931-2, 1936, 1945), 1/2/1 (1923).

⁹ *Taunton Courier*, 1 June 1957: BNA accessed 24 April 2026; SHC, D/DC/tau.d/2/2/4.

2007 survey, which found 18 households on very low incomes in insecure accommodation, resulted in affordable housing development in 2007 and 2016 at Dipford and Gatchell Oaks.¹⁰

Migration

Edward Ash (d. 1671) moved to Batts c.1662 but retained his house in Barbados.¹¹ Several men were transported to the West Indies in 1685 and one to Virginia.¹² Edward Dymond (d. 1716) came from Cork, Ireland where he kept a house and left money to the poor.¹³ By the 19th century most long-distance migrants were retirees from government service in India, Australia or elsewhere. In 1901 at least ten residents were Indian born.¹⁴

Several parishioners moved to London although Edward Strickland (d. 1826), cutler and silversmith, returned.¹⁵ Poor migrants were returned under the settlement laws, however, Cradley, Worcestershire was prepared to keep a family in 1835 if Trull contributed to their relief.¹⁶ From the mid 19th century several Trull people emigrated to the USA and Canada.¹⁷ People also migrated to south Wales, 14 by 1891, but most migration was local; 63 Trull people were living in Taunton in 1891.¹⁸

COMMUNITY LIFE

Medieval entertainment centred around church ales and other fundraising events.¹⁹ In 1680 a Trull goldsmith built a show called *The beginning of the world*.²⁰ Children's novelist Juliana

¹⁰ SHC, D/PC/tru/5/5/2; TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 66.

¹¹ TNA, PROB 11/339/249; SHC, DD/X/MDT/328.

¹² W. Wigfield, *Monmouth Rebels*, 24, 55, 136, 159, 181-2.

¹³ TNA, PROB 11/552/238.

¹⁴ SHC, DD/X/MDT/328; TNA, RG 10/2367, RG 13/2273, RG 14/14216, RG 15/11221.

¹⁵ TNA, PROB 11/1712/435; SHC, DD/CH/44; D/P/tru/2/1/8 (1826).

¹⁶ Devon Heritage Centre, 3483A/PO/22/98; 3137A/PO/43/10, 45/5; SHC, D/P/tru/24/60.

¹⁷ SHC, DD/X/NFD/1; New York, arriving passenger lists; Canada, arriving passenger lists: Ancestry accessed 30 Apr. 2026.

¹⁸ Census schedules, 1891.

¹⁹ Dunning and McDermott, *Church Accounts*, 246-303.

²⁰ *Cal. SP. Dom.* Jul.-Sep. 1683, 192.

Horatia Ewing (d. 1885), wife of hymnwriter Alexander Ewing (d. 1895), spent her last years in Trull and kept *Aunt Judy's Magazine*.²¹ The parish celebrated Empire Day in the 1900s, Coronation Day 1902 and 1911, peace in 1919 and 1946, the 1953 coronation and the 1977 Jubilee with processions, teas and sports.²²

Sport

From 1846 to 1852 Taunton races were held on Trull Moor, part of which was called Trull Race Course until 1858.²³ In 1851 Boxenhedge Green was allocated for recreation, a use legally extinguished c.1964.²⁴ An archery ground at Batts Park, created c.1875 with pavilion and croquet and tennis lawns, was used by the West Somerset Archery Society until 1888.²⁵ A rifle range opened at Trull Green in 1901 but after 1918 was replaced by a bungalow.²⁶ From 1925 a skittle club used an alley at the village hall but it was demolished before 1971.²⁷ The Taunton Vale Hunt kennels were at Reaphay from 1942-96.²⁸

A Trull cricket club was recorded in 1872.²⁹ Trull Sports Club, established 1920, provided cricket, football, hockey, netball and tennis on a rented field in Pitminster until 1947 when a tennis club was formed and the sports club disbanded.³⁰ Trull tennis club moved to Sweethay Lane, Pitminster where it remained in 2026. A new cricket club established a ground at Dipford where it was based with men's, women's and junior teams in 2026.³¹

A fund of £300 was given c.1945 towards a playing field but only in 1956 was the George V recreation ground established on land near the school. By 2026 it had the Geoff

²¹ ODNB Julia Ewing; SHC, DD/X/MDT/328.

²² SHC, D/P/tru/23/66, 68, 73; 28/2; A/DQO/418/11.

²³ SHC, Q/SR/559/45; *Taunton Courier*, 9 Sep. 1846, 25 Aug. 1852, 3 Aug. 1853, 1 Dec. 1858: BNA accessed 20 Apr. 2026.

²⁴ SHC, C/E/4/401/129.

²⁵ *Taunton Courier* 30 June 1875, 7 Aug. 1878, 5 Sep. 1888: BNA accessed 24 Apr. 2026.

²⁶ Green, *Trull and Staplehay*, 32.

²⁷ TPAG, *Where we used to meet*, (Trull, 2014), 26, 32.

²⁸ TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 86-7.

²⁹ *Taunton Courier*, 19 June 1872: BNA accessed 24 Apr. 2026.

³⁰ TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 140-1.

³¹ SHC, DD/WI/293/10/1; trull.play-cricket.com; accessed 20 Apr. 2026.

Hewitt Pavilion, pitches for football, basketball and cricket, play and gym equipment.³² Trull Rovers were named for using the football pitch but had no Trull players.³³ Queen's College bought Trull Meadow with its veteran oak in 1970 and in 2020 it was acquired by the Trull Meadow Trust to remain open space.³⁴ Comeytrowe park was established in the early 21st century.

Gatchell House was home to a squash and country club and a school of dancing from c.1978-2003.³⁵ In 2026 padel courts were built at Queen's College adding to its existing sports pitches and courts on c.33 a. of playing fields, 1908 indoor swimming pool, 1934 cricket pavilion and 1970s sports hall. Some facilities are made available to the local community.³⁶

Societies and Clubs

A church temperance society with Band of Hope, mainly supported by women, was in existence from 1883 to 1928 or later and a parish lending library from 1888-92.³⁷ A men's club met over the church stable but in 1895 moved into the new parish rooms and established a reading room for men only. Between 1921 and 1965 the club used the village hall. A scout group first formed in 1909 was revived in 1921. A brownie pack used the old village hall from 1967 until 2013. In 2026 mixed scouting groups used the Geoff Hewitt Pavilion.³⁸

A women's institute branch formed in 1940 and won a national award in 1953 for its history of Trull.³⁹ It was registered as Trull and Staplehay Women's Institute in 1993, ran a

³² SHC, A/AGH/1/343; Green, *Trull and Staplehay*, 10-11.

³³ SHC, D/PC/tru/2/1/1 (2001)

³⁴ TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 106

³⁵ *Sunday Express* 31 July 1978; *Bristol Evening Post* 13 March 1984: BNA accessed 20 Apr. 2026; TPAG, *New story of Trull*, 142.

³⁶ Som. HER 47613, 47708; SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/210/12047; queenscollege.org.uk/sports-facilities-hire; accessed 29 Apr. 2026

³⁷ SHC, D/P/tru/23/64-5, 68; DD/X/CCE/3.

³⁸ TPAG, *Where we used to meet*, 6-10, 19, 29; *Taunton Courier* 29 Sep 1909: BNA accessed 24 April 2026; SHC, DD/WI/293/10/1; A/CVB/7/1/1.

³⁹ O. Hallam and WI, *The Story of Trull* (Som. W.I., 1953).

produce show until 1996 but was officially closed in 2009.⁴⁰ A Comeytrowe and district branch was formed in 1952 with 62 members who usually met in Galmington. In 1985 they were registered as Trull Trendles Women's Institute and met in Trull and despite members moving to the Galmington branch in 1989 Trull Trendles remained active in 2026.⁴¹

Village Halls

The church built the parish rooms in 1895 but in 1909 the men's club was accused of monopolising the building and charging others to use it.⁴² The school used the parish rooms for overflow classes in the mid 20th century but thereafter the building was used mainly for church purposes. In 1921 an army hut from Salisbury was erected west of the rooms as a village hall. During the Second World War dances were held for servicemen and the 1953 coronation was viewed there. The Memorial Hall east of the school opened in 1965 but organisations like playgroup used the old village hall until it and the parish rooms were demolished in 2013 to build the church community centre.⁴³ The Memorial Hall, extended in 1992, was used by local organisations and for drama, keep fit and bowls sessions.⁴⁴ The Somerset county drama festival was held at Trull in 1969.⁴⁵ In 2006 the Winchester, later Trull, Players were formed.⁴⁶

EDUCATION

The parish clerk was accused of keeping an unlicensed school in 1623.⁴⁷ In 1756 nonconformist John Wyatt of Bishops Hull gave £200 to educate poor Trull children.⁴⁸ John

⁴⁰ SHC, DD/WI/293/2/1, 104/24/5; Char. Com. reg. 1021532.

⁴¹ SHC, DD/WI/104/24/2, 152/1/1, 152/2/1; Char. Com. reg. 292206.

⁴² *Taunton Courier* 17 Nov. 1909; BNA accessed 24 April 2026.

⁴³ TPAG, *Where we used to meet*, 5, 19, 22-7, 30-2, 37-8; SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/823; below, rel. hist.

⁴⁴ SHC, D/PC/tru/6/4/3

⁴⁵ SHC, D/R/ta/24/1/823; A/BKK/1/12

⁴⁶ TPAG, *Where we used to meet*, 34.

⁴⁷ SHC, DD/SAS/C795/TN/26, f. 44.

Buncombe added £50 and land was bought in Pitminster. Mrs Oaten and Mrs Locke each taught nine charity pupils *c.*1800 rising to 12 by 1814.⁴⁹ In 1818 an endowed school, sufficient to educate all the poor and presumably supported by Wyatt's charity, taught up to 20 children. Investment of surplus income indicates the charity money had not been fully spent.⁵⁰ In 1833 three schools, possibly short-lived, taught 36 children, half with charity money and half at parents' expense.⁵¹

In 1850 the charity paid a dissenting dame school in Pitminster to teach 16 charity Trull children but teaching was poor and only five eligible children attended. By 1883 the school was at Blagdon in Pitminster and although no Trull children attended it asked for charity money.⁵²

Sunday schools

In 1790 a man was paid to look after the church Sunday school, possibly over the church house. It cost the church £5 4s. a year and had 22 children by 1797 rising to 46 in 1833.⁵³ By 1846 it had merged with the day school but was financed by subscriptions until 1893 or later as only the day school was eligible for Wyatt's charity.⁵⁴

The Baptist Sunday school had 35 children and two teachers in 1897 but in 1968 with only 15 members it transferred to Galmington youth centre and closed *c.*1969.⁵⁵

Trull church school

⁴⁸ SHC, D/N/ful/1/5/6; D/P/tru/24/46; DD/X/DEC/1.

⁴⁹ SHC, DD/X/CCE/2.

⁵⁰ *Educ. of Poor Digest*, 801.

⁵¹ *Educ. Enq. Abstract*, 825.

⁵² SHC, DD/TAC/2/4/1; DD/DP/198/2.

⁵³ SHC, D/P/tru/4/1/4, 23/57, 24/60; *Educ. Enq. Abstract*, 825.

⁵⁴ SHC, D/P/tru/4/1/5, 18/3/1; *Nat. Soc. Schs Inquiry, 1846-7*, Som. 16-17.

⁵⁵ SHC, D/N/tau.b/4/2/4, pp. 15, 223; 4/2/7, pp. 451, 479.

In 1837 the vestry decided to convert the former church house into a school supported by public subscription.⁵⁶ By 1846 that was the only village school, serving as day and Sunday school. Two paid teachers taught 70 children free of charge and five voluntary teachers taught 50 children who attended only on Sunday. Fewer girls attended than boys.⁵⁷

In 1874 the parish bought allotment land south of the church and a new school designed by John Houghton Spencer opened in 1875. Trull children paid 1*d.* a week, others 2*d.*⁵⁸ In 1882 it had two teachers and 100 pupils, the remaining nine poor children in the parish attending West Buckland school.⁵⁹ The school could accommodate 195 pupils in three rooms with three teachers and a pupil teacher c.1895 but average attendance was only 130. Many children walked several miles to school and absences were due to lack of shoes or foot injuries besides farm work, disease and entertainments.⁶⁰ In 1903 four teachers taught 117 children, more girls than boys, and 59 infants.⁶¹ In 1909 many children were 'half-timers', 37 were not parishioners and under-fives were no longer admitted.⁶²

Wyatt's charity objected to church trustees in 1902 but in 1909 only eight nonconformist children attended.⁶³ Following the introduction of universal free education Wyatt's charity was used for prizes, evening school fees and surgical appliances for former pupils but by the 1930s only four children benefitted.⁶⁴ A 1974 scheme allowed Wyatt's money to be used for a wide range of educational purposes but the charity closed c.1996.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ SHC, D/P/tru/4/1/5, 13/2/8.

⁵⁷ Nat. Soc. *Schs Inquiry*, 1846-7, Som. 16-17; SHC, tithe award.

⁵⁸ SHC, D/P/tru/18/1/1, 18/7/1.

⁵⁹ SHC, DD/TAC/2/4/1.

⁶⁰ SHC, D/P/tau.a/18/7/1; Green, *Trull school*, 8, 11, 34-8.

⁶¹ SHC, C/E/4/380/401.

⁶² SHC, D/P/tru/18/7/6.

⁶³ SHC, DD/DP/199/3.; D/P/tru/18/7/6.

⁶⁴ SHC, DD/TAC/2/4/1; D/PC/tru/6/3/1; DD/DP/198/5.

⁶⁵ SHC, D/P/tru/17/1/2; Char. Com. reg. 310089.

An 1880 scheme gave a quarter of the Parish Lands charity income to support children at evening continuation and secondary schools.⁶⁶

In 1915, when the school was enlarged, most children left to work and only three girls and a boy moved to secondary school.⁶⁷ London evacuees raised pupil numbers temporarily to 179 in 1944. From 1952 the school was voluntary aided and numbers rose as new housing was built. From 1956 it was a primary school and children over 11 transferred to Priorswood, Taunton.⁶⁸ In 1966 parents built an indoor swimming pool, converted to a classroom in 2010. School dinners were provided in the old village hall despite rat problems but Michael Torrens designed a school hall in 1970 and later added 1st-floor accommodation. In 1974 Comeytrowe children moved to the new Galmington school but numbers continued rising to 161 in 1985.⁶⁹

The school was substantially rebuilt over two floors in 1993 and in 1999 had six classrooms, an assembly hall, nine teachers and 24 support staff for 184 children.⁷⁰ More classrooms were built in 2014 and by 2022 there were 255 children aged 4 to 11. The Trull Saplings pre-school, registered in 2017, had 48 children aged 2 to 4. Both were classed as good schools.⁷¹

Orchard Grove school

In 2023 an integrated primary and nursery school for children aged 2 to 11 was built on Egremont Road on the Orchard Grove estate, aiming to be carbon neutral. It opened in 2024

⁶⁶ SHC, C/E/4/401/107.

⁶⁷ SHC, D/P/tru/18/7/7, 18/8/1.

⁶⁸ Green, *Trull school*, 18-19; *Taunton Courier*, 21 July 1956: BNA accessed 24 Apr. 2026.

⁶⁹ SHC, C/E/4/64; Green, *Trull school*, 25-7; TPAG, *Where we used to meet*, 24-5; New story of Trull, 99.

⁷⁰ SHC, C/E/4/409/182.

⁷¹ TPAG, New story of Trull, 100; ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/123850, EY484093: accessed 14 April 2026.

with spaces for 420 children and a nursery for 52 infants but only had 64 children initially. It was run by the Blackdown Education Academy.⁷²

Private schools

A small, mixed boarding school was kept at Boxenhedge in 1840 and at Kepple Cottage, Trull Green from c.1844 to the 1850s.⁷³ From 1844 to 1881 the Passmore sisters kept their girls school, begun at Bishops Hull, at Batts House.⁷⁴ In 1851 half the 24 boarders had been born in India and one in Australia, three had infant brothers with them and there were four resident teachers, a nurse and ten servants.⁷⁵ In 1871, apart from Batts and Queen's College, there were two senior boarding schools for boys and one for girls and a mixed junior school with a total of 48 boarders but from 1881 to 1891 only one small girls' school at Wild Oak House.⁷⁶ In 1911 Haines Hill girls school was at 2-3 Hovelands Terrace with four resident teachers.⁷⁷

Queen's College

The Wesleyan Collegiate Institution, Queen's College since 1887, originated as Castle School in Bishops Hull. In 1847 it opened on its present site on Trull Road.⁷⁸ There were few day boys and boarders peaked at 194 in 1881.⁷⁹ Cotlake House was built in 1880 as a boarding house and later houses along Trull Road were acquired.⁸⁰ By 1961 there were new teaching rooms, more boarding houses and the playing fields extended downhill to Galmington. A new

⁷² ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/149764: accessed 14 Apr. 2026.

⁷³ *Taunton Courier* 8 Jan. 1840, 7 Aug. 1844: BNA accessed 23 Apr. 2026; TNA, HO 107/959, 1922.

⁷⁴ SHC, A/ANF/1/6/1-2; DD/CPHS/43.

⁷⁵ TNA, HO 107/1922.

⁷⁶ TNA, RG 10/2367; RG 11/2364; RG 12/1873; Green, *Trull and Staplehay*, 40.

⁷⁷ TNA, RG 14/14216.

⁷⁸ Above, Bishops Hull, soc. hist., educ.; TNA, HO 107/1922.

⁷⁹ *Royal Com. to Inquire into Educ.* (1868), XIV, 491-2; TNA, RG 11/2364.

⁸⁰ H.J.C. Cannon, *History of Queen's College, Taunton* (Taunton c.1956), 16—17, 114; SHC, A/BMG/5/2.

hall also served as a chapel and theatre and a sixth-form block was added in 1965.⁸¹ In 2026 it was a co-educational, non-selective boarding school with 642 pupils of whom 112 children over 7 boarded.⁸² A nursery school opened at 94-6 Trull Road, a former children's home, but after 2022 moved to the college campus where in 2025 it had 75 children aged 1 to 4.⁸³

The main building, by James Wilson of Bath in Tudor Gothic style, was built of North Curry stone with a central tower in the nine-bay, two and three-storey front, large cross wings and a rear chapel wing.⁸⁴ In 1856 the timber astronomical observatory was built. North of the main block the Tudor Revival library and music block of Bath stone with mullioned and transomed windows under a slate roof with parapets by Roberts and Willman of Taunton was linked to the 1847 building by a bridge dated 1924. A physics block, now the learning resource centre, was built behind at the same time of the same materials. Further north the Haslam block by Edward Mills and Partners of London was built in 1956 with a façade of artificial ashlar and extended in the 1960s in concrete framing with orange brick panels. Many sports and other buildings have been added to the 13-a. site west and north of the original buildings.⁸⁵

SOCIAL WELFARE

Poor Relief

In 1610 nine people were on regular relief, all women in 1626, but rent, clothing, sick pay and burial expenses were paid for others. Female paupers were paid to attend the sick and look after illegitimate children.⁸⁶ By the late 17th century most of those relieved were men, 16 in the 1690s, and money was spent on settlement and absconding cases.⁸⁷ Expenditure on

⁸¹ Cannon, *Queen's College*, f.p. 156; SHC, A/CBG/23; A/CFG/2/2; A/DRS/8; *VCH Som.* XIII, educ.

⁸² [isi.net/institutions/school/queen-s-college-6814](https://www.isi.net/institutions/school/queen-s-college-6814): accessed 14 Apr. 2026.

⁸³ SHC, C/SSAS/4/15; ofsted.gov.uk/provider/16/2800333: accessed 14 Apr. 2026.

⁸⁴ *The Builder* 1846, p. 220, 1847, p. 533; Som. HER 46205.

⁸⁵ SHC, D/B/ta/24/1/56/971 Som. HER 47611-13, 47616-17, 47709.

⁸⁶ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/A1, 13/2/1, 13/6/1.

⁸⁷ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/2, 13/3/5; Q/SR/212/4-5, 308/356-7.

the poor rose from c.£29 in 1692 to over £68 in 1741-2 when 21 households were on relief.⁸⁸ Settlement disputes continued and in 1752 a young girl from Trull was arrested in Wellington for vagrancy.⁸⁹

In the 1790s 37 households were on relief and annual expenditure was over £90 rising to over £183 by 1803.⁹⁰ A c.1608 decree that children be apprenticed with charity money was apparently not obeyed and landholders were compelled to take pauper children until they were 16, reduced to 21 in 1822 when 21 children over 9 were waiting to be apprenticed.⁹¹ The overseers kept separate accounts, possibly based on tithings. By 1810 total expenditure was £571 falling to £321 in 1815 when 58 people were on regular relief and 14 occasionally but there was no workhouse.⁹² In 1847 the parish bought rice, fish and other provisions to sell at reduced prices to the poor.⁹³ Total outdoor relief fell from £94 in 1875 to £21 in 1893 when 24 paupers were relieved, less than three per cent of the population, which was increasingly middle and skilled working class.⁹⁴

In 1621 several poor families occupied the church house. The parish was allowed to build two poor houses on the lord's waste but parishioners objected claiming that if needed they should be built on parish land near the churchyard where one was built c.1623.⁹⁵ Another was added c.1677.⁹⁶ The older one, still thatched in 1901, was demolished in 1904, the other c.1966.⁹⁷ By 1822 up to seven whitewashed and thatched parish houses were completed south-east of Mill Lane.⁹⁸ Three people were required to vacate the parish house in

⁸⁸ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/2-4.

⁸⁹ SHC, D/P/tru/13/3/8; Q/SR/320/3/66-7.

⁹⁰ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/5.

⁹¹ SHC, DD/X/CCE/2; Q/SR/306/97; D/P/tru/9/1/1-2, 13/6/1-2.

⁹² SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/6; *Abridgement of the Abstract of the Answers and Returns ...so far as relates to the poor* (HC 1818), 390-1.

⁹³ *Taunton Courier*, 27 Jan 1847; *Dorset County Chronicle*, 3 June 1847: BNA accessed 23 April 2026.

⁹⁴ SHC, D/G/ta/57/21.

⁹⁵ SHC, Q/SR/39/87, 126; 41/192; 43/193-4.

⁹⁶ SHC, C/WS/2/50.

⁹⁷ SHC, tithe award; Hallam, *Trull*, 23, f.p. 30; C.W. Green, *Trull and Staplehay*, 13.

⁹⁸ SHC, D/P/tru/4/1/4, 6.

1822, possibly the church house, which became a school c.1837. The Mill Lane cottages belonged to the Parish Lands charity.⁹⁹

Friendly Societies

There was a provident club in the 1880s.¹⁰⁰ From 1907 until 1949 or later there was a branch of the National Deposit Friendly Society with 1,150 members.¹⁰¹

Modern welfare

Nellie Rogers established a nursery at Wild Oak House before 1927 for 35 infants up to 7 with family overseas or awaiting adoption. She employed ten uniformed nurses and trained nursery nurses. In 1931 three babies died in a fire, another was injured and 30 were rescued. It closed c.1940.¹⁰²

Ventura House, Trull Road was a nursing home by 1939.¹⁰³ In 2000 it and its neighbour were converted into the Mountbatten Nursing Home, which remained open in 2026 for 30 residents.¹⁰⁴

Charities for the Poor

In 1609 parish land in Taunton and Pitminster, property of Our Lady's store in the early 16th century, was surrendered to trustees for church repair and charitable purposes. After further litigation in 1688 and an enquiry in 1696 it became the Parish Lands charity.¹⁰⁵ Between 1803

⁹⁹ SHC, D/P/tru/9/1/2, 13/2/8; DD/IR/T/27/3.

¹⁰⁰ Hallam, *Trull*, 57.

¹⁰¹ TPAG, *Where we used to meet*, 14.

¹⁰² SHC, A/FAX/1; A/BRP/1/3; TNA, RG 305/1/WPXX; Taunton Courier 125 May 1940: BNA accessed 24 April 2026.

¹⁰³ TNA, RG 305/1/WOON.

¹⁰⁴ *Som. Co. Gaz.* 6 Nov. 2025.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, C 2/JasI/T14/45; SHC, D/P/tru/24/42, 44-5.

and 1810 property was exchanged and sold to build cottages in Mill Lane.¹⁰⁶ The income supplied coal and clothing to the poor and before 1867 a blanket club was established. From 1880 half the money was divided between the church and the school and in 1881 57 poor recipients received clothing, boots and coal.¹⁰⁷ In 1902 there were 333 recipients of necessities. Remaining property was sold during the 20th century and the money invested. By the 1950s although £30 was spent on coal and clothing and £40 the income was never fully spent.¹⁰⁸ The charity, renamed the Trull Parish Lands Community Fund in 2020, uses c.£20,000 a year to relieve poverty or benefit educational and religious activities.¹⁰⁹

In 1755 John Buncombe left land to his son and descendants to provide 20s. annually on stockings for the charity schoolchildren.¹¹⁰ Stockings were distributed until the mid 20th century but in 1967 the charity merged with the Parish Lands charity.¹¹¹ Theophilus Marke (d. 1901) and Caroline Norman (d. 1906) left £400 for nursing care. The income was given to the Taunton Nursing Association but from 1921 to a new Trull Nursing Fund. It amalgamated with that of Pitminster in 1944 and since 1975 has been the Corfe, Pitminster and Trull Almshouse Charity supporting Pitminster almshouses.¹¹² No money was distributed in the 2020s.¹¹³

Health

The 1348 Black Death probably killed c.18 tenants but apparently only three in 1361.¹¹⁴ A smallpox epidemic in 1684-5 possibly killed 30 people including the vicar and his wife.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ 5th Rep. Com. Char. 543-4; SHC, DD/MT/27/1/15.

¹⁰⁷ SHC, D/P/tru/4/1/4-5; DD/DP/198/1; DD/X/CCE/3; D/PC/tru/6/3/1.

¹⁰⁸ SHC, DD/DP/198/2, 4-5, 9; D/DC/tau.d/25/5 (VLR044); DD/C/331/a.

¹⁰⁹ Char. Com. reg. 1040796.

¹¹⁰ SHC, D/P/tru/24/46; 5th Rep. Com. Char. 545.

¹¹¹ SHC, D/PC/tru/6/3/1; DD/X/CCE/2.

¹¹² SHC, D/P/tru/17/1/2, 17/2/1; A/BKK/1/12 ; DD/X/PACT; Char. Com. reg. 205298.

¹¹³ Char. Com. reg. 238536, 272535.

¹¹⁴ SHC, T/PH/win 1348-9, 1360-21.

¹¹⁵ SHC, D/P/tru/2/1/3.

Inoculations were carried out from 1771, not always successfully, and there was a bad outbreak in 1782.¹¹⁶ Vaccination of the poor was proposed in 1834.¹¹⁷

In the 17th and 18th centuries the parish paid women to heal the sick poor and attend births but in the early 19th century paid a surgeon.¹¹⁸ A labourer's wife was a midwife in 1861.¹¹⁹ There was charity money for nursing by the 20th century supporting a resident district nurse in 1921.¹²⁰ By 1934 a Trull District Nursing Association had 180 subscribers and 32 donors. A nurse provided midwifery and nursing care for a modest fee and sold dressings. By 1942 those dependent on the state pension had free care. Salary, rent and other expenses exceeded the association's income and from 1944 the nurse was shared with Pitminster. A fortnightly infant welfare clinic was held in Trull until the 1965 or later.¹²¹

MILITARY HISTORY

In 1609 Parish Lands income was claimed for 'putting forth soldiers'. In 1627 a rate was levied to pay for billeting soldiers in Taunton.¹²² During the civil war soldiers put horses on arable fields, removed hedges and blocked highways.¹²³ In 1644 some parishioners had quartered soldiers for up to five weeks and in 1648 £4 was levied to maintain Fairfax's troops.¹²⁴ In 1685 c.28 men were suspected rebels but only one was executed and a few were transported.¹²⁵ In 1692 the widow of a man who died in Maryland, USA successfully petitioned to be allowed to fine for his copyhold.¹²⁶ In the mid 18th century at least two Trull

¹¹⁶ SHC, C/WS/2/50.

¹¹⁷ SHC, D/P/tru/9/1/1 (1834).

¹¹⁸ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/A2, 13/2/1, 8; C/WS/2/50.

¹¹⁹ TNA, RG 9/1613.

¹²⁰ Above, this section, charities; TNA, RG 15/11221.

¹²¹ SHC, D/P/tru/4/1/19; DD/X/PACT/3-4; DD/WI/293/10/1; TPAAG, *Where we used to meet*, 14.

¹²² TNA, C 2/JasI/T14/45; SHC, D/P/tru/23/14.

¹²³ SHC, DD/SF/12/15/17.

¹²⁴ SHC, D/P/tru/23/23, 24/53.

¹²⁵ Wigfield, *Monmouth Rebels*, 5-185.

¹²⁶ SHC, DD/SP/22/9.

men had a long military career and by 1800 one man had served in a foot regiment, the Somerset militia and the Royal Marines.¹²⁷

The parish spent £21 finding a man to serve in 1804. Militiamen's families received 1s. a week in 1800 rising to 7s. 6d. for a wife and four children in 1812.¹²⁸ Trull men served in the Taunton volunteers or foot regiments during the Napoleonic wars.¹²⁹ In the mid 19th century at least eight local men joined the marines, one aged only 14, and others enlisted in the Royal Artillery.¹³⁰ Two men served in the navy in the 1870s and 1880s.¹³¹

By January 1915 only 27 men were serving, fewer than in neighbouring parishes. At least 15 died, one in a prisoner of war camp and his brother in Mesopotamia. Most served in the Somerset Light Infantry but one transferred to the Royal Flying Corps.¹³² In 1917 the church was insured against air attack.¹³³ In 1919 the parish wanted a war memorial to commemorate only those who died. It was made by Harry Hems of Exeter and installed in the churchyard in 1921.¹³⁴ The same year a memorial designed by E. Harbottle Reed was erected in front of Queen's College.¹³⁵

During the Second World War evacuated schoolchildren occupied Wild Oak House and Chilliswood.¹³⁶ A searchlight battery was sited near Lower Comeytrove by 1941 and a bombing decoy was built on Castleman's Hill in 1942.¹³⁷ At Trull Green rest rooms were provided for refugees. Road blocks and a pillbox defended the road to Taunton. Trull's Home

¹²⁷ SHC, D/P/tru/13/3/6; TNA, WO 121/3/227, 121/40/113.

¹²⁸ SHC, D/P/tru/13/2/6, 13/3/7.

¹²⁹ SHC, D/P/tru/24/54; TNA WO 97/365/56, 97/609/64, 97/754/26, 97/1047/56.

¹³⁰ TNA, ADM 157/811/13, 157/2085/29a, 157/2213, 157/2213/3, 157/2880/32, 158/80/19/1, 158/106/27/11, 158/135/55/18, 158/211/20/17, WO 69/79/1546, 69/105/132, 69/149/142, 69/160/403, 69/604/48.

¹³¹ TNA, ADM 188/111/98056, 188/202/143778.

¹³² *Taunton Courier*, 27 Jan. 1915: BNA accessed 24 April 2026; SHC, DD/X/MDT/328.

¹³³ SHC, D/P/tru/5/4/1.

¹³⁴ SHC, D/P/tru/10/2/1, 10/3/1.

¹³⁵ Som. HER 24568.

¹³⁶ *Taunton Courier*, 28 Sep. 1940: BNA accessed 24 April 2026

¹³⁷ Som. HER 43706, 44684.

Guard platoon guarded the Blackdown reservoirs.¹³⁸ In 1940 wooden huts were built at Batts Park for military convalescents called Sherford camp with training trenches east of the Sherford stream. It was run by the Somerset Light infantry and then the Royal Nursing Corps.¹³⁹ In 1945-6 a Welcome Home fund and celebrations were planned for 90 servicemen and eight women and Sherford camp became a demobilisation centre.¹⁴⁰ Five Trull men died during the war including two serving in the RAF.¹⁴¹

The army retained Sherford camp as headquarters for the south-west district, the women's Auxiliary Territorial Service and the 43rd (Wessex) Division of the Territorial Army and in 1950 provided married quarters. In 1949 the first 17 women auxiliaries to become regular soldiers in the newly-formed Women's Royal Army Corps were sworn in there.¹⁴² The camp closed in 1977-8.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ SHC, D/PC/tru/1/1/1 (1941); Som. HER 18157; TPAG, *New Story of Trull*, 138-9.

¹³⁹ M. Hawkins, *Somerset at War 1939-45* (Bridgwater, 1996), 116, 143; Som. HER 17017; *Taunton Courier*, 23 Nov. 1946: BNA accessed 29 April 2026.

¹⁴⁰ SHC, D/PC/tru/2/2/6, 28/2; *Taunton Courier*, 22 Nov. 1945: BNA accessed 29 April 2026.

¹⁴¹ SHC, DD/X/MDT/328.

¹⁴² Som. HER 17017; *Taunton Courier*, 8 Nov. 1947, 12 March 1949, 14 Oct. 1950: BNA accessed 29 April 2026.

¹⁴³ *Bristol Evening Post*, 16 Sep. 1977, 11 May 1978: BNA accessed 29 April 2026.