

Early Modern Macclesfield: Market Town to Proto-Industrial Hub, 1600 – 1740

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by
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Abstract

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The subject of this study is the development of the town of Macclesfield in east Cheshire in the early modern period. The study is primarily based around the probate records left by the inhabitants of the town, which begin in 1553 but are sufficiently consistent from 1600 to allow them to be studied. Gail Malmgreen's thesis on industrial Macclesfield begins in 1740.¹ These two factors set the chronological parameters of the study. Within these boundaries, it has not been possible to make use of all of the written sources. The proposition was to undertake sub-studies of specific aspects of Macclesfield in order to determine the nature and characteristics of the town. Wherever possible, these sub-studies would be compared with comparable English towns within the early modern period to assess where Macclesfield stood within the urban hierarchy. Studies of early modern towns tend not to compare towns against one another, but rather to discuss common themes.

This thesis begins by describing the physical and historical background to Macclesfield. This includes a brief summary of the historiography of a number of the subjects to be covered in this study. It then proceeds to describe the sources made available for and used by this study, and the methodology by which they were examined. The following chapters then assess specific aspects of Macclesfield. Three chapters cover the political, social and wealth structures. Chapter 3 covers corporate government, both with respect to the town and national politics, while Chapter 4 looks at the structure of wealth within the town. Chapter 5 follows this trend by focusing on non-financial social structures. Chapters 6 and 7 examine the economic activities practiced in Macclesfield. Firstly, the silk button industry will be examined, which was the town's main proto-industrial activity. The remaining economic activities are examined later, but with a focus on the leather industry as an example of an older industry which pre-dated the silk button industry. The final chapter places Macclesfield into a national context. This will be in two parts. Firstly, Macclesfield is examined at the centre of a network with various links extending outwards, for example with characteristics of administrators and executors of probate. Secondly, Macclesfield is tied into the national economy through a study of its horse fair.

This study found that the pre-industrial town of early modern England could be a lively and vibrant community full of economic growth, development and confidence. Macclesfield was one of the leaders in this field. Its proto-industry represents a luxury product in a niche market at the end of a complex international trade system. The wealth generated through this industry gave the town the opportunity to invest in urban improvement schemes and Macclesfield seems to have been at the forefront of improvement schemes, like paving and piped water. But Macclesfield was also able to retain its earlier functions of a market town, as is exemplified by the continued presence of the horse fair and the leather industry. Socially, the town also retained rural characteristics as is shown through baptism and marriage patterns tied to the

¹ G. Malmgreen, *Economy and Culture in an Industrialising Town: Macclesfield, Cheshire, 1750 – 1835* (unpublished Indiana University Ph.D. thesis, 1981).

agricultural year. This study also shows that towns should not be studied in a vacuum, but as part of the wider regional and national picture. All towns possess a hinterland, although in practise this was found to be not one but multi-layered. Dr Jon Sobart recently examined this pattern with regards to Chester by producing three accounts, at town, county and country level.² This thesis will show that Macclesfield also possessed similar, multi-layered characteristics, which formed an important aspect of the fabric of early modern English urban society.

² J. Stobart, 'County, town and country: three histories of urban development in eighteenth-century Chester' in P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot, (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland: Change, Convergence and Divergence* (Oxford, 2002).

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Abbreviations

<i>AHEW</i>	<i>The Agrarian History of England and Wales</i>
CCRO	Chester and Cheshire Record Office
Ch.	Chapter
<i>CLP</i>	Calendar of Letters Patent
<i>CSPD</i>	Calendar of State Papers Domestic
d	penny/pennies
<i>EcHR</i>	Economic History Review
ed/eds	editor/editors
<i>EHR</i>	English Historical Review
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>HWJ</i>	<i>History Workshop Journal</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of British History</i>
<i>JECh</i>	<i>Journal of Economic History</i>
Macc. Coll.	Macclesfield Collection
O.E.D.	Oxford English Dictionary
pt.	Part
s	Shilling/s
Shrops. R. O.	Shropshire Records Office
<i>Staffs. Rec. Soc.</i>	Staffordshire Records Society
trans.	translated
<i>THSLC</i>	Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
<i>TLCAS</i>	Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society
<i>UHY</i>	<i>Urban History Yearbook</i>
<i>VCH</i>	Victoria County History
Vol/s	Volume/s

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Aim of the Dissertation

Macclesfield represents one of those middle ranking towns which successfully changed themselves from a medieval market town to an early modern proto-industrial centre, and again into a fully industrialised factory town in the Victorian period. These towns were not the great industrial centres characterised by massive population growth like Halifax, Manchester or Birmingham, but equally they were not the medieval centres which declined through a failure to attract population and saw their staple industries decline through the introduction of new practices elsewhere.¹

The aim of this dissertation is to look at the first reinvention of Macclesfield, from a medieval market town to a centre at the hub of economic region (both proto-industrial and agrarian) with an administrative infrastructure. This process can be dated back to 1574 when Macclesfield's proto-industry, the silk button industry, was first evident.² The second reinvention, into the industrialised factory town of the

¹ C. Chalkin could write that by 1750 'Colchester, Exeter, Yarmouth and York had passed the peak of their relative prosperity.' C. Chalkin, *The Provincial Towns of Georgian England* (London, 1974), p. 25. See n. 85 which places Macclesfield in the top 70 towns in England. Macclesfield was not one of the estimated 68 'small towns' in England and Wales in 1700 with a population below 2500 identified by Dyer and Corfield. See A. Dyer, 'Small towns in England, 1600 – 1800' in P. Borsay & L. Proudfoot (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 55 – 68, especially p. 53; P. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns, 1700 – 1800* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 8 – 9; P. Clark & J. Hosking, *Population Estimates of English Small Towns, 1550 – 1851*, revised edition, (Leicester, 1993); P. Clark, 'Small towns in England 1550 – 1850: national and regional population trends' in P. Clark (ed), *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 90 – 120.

² It has been assumed from the outset that the silk button industry represented a proto-industry. Over the past three decades, this has been a major source of standardisation regarding the industrialization process. For the classic statement, see F. Mendels, 'Proto-Industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialization Process', *JECh*, xxxii (1972), pp. 241 – 61 and H. Mendick, 'The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism', *Social History*, iii (1976), pp. 291 – 315. For a solid and fair overview, see R. Houston & K.D.M. Snell, 'Proto-Industrialization? Cottage Industry, Social Change, and Industrial Revolution', *HJ*, xxvii, 2 (1984), pp. 473 – 92 and for a powerful critique see D.C. Colman, 'Proto-Industrialization: A Concept Too Many', *EcHR*, xxxvi (1983), pp. 435 – 48, esp. pp. 436 – 7. For further reading see D. Levine, 'Industrialization and the Proletarian Family in England', *P&P*, cvi (1985), pp. 168 – 203; D. Levine, 'The Demographic Implications of Rural Industrialization:

Victorian era, began about 1740 and has been studied by Gail Malmgreen.³ Consequently, the chronological parameters of this dissertation are fixed at about 1600, when a continuous source of information from Macclesfield's probate files and corporation minute book becomes available, to 1740 when Malmgreen's thesis charts factory-system industrialisation.

Reinvention may not even be the best word to describe the changes in Macclesfield. The change from the silk button industry to the silk weaving industry took fifty years to complete, with button merchants still in operation in the 1790s.⁴ Both of these industries were laid on top of the medieval, agricultural based market town, which retained its role throughout the period under review and beyond. Macclesfield was a market town and became an industrial centre at the same time. It is difficult to see Manchester or Birmingham retaining significant market town status once industrial expansion had taken hold.

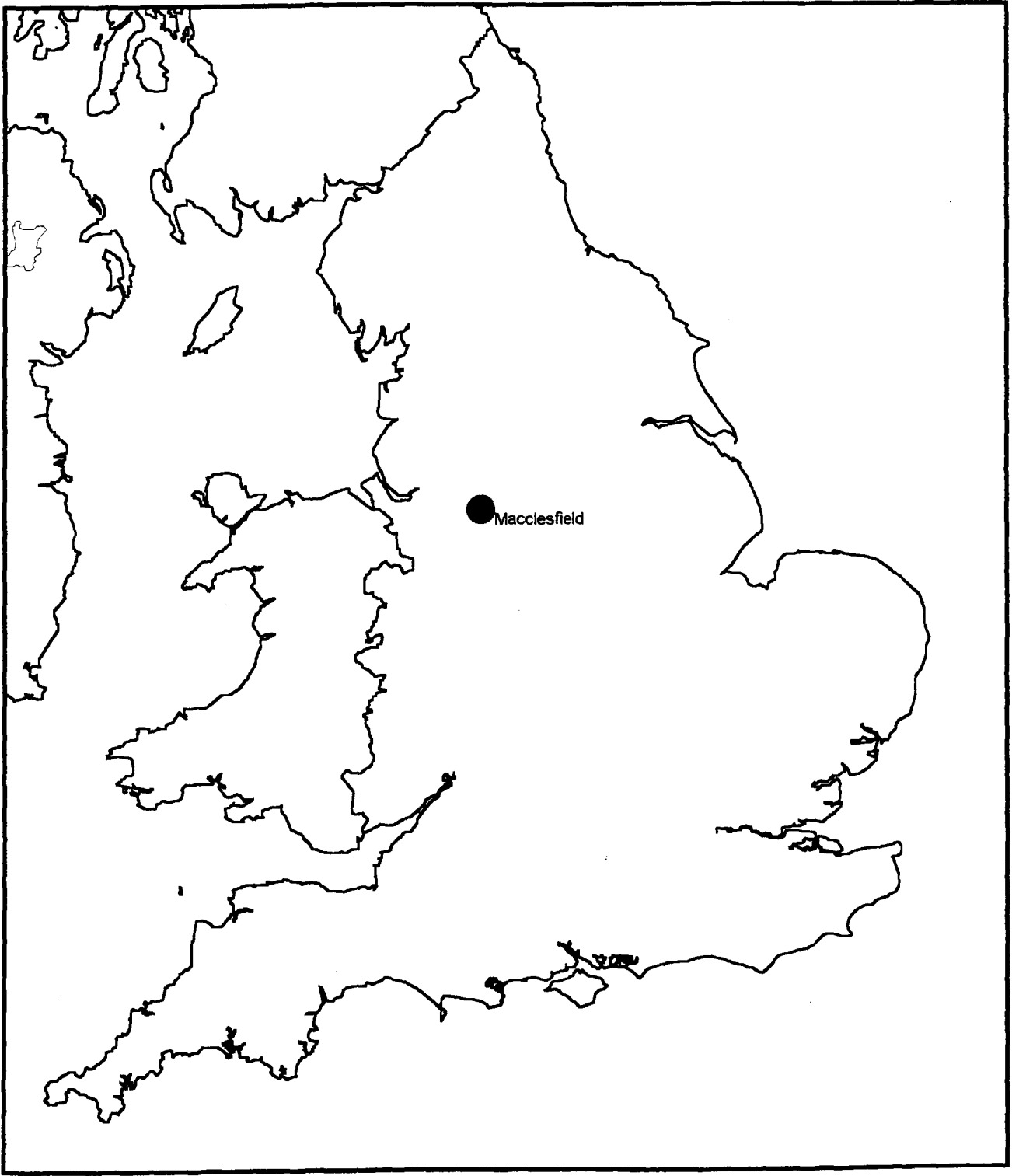
A market town required a hinterland over which it exerted a dominant economic influence. Macclesfield was also the administrative centre of the Macclesfield Hundred. The courts for Macclesfield Forest sat in the town, although Macclesfield itself was not a part of the Forest. Macclesfield's chapel was subservient to the parish church at Prestbury, but was also responsible for its own subservient chapels. The town also developed as an industrial hub and through the putting out

A Family Reconstruction Study of Shepshed, Leicestershire, 1600 – 1851', *Social History*, ii (May, 1976), pp. 177 – 195, on p. 179.

³ G. Malmgreen, *Economy and Culture in an Industrialising Town: Macclesfield, Cheshire, 1750 – 1835* (Indiana University Ph.D. thesis, 1981); G. Malmgreen, *Silk Town: Industry and Culture in Macclesfield 1750 – 1835* (Hull, 1985); C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), p. 43.

⁴ In 1789, the firm of Brocklehurst, Acton and Street exported to Kruger and Reisenkampff of 'Mosco' buttons and silk twist worth £300. Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 123.

Map 1.1: Location of Macclesfield.



system, the silk button industry was carried out in and around Macclesfield until the introduction of the factory system concentrated the silk industry in Macclesfield. Macclesfield maintained economic ties with Manchester, as the nearest significant industrial centre, and also with London for the import of silk. This connection to London, in particular, connected Macclesfield with an international economy, with silk being imported from Turkey and later further afield. So, it would be wrong to study Macclesfield in isolation, as a sterile unit in a vacuum. Macclesfield existed at the centre of its own spheres of influence or hinterlands of different sizes and characteristics which overlapped one another. It should also be remembered that Macclesfield was also part of the spheres of influence or hinterlands of other communities. As such, Macclesfield will be viewed as being at the hub of its own hinterlands with an influence extending for various distances in all directions.

The social structures within Macclesfield will be examined through the use of parish registers and probate for the demographic and economic elements. A study of the aldermanic bench and the list of mayors will be used to examine the nature of the political elite within the town.

Finally, in order to gain an assessment of the quality of life in Macclesfield the date and extent of the introductions of new utilities will be studied. This allows an assessment of the ability and willingness of the Macclesfield Corporation to improve the standard of living of the inhabitants. This is particularly important because until recently, no attempt has been made to compare the introduction of utilities in towns.⁵ Commentaries on the introduction of these utilities has usually been on a town-by-town basis. Rosemary Sweet has begun such an approach for the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries but concentrated on changes in the legal approach for

⁵ R. Sweet, *The English Town, 1680 – 1840: Government, Society and Culture* (London, 1999).

implementing such utilities.⁶ I intend to make comparisons with the date and scale of the implementation of utilities like street lighting, paving and piped water to place Macclesfield into a context of early modern public utilities innovation.

Therefore, the aims of this dissertation will be five-fold. Firstly, it will be a general study of an early modern town which can be compared with other studies of similar towns. Secondly, it will be a study of Macclesfield's ability to develop a proto-industry in addition to its existing activities, which allowed Macclesfield to develop a mixed economy in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Thirdly, Macclesfield will be assessed in a regional and national context as part of a network of towns and administrative structures in England. Fourthly, an assessment of the demographic, economic and political structures identifiable within Macclesfield. Finally, Macclesfield will be compared with other towns to make a qualitative assessment of the activities of the corporation and its implementation of utilities.

1.2 Recent Historiography of the Early Modern Town

A number of aspects of the early modern town will be covered in this dissertation, but one debate which will not be entered into in any great detail will be that of what constituted a town. This was the subject of a number of works during the 1970s and 1980s by Peter Borsay, Penny Corfield, Peter Clark, Paul Slack and others.⁷ Perhaps the greatest problem they faced in determining 'the town' was that although contemporary observers were sure that a dichotomy existed between urban

⁶ For example, Sweet devotes two pages to water supplies, but covers the later seventeenth century in five lines while the early-nineteenth century receives one page. However, she does make comparisons between the actions of different towns. *Ibid.*, pp. 86 – 88.

⁷ See P. Clark & P. Slack, *Crisis and Order in English Towns* (London, 1972); Chalkin, *Provincial Towns of Georgian England*; P. Clark & P. Slack, *English Towns in Transition, 1500 – 1700* (Oxford, 1976); J. Patten, *English Towns, 1500 – 1700* (Folkestone, 1978); Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns*; P. Clark, *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns, 1600 – 1800* (London, 1984); C. Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages*

and rural, contemporaries themselves were unsure what constituted 'urban'.⁸ Despite this, a number of parameters were identified. Population was the most obvious criterion, because after all, towns were concentrations of people living in close proximity. Other possible defining factors, in no particular order, included organised local government, town walls, castles, churches and cathedrals, charters, administrative functions, port functions, specialised economic functions, fairs and markets, plagues and fires, seats of judiciary, a wide range of occupations, focus of transport routes and election of borough MPs. Other events appear in town records from time to time when they occurred in or around towns: the presence of the poor, riots and other political factors, silting up of rivers and the provision of social amenities and entertainment, for example. The whole issue of the early modern urban experience has recently been condensed and clarified in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*.⁹

Not all towns possessed every urban function. Macclesfield, for example, was a corporate town but was not franchised to elect MPs. Both of these features are characteristics of early modern towns. Nor were most towns incorporated. An unenfranchised, unincorporated place, like Sheffield in 1700, was as much a town as Macclesfield.¹⁰ Furthermore, there is a debate over quantitative factors. If population makes a settlement into a town, what level of population was required for this? Corfield's study concentrated on towns with a population above 2500. Peter Borsay found that between five and six hundred towns, about four fifths of the total, possessed populations of between 500 and 2500 in 1700, and provided the 'bedrock of the urban system'. For Clark and Slack contemporaries 'do not envince much

(Cambridge, 1979); P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 – 1770* (Oxford, 1989).

⁸ P. Clark & P. Slack, 'Introduction' in Clark & Slack, *Crisis and Order*, pp. 1 – 55, on pp. 3 – 4.

⁹ P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II: 1540 – 1840* (Cambridge, 2000).

confidence in their categorisation of urban society’, so they set out to do it themselves.¹¹ Whatever criteria are required for the adjectives ‘urban’ or ‘civic’, the definition of a town is as much a qualitative as quantitative assessment. Fortunately for this dissertation, Macclesfield can be safely considered as a town.

What aspects of urban life are covered in this dissertation? After the Introduction and Sources and Methodology chapters, the core of the work consists of six chapters of which three concentrate on political and social aspects of the town and variations in wealth. Chapter 3 examines the nature of corporate politics and looks at Macclesfield as a corporate town. This will look at how the Corporation worked in practice and how it responded to pressures from royal government, especially under the later Stuarts. The chapter will also look at how well the Corporation discharged its duties towards the townspeople through the provision of utilities. This will be compared with the provision of utilities in other towns to determine how pro-active or otherwise Macclesfield was. Chapter 4 emphasises changes in ‘wealth’. This will be in two parts, firstly across a wide range of occupations and secondly a closer look at what constituted a ‘yeomen’ or ‘husbandmen’. In chapter 5 under ‘Social Structure’, a selection of consumer goods will be studied to assess their distribution in Macclesfield compared with a selection of other towns together with other non-financial sources like the development of inns. In chapter 6, the silk button industry will be examined. This was Macclesfield’s early modern proto-industry and preceded the introduction of silk weaving into Macclesfield. It was based upon a ‘putting out’ model of production so while the industry was based in Macclesfield, the actual production was scattered around the local countryside. Chapter 7 examines the remainder of the occupations and social descriptions identified from the probate

¹⁰ See pp. 10 – 11 for a comment on Sheffield.

material, the largest of which was leather which provides an example of pre-industrial economic activity in a proto-industrial environment. Finally, chapter 8 places Macclesfield into a national context by looking at the extent of the hinterlands and the links between Macclesfield and other parts of the country as identified through the probate files and through the evidence of a horse fair toll book to look at its impact on Macclesfield's inhabitants, and also how far the hinterland of the horse fair extended.

Many towns developed a reputation based upon a predominant industrial or economic specialisation. Daniel Defoe made this point in a passage which is quoted at the beginning of chapter 8.¹² Defoe was writing in the 1720s, yet Rosemary Sweet, writing in 1999, dates this process from the 1780s when 'Towns were differentiated in terms of their functional role, and in terms of their size. From the 1780s onwards commentators began to single out large towns...as places which had specific characteristics and problems.'¹³ There were the market towns, the 'inland entrepôts', and other towns that serviced the growth of inland trade through inns and alehouses, like Ulverston and Hereford.¹⁴ Winchester could survive with 'no manufacture, no navigation; here is a great deal of good company; and a great deal of gentry being in the neighbourhood, it adds to the sociableness of the place. The clergy also here are, generally speaking, very rich and numerous.'¹⁵

The manufacturing town was a particular type. Defoe mentions the manufacturing town decades before Corfield found it in common usage. Defoe used it in reference to Manchester and Macclesfield, as well as less familiar proto-industrial

¹¹ Corfield, *Impact of English Towns*, pp. 2, 11 Table III, 12 Fig. 1, 13 Fig. 2; Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, p. 4; Clark & Slack, 'Introduction', pp. 4 – 6.

¹² See p. 309.

¹³ Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 14. See also Dyer, 'Small Towns in England, 1600 – 1800', p. 60; Dyer, 'Small Towns in England, 1550 – 1850', p. 100' and n. 17, below, for other economic specialisation in towns.

¹⁴ Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 15.

¹⁵ D. Defoe, *A Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain*, ed. P. Rodgers (London, 1971), p. 192; Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 17.

towns like Tiverton and Taunton.¹⁶ There were the textile towns like Leeds (woollens) and Manchester (cottons); cutlery from Sheffield, metal work from Birmingham, pottery from Burslem, pewter from Wigan, blankets from Whitney; Northampton specialised in shoes.¹⁷ To this list can be added port towns like Liverpool, Whitehaven and Bristol, and leisure towns like Bath, Buxton, Tunbridge Wells and Scarborough.

This specialised function is the accepted view of the early modern town. Macclesfield was no exception with the silk button industry. But it is worth asking to what extent towns like Macclesfield were only a product of their dominant industry? As an established market town it would possess associated industries which would support, and be supported by, the local agricultural infrastructure. Did this new dominant industry supplant existing industry, or was it simply another layer added to the existing industrial activities? What happened to the old, pre-proto-industrial community in the metamorphosis to a manufacturing (or port or leisure) town? Liverpool was known as a fishing village, but did the port of Liverpool add to or replace the fishing village? Sweet notes that ‘all kinds of manufacturing towns would have a market, in addition to the manufactures, and many market towns were engaged in a range of small-scale manufactures.... Categories must be determined by which element dominated the economy.’ J.A. Sharpe, commenting on the Southwark leather industry *circa* 1619, wrote that the traditional industries were probably healthier and more significant than expected, and would warrant closer inspection.¹⁸ Is it possible, therefore, for a market town to co-exist with a manufacturing town?

¹⁶ Corfield, *Impact of English Towns*, p. 23. Defoe also compares Macclesfield with Halifax, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham.

¹⁷ For studies of a few of these towns, see D.C. Watmough, *The Trading Region of Wigan in the early Seventeenth Century* (University of Liverpool MA dissertation, 1993) and D. Hey, *The Fiery Blades of Hallamshire: Sheffield and its neighbourhood, 1660 – 1740* (Leicester, 1991).

¹⁸ Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 17; J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History, 1550 – 1760* (London, 1987), p. 150.

Although population is normally given as a criterion for a town's existence, population size alone did not make a settlement a town. Around 1700, Henley-in-Arden in Warwickshire had a population of between 500 and 700 which might have made it a town by Gregory King's criteria.¹⁹ Yet Henley was a market town, possessed 'urban' trades, services and a proletariat, and a 'rudimentary civic organisation'. As both Philip Styles and Peter Borsay have noted, it was the 'Henleys of England [which] demonstrate the importance of defining towns qualitatively rather than quantitatively, by the standards of the time.'²⁰ One contemporary observer, John Hooker of Exeter, used sociological rather than demographic criteria to define a town: the 'civitas' was a 'multitude of people assembled and collected to the end to continue and live together in a common society yielding dutiful obedience unto their superiors and mutual love to [one] another.'²¹ Paul Halliday, writing in 1998, made a similar point when he wrote that 'Monarchs created corporations to administer justice and maintain peace in populated areas where it might be inconvenient for county justices or and sheriffs to act.'²² Macclesfield was a corporate borough governed by a mayor, aldermen and officers: it had been granted charters since the early-thirteenth century.²³ But incorporated towns were a minority: in 1660 there were 'at least 190 corporations', eighteen more by 1727 but still only 246 by 1833.²⁴ Sheffield, for

¹⁹ See pp. 29 – 30.

²⁰ P. Styles, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century West Midlands History* (Kineton, 1978), pp. 205 – 12, also quoted in Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, pp. 1 – 2, 4.

²¹ Quoted in Clark & Slack, 'Introduction', pp. 3 – 4.

²² P. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650 – 1730* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 221.

²³ Stella Davies lists the surviving charters: 45 Henry III (29 May 1261) – see Appendix A and CCRO LBM 311/1; 8 Edward III (26 February 1333/4, LBM 311/2); 5 Edward IV (30 January 1465/6, LBM 311/3); 6 Elizabeth I (13 May 1564, LBM 311/4); 37 Elizabeth I (1 September 1595, LBM 311/5); 3 James I (31 May 1605, LBM 311/6); 18 Charles II (C.S. Davies gives 1678, but actually 31 December 1666, LBM 311/7); 36 Charles II (19 November 1684, LBM 311/8). In addition to these are the lost original charter of before 1233 and a lost charter of Richard II; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 380. When Edward IV re-affirmed Macclesfield's charter, he re-affirmed the charter of 14 November 13 Richard II, *CLP 1461 – 7*, 30 January 1466. Typed transcripts of the charters from 1261, 1333/4, 1465/6 and 1684 are available as LBM 2703/92. See pp. 21 – 9 for a summary of Macclesfield's history.

²⁴ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 7; Sweet, *English Town*, p. 33.

example, was administered by the Cutler's Company, the trade body representing the main industry in the town while Defoe noted that Manchester's senior magistrate 'is but a constable'.²⁵ Macclesfield was incorporated and had its Common regulated, trade controlled, social behaviour enforced and the rights of the borough defended.²⁶ As a corporate borough, Macclesfield possessed the trappings of an urban society with the legal protection to guarantee its semi-independence. It was not, however, a parliamentary borough and did not return its own Members of Parliament until 1832.²⁷ Without a parliamentary franchise, the 'Rage of Party' with ten general elections in twenty years passed Macclesfield by. At a regional level, Macclesfield was ignored during the embittered political battles between the early of Derby and Warrington. Ballot returns for this period would have greatly assisted in unravelling local politics.²⁸ Nevertheless, while the charters granted the borough rights, they could also be used to threaten the borough: James II purged Macclesfield's corporation of a quarter of its members in 1688. These can be used to see into the world of corporate government.²⁹

Paul Halliday noted that a third of corporate towns received new charters in the 1660s, and Macclesfield was amongst them. One aim of re-chartering was to establish a degree of uniformity throughout the corporations, for example from June 1663 all charters were to include a clause of approbation whereby the Crown verified

²⁵ Hey, *Fiery Blades*; Defoe, *Tour*, p. 426.

²⁶ For example, in 1735 the Corporation ordered a search of its records for evidence that Macclesfield's freemen were free of tolls in Stockport, Macc. Coll. B/II/14. Other towns involved in similar legal disputes with their neighbours include Leeds, Leicester and Nottingham: J. Thirsk (ed.), *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II (Cambridge, 1985), p. 418.

²⁷ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 290.

²⁸ J.H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675 – 1725* (London, 1967), pp. 70, 71; P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660 – 1730* (London, 1989), p. 263; J.B. Owen, *The Eighteenth Century, 1714 – 1815* (London, 1974), p. 10. Plumb states twelve general elections between 1689 and 1715, only one less than for the remainder of the eighteenth century, Earle states ten general elections in the twenty years following the Triennial Act of 1694.

the appointment of officers. Leicester's new charter of 1665 included this clause but Charles II accepted all of the corporation's choices.³⁰ While re-chartering was being undertaken, the corporation had an opportunity to gain real concessions although not all took advantage of this. Thetford and Hereford received new charters in 1682: Hereford gained a new fair; Thetford gained nothing.³¹ It should be noted that many corporations existed perfectly well without re-chartering so this was not a necessary or regular aspect of urban corporate life and most proceeded without regular expansions to their rights: in Macclesfield, sixty years passed between the charters of James I and Charles II. It was left to James II to interfere directly in the affairs of the corporations. However, even these experiments were short-lived and largely revoked before James abandoned the throne. Following the Glorious Revolution, William and Mary moved away from this policy of re-chartering: they issued fourteen charters, the lowest level since John.³² By the early-eighteenth century, writs from the King's or Queen's Bench which instructed the corporation to act were being favoured. This was not a new policy: Macclesfield had received a *quo warranto* writ in the mid-fourteenth century.³³ The number of writs being issued belies the idea that with the advent of 'Walpolian stability, the boroughs sank into a century of political torpor, brightened only by the occasional electoral conflict'.³⁴ The development of Whig and Tory parties led to party politics. The 'rage of party' and partisan politics of Anne's reign continued into the early-Hanoverian period.³⁵

²⁹ For example, the 1684 charter granted the borough the right to draw water from the Common which was used for the waterworks. For James II's actions against Macclesfield's corporation, see Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 248.

³⁰ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 150, 159 – 60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24 – 6, 351.

³² Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 64

³³ See p. 28.

³⁴ Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 122.

³⁵ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 306.

What is perhaps most important for the post-1688 period is that Crown intervention in corporate affairs became less overt and direct, shifting from surrendering and re-issuing charters to writs. There was also a continued development of political parties. By whatever name they were known, there can be only one 'in' party at any one time, with the reminder being 'out' of power. A study of Macclesfield's mayoral lists and aldermanic bench will be used to identify any trends in 'party'. The shift from re-chartering to writs reflects a policy change from the Crown. At borough level, this change may have been largely procedural, with limited impact on the actual outcome.³⁶ It would be interesting to see if non-parliamentary boroughs, of which Macclesfield was one, followed this national political trend for party politics.

The third aspect of this dissertation will be to place a town against other towns. This will be in two parts. Firstly, all towns possess a hinterland which is their 'market area'. Christopher Chalkin estimated this to extend three to six miles.³⁷ This hinterland is by no means exclusive and it can be expected that there will be sales or influence from other towns within the hinterland. Walter Christaller called this the central place theory: 'It is quite obvious that for the creation, development, and decline of towns to occur, a demand must exist for the things which the town can offer. Thus, economic factors are decisive in the existence of towns'. Furthermore, neither 'area nor population may precisely express the meaning of the *importance of the town* [his italics]'. For Christaller's central place theory, centrality did not refer to 'the merely spatial' but 'to the central function in a more abstract sense.' It would be wrong to see Christaller's theory operating in terms of concentric circles but rather, as

³⁶ Without re-chartering there would have been fewer opportunities to gain concessions from the Crown, as with Hereford's new fair. However, corporate towns seemed to manage without these concessions in periods when re-chartering was less frequent.

is shown in Map 1.2, hinterlands reacting to numerous factors, like terrain and the presence of other towns. Christaller conceded that these areas would be ‘difficult to determine, mainly because its size is different for different types of goods and it undergoes periodic and seasonal variation. Besides that, it consistently overlaps the neighboring [sic] complementary regions at its periphery.’³⁸ In other words, the physical size of a town or population were insufficient in determining the actual importance of the town. This is better measured by the extent of its influence across adjoining areas. This influence is a variable quantity, depending on different types of goods (services should be added to this), periodic fluctuations and seasonal variations.

Most studies of hinterlands concentrate on a focal town and work outwards. H.A. Rodgers speculated that Preston’s hinterland was affected by the presence of other lesser market towns at distance, for example Kirkham. In this situation the proximity of a lesser market town could outweigh the ‘pull’ of a larger market town.³⁹ Generally, however, studies of hinterlands focus on one town only, as with A.D. Dyers’s study of Worcester.⁴⁰ Only through regional studies encompassing several towns is it possible to get an overall impression of the reciprocal connectivity, as with Jon Stobart’s study of the urban system in the north-west of England.⁴¹ This study of Macclesfield studies the hinterland of one town only. A similar study of, for example, Congleton, would be able to establish whether the hinterland determined for

³⁷ Chalkin, *Provincial Towns*, pp. 5, 11; C. Chalkin, *The Rise of the English Town, 1650 – 1850* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 2.

³⁸ W. Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany*, trans. C.W. Baskin (New Jersey, 1966), pp. 3, 17, 18, 19, 21.

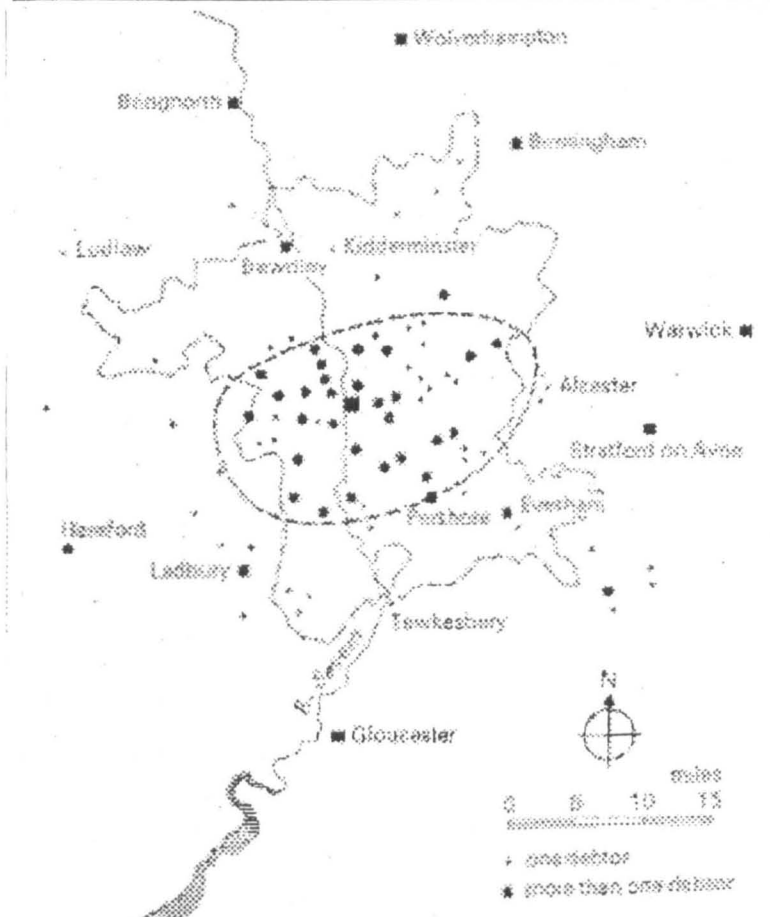
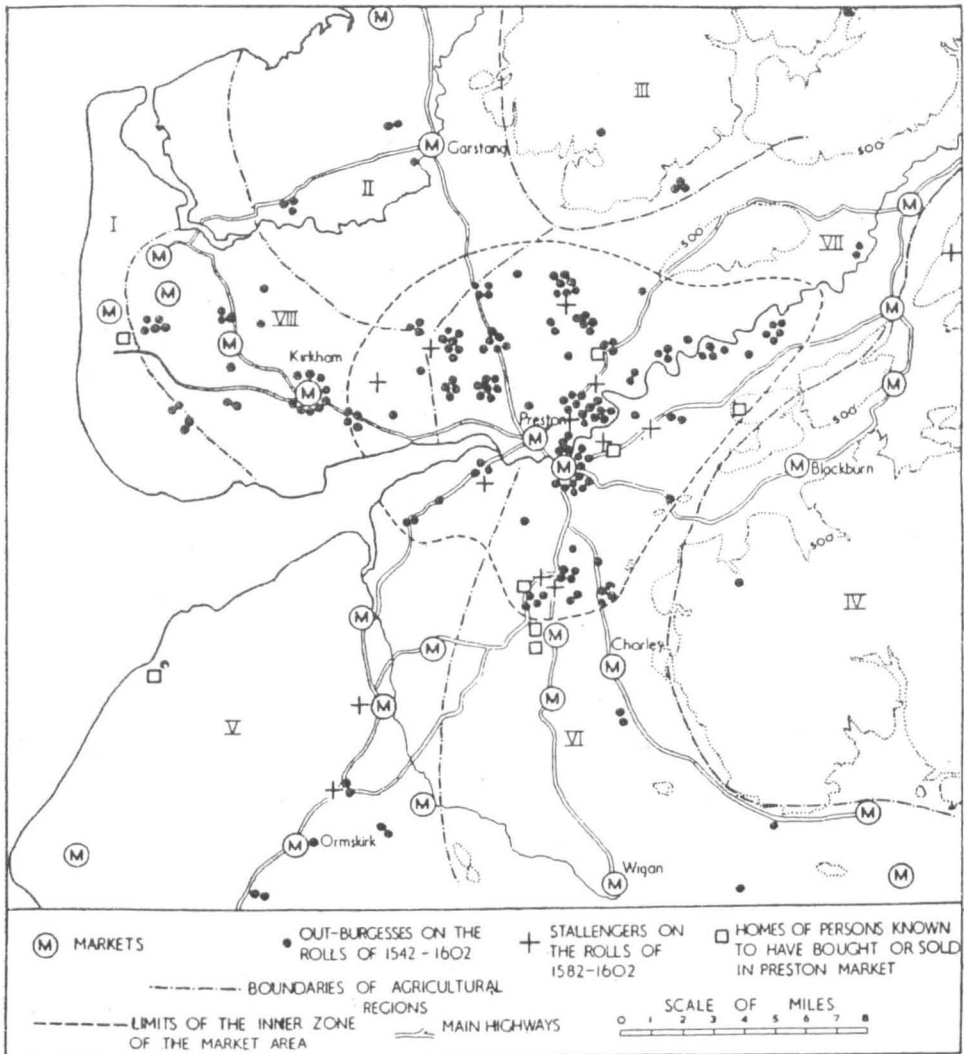
³⁹ H.A. Rodgers, ‘The Market Area of Preston in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *Geographical Studies*, 3, (1956), pp. 46 – 55; reprinted in A.R.H. Baker, J.D. Hamshere & J. Langton (eds), *Geographical Interpretations of Historical Sources* (London, 1970), pp. 103 – 113.

⁴⁰ A.D. Dyer, *The City of Worcester in the Sixteenth Century* (Leicester, 1973). See also H. Carter, *An Introduction to Urban Historical Geography* (London, 1983), p. 92.

⁴¹ J. Stobart, ‘Regional Structure and the Urban System: North-West England, 1700 – 1760’, *THSLC*, cxlv (1996), pp. 45 – 74. See also J. Stobart, ‘County, Town and Country: Three Histories of Urban Development in Eighteenth-Century Chester’, in Borsay & Proudfoot, *Provincial Towns*, pp. 171 – 194 for an attempt to address the issue for one town.

Map1.2: Early Modern Hinterlands of Preston and Worcester, after Rodgers

and Dyer.



Macclesfield was similar to Congleton's and whether links identified between Macclesfield and Congleton were reciprocal, or if one town dominated the other. Towns do not exist in isolation, and one would expect to find that the hinterland of the market place, market goods, the church or administrative functions would differ in radius and the shape. Therefore, the study of a particular town should assess the shape and extent of several hinterlands, not just one.

Towns can be expected to improve their facilities, for example the rebuilding of town halls, market halls and other civic buildings. There was a post-Restoration movement of civic rebuilding: in the 1650s the *façade* of civic life bore a 'rather careworn and undistinguished public profile'.⁴² To a large extent rebuilding projects were dependent upon capital and necessity. Cheltenham, for example, built four market houses within a century to accommodate expanding trade.⁴³ Around 1680, Abingdon rebuilt its town hall as a classically designed *palazzo* at the cost of £3000. Courthouses, county centres, guildhalls and custom houses were also rebuilt between the Restoration and the mid-eighteenth century.⁴⁴ But in order to place this re-building and other urban improvement projects into a meaningful context it is necessary to compare the actions of one corporation with those of other corporations. Only in this way can the relative vitality of a town be measured. An early investigation into this was by M. Falkus, which discussed the general trends.⁴⁵ More recently, Sweet has made a number of comparisons. However, although her study covers the period 1680

⁴² Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, p. 104.

⁴³ Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 98.

⁴⁴ Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 104 – 9. See also P. Borsay, 'The English Urban Renaissance: The Development of Provincial Urban Culture c. 1680 – c. 1760', *Social History*, v (1977), pp. 581 – 603; C.W. Chalkin, 'Capital Expenditure on Building for Cultural Purposes in Provincial England, 1730 – 1830', *Business History*, xxii (1980), pp. 51 – 70 and from London's perspective P. Borsay, 'The London Connection: Cultural Diffusion and the Eighteenth-Century Provincial Town', *London Journal*, 19/1 (1994), pp. 21 – 35.

⁴⁵ M. Falkus, 'Lighting in the Dark Age of English Economic History: Town Streets before the Industrial Revolution', in D.C. Coleman & A.H. John (eds), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England* (London, 1976).

to 1840, the examples given are largely from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and often focus on the methods employed such as Improvement Acts, the first of which was for Bristol in 1701.⁴⁶ It is clear that there was a wave of urban improvements in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. These schemes were limited in scope due to the limited capital available to the corporation if the expense of gaining an Act of Parliament to authorise additional sources of revenue, like rates, was to be avoided. Urban improvements needed to be justified and if fresh drinking water was available for free, why go to the expense of piping it into the town from a great distance?

At some point in the late-seventeenth and early- to mid-eighteenth centuries, the population of many towns expanded at a massive rate. Population increase during this phase would put pressure on other resources like water. When the town itself actually began to grow outwards, and especially if the extra population was made up of the 'urban poor', there would be other drains on the town finances through poor relief delivered through the vestry. It can be assumed that there was a period of urban improvement in the period after 1660 which coincided with the general upturn in economic activity which provided corporations with the resources to implement such schemes. For the purposes of this dissertation, the survey of the provision of utilities and urban improvement schemes will consider the period up to 1740. But by comparing the date and scale of similar schemes implemented by other towns, it will be possible to make a quantitative assessment of the vitality of Macclesfield Corporation.

Therefore, there is general agreement about what constituted a town in early modern England, even if in vague and unquantifiable terms. What has been less well

⁴⁶ Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 43; Falkus, 'Lighting in the Dark Ages', p. 257.

examined is how well towns compared with one another. For this it is necessary to consider a number of types of information, on rebuilding, paving, lighting and water supply to get an overall feeling of how a particular town performed.

1.3 Characteristics of Macclesfield

The aim of this section is to bring together some basic geographical and historical characteristics of Macclesfield as background to this dissertation.

Macclesfield was built on a tributary to the River Bollin, but below the level of the surrounding countryside.⁴⁷ To the west of the town about a thousand acres of arable land formed a triangle with Broken Cross and Gawsworth.⁴⁸ To the east lay several thousand acres of rough pasture (Macclesfield Common) whose boundary with Hurdesfield, Sutton and Rainow was not established until the late-sixteenth century.⁴⁹ Today, the western boundary of the Peak District National Park lies only a couple of miles to the east of Macclesfield. Macclesfield finds itself on the juncture of two agricultural regions, the sheep and cattle rearing upland pastures to the east and the arable and pastoral region of the Cheshire plain to the west, as is shown in Map 1.3.⁵⁰ This location helped to develop Macclesfield as a centre for trans-Pennine packhorse carriage. Both of these factors may have encouraged and maintained a horse fair at Macclesfield, examined in chapter 8.

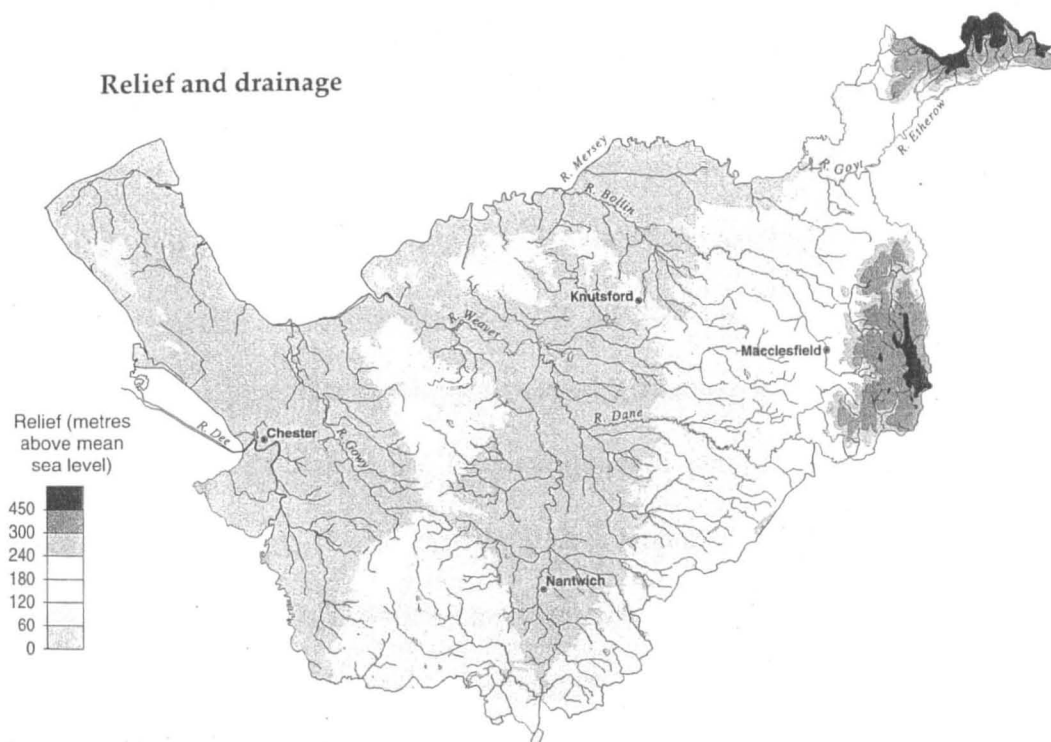
⁴⁷ Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVII, vol. III (London, 1882), p. 741; Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 1 – 2.

⁴⁸ According to Stella Davies, this figure remained about the same between 1086 and the eighteenth century. Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 96 – 7.

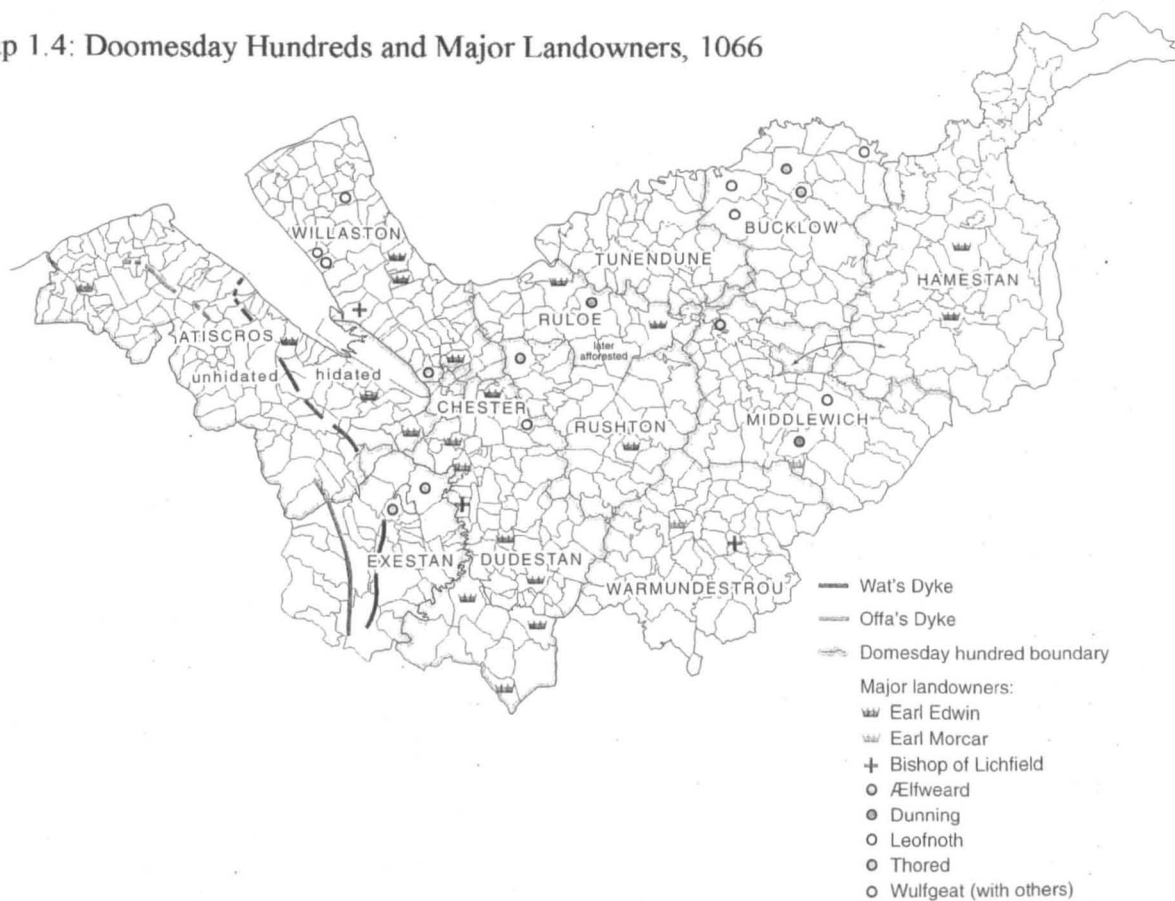
⁴⁹ Macc. Coll. contains numerous documents for the boundaries, especially B/VI/4 for a 19th century copy of a 1623 document. B/VI/3 is a 19th century copy of a 1582 agreement on the boundary of Macclesfield 'Moss' with Gawsworth. Also B/IV/1, B/VI/5, T/I/135 and T/I/41 for other 17th century accounts.

⁵⁰ See also *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. I (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 129 – 58 especially Fig. 5.1 which places an agricultural boundary running north-south immediately to the east of Macclesfield. To the west is a pastoral 'Subsistence corn with cattle rearing, dairying and/or grazing' and to the east is 'Subsistence corn with stock and industries'.

Map 1.3: Relief and Drainage⁵¹



Map 1.4: Domesday Hundreds and Major Landowners, 1066



⁵¹ A.D.M. & C.B. Phillips, *A New Historical Atlas of Cheshire* (Chester, 2002), pp. 5, 27.

The development of communications is one aspect of early modern economic growth which is supposed to go hand-in-hand with increased productivity. For Defoe, road carriage was ‘the very medium of our inland trade’, while Jon Stobart writes ‘all leading towns in 1700 were situated on navigable rivers’.⁵² However, Macclesfield’s roads were not turnpiked until after 1758. The Macclesfield Canal was not opened until 1831, too late to be economically viable before the arrival of the railway.

Modern Macclesfield has incorporated a number of settlements which were physically distinct townships in the early modern period, including Tytherington, Hurdesfield and Broken Cross, but others have remained outside Macclesfield’s later growth, including Butley, Bollington, Pott Shrigley, Rainow, Sutton, Gawsworth, Henbury and Prestbury.⁵³ All of these communities lie within about five miles of Macclesfield. Slightly further afield are the other east Cheshire market towns, Congleton, Stockport, Knutsford, Sandbach, Altringham, and the three salt-producing Wicks; Nantwich, Northwich and Middlewich.⁵⁴ These are found at various distances from Macclesfield, but within a radius of 7 to 17 miles.⁵⁵ All lay to the south, west or north of Macclesfield. There were no significant settlements in the Pennines until Yorkshire settlements, like Sheffield, were reached some twenty miles away. To the west and north, Chester and Manchester were the two largest early modern

⁵² Defoe quoted in J.A. Charters, ‘Road Carriage in England in the Seventeenth Century: Myth and Reality’, *EcHR*, xxx (1977), pp. 73 – 94, on p. 73; J. Stobart, ‘In Search of Causality: A Regional Approach to Urban Growth in Eighteenth Century England’, *Geografiska Annaler*, vol. 82B, no. 3 (2000), pp. 149 – 63, on p. 153.

⁵³ For a recent study of the history of Pott Shrigley and Rainow, see R.M. Kemsley, *Landowners and Communities in the East Cheshire Pennines from the 13th Century to the 20th* (unpublished Liverpool University PhD, 1999).

⁵⁴ The list was taken from Jon Stobart’s list of towns consistently described as market towns by gazetteers throughout the early modern period. J. Stobart, ‘An Eighteenth-Century Revolution? Investigating Urban Growth in North-West England, 1664 - 1760’, *Urban History*, xxiii, pp. 26 – 47, on p. 39. See *Cheshire History*, cli (2001 – 2) for three recent articles on early modern Nantwich and Northwich: P. Anderton, ‘Seventeenth Century Nantwich: Dairy Farming and a Sample Analysis of Probate Inventories’, pp. 28 – 41; T. Bostock, ‘Owners, Occupiers and Others: Seventeenth Century Northwich’, pp. 42 – 46; D. Nuttall, ‘The Early Book Trade in Nantwich’, pp. 66 – 9.

⁵⁵ Congleton, the closest market town, lay some 7 ½ miles to the south of Macclesfield. Knutsford lay about 11 miles away, Sandbach 13 miles, Middlewich 15 miles, Northwich 17 miles.

communities and Liverpool experienced massive population growth to become the largest community by the late-eighteenth century.⁵⁶ Chester's position as the administrative and judicial centre of Cheshire, and Manchester's position as an industrial centre made it inevitable that they would interact with Macclesfield. Finally, the great metropolis of London, which seemed to impact on all aspect of national life in early modern England, had its own interaction with Macclesfield, not least through the importation of silk for the silk button industry.

1.4 History

Macclesfield is known to have been an Anglo-Saxon settlement and was traditionally a seat of the Saxon earls of Mercia in their government of east Cheshire, as is shown in Map 1.4. The earliest description of the borough comes from the Domesday Book, where the impact of the 'Harrying of the North' is clearly evident:

Macclesfield. Earl Edwin held it. 2 hides paying tax. Land for 10 ploughs. In lordship 1 plough; 4 slaves. A mill which serves the Hall; woodland 6 leagues long and 4 wide; 7 enclosures; meadow for the oxen. The Third Penny of the Hundred belongs to this manor. Value before 1066 £8; now 20s.; it was waste.⁵⁷

George Ormerod speculated that a church would have been established adjacent to the courthouse. This went unrecorded in the Domesday Book, so if it had existed it was subsequently destroyed.⁵⁸ The town appears to have been defended by a haia or fortification, probably a ditch.⁵⁹

The Norman earls continued the Anglo-Saxon tradition of administering east Cheshire from Macclesfield. Under Randle, earl of Chester (probably the third of that

⁵⁶ Stobart estimated 2603% between 1664 and 1778. Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Century Revolution?', p. 40.

⁵⁷ 'Cheshire' P. Morgan (ed.), in *Domesday Book* J. Morris (gen. ed.), xxvi (Chichester, 1978), 263d.

⁵⁸ Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVI, vol. III (London, 1882), p. 537.

⁵⁹ Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVII, vol. III, p. 739; J.P. Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II (London, 1880), p. 459.

title), Macclesfield attained a grant of free burgh. This event took place before 1233, traditionally set at 1220, but the details of this charter no longer exist except that 120 burgesses paid a quit-rent of 12d *per annum*.⁶⁰ In 1238, John the Scot, seventh earl of Chester, died leaving only two daughters. Henry III took the earldom, including Macclesfield, saying ‘We are unwilling so illustrious an inheritance should fall under the divided sway of the distaffs of women’. Prince Edward, as earl of Chester, confirmed the town’s privileges in 1261. From this point, it is possible to begin to assess the history of Macclesfield as a corporate borough.⁶¹

The 1261 charter makes no mention of the 120 burgesses although they probably continued to pay quit rent: £6 3s rent was paid which would suggest that 12d was paid by each of the burgesses and by the three burgesses held by elected officers. The number of mossrooms held by turbury also corresponds to this figure. The burgage plots consisted of a house-plot and an acre of land plus further rights on the common and freedom from tolls in Cheshire. The limitation to this freedom was a toll on salt from the ‘Wichs’. The burgesses were also free to form a guild to regulate trade, although this does not appear ever to have been enacted. Corn was to be ground in the manorial mill and bread baked in the bakehouse. The Crown maintained a bakehouse in the town until 1818. The burgesses were not permitted to form a corporation or elect a mayor although at some point in the following century they did. In 1350 this practice was questioned by Edward III and permitted for a permissive fine.⁶²

⁶⁰ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 7; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, p. 459.

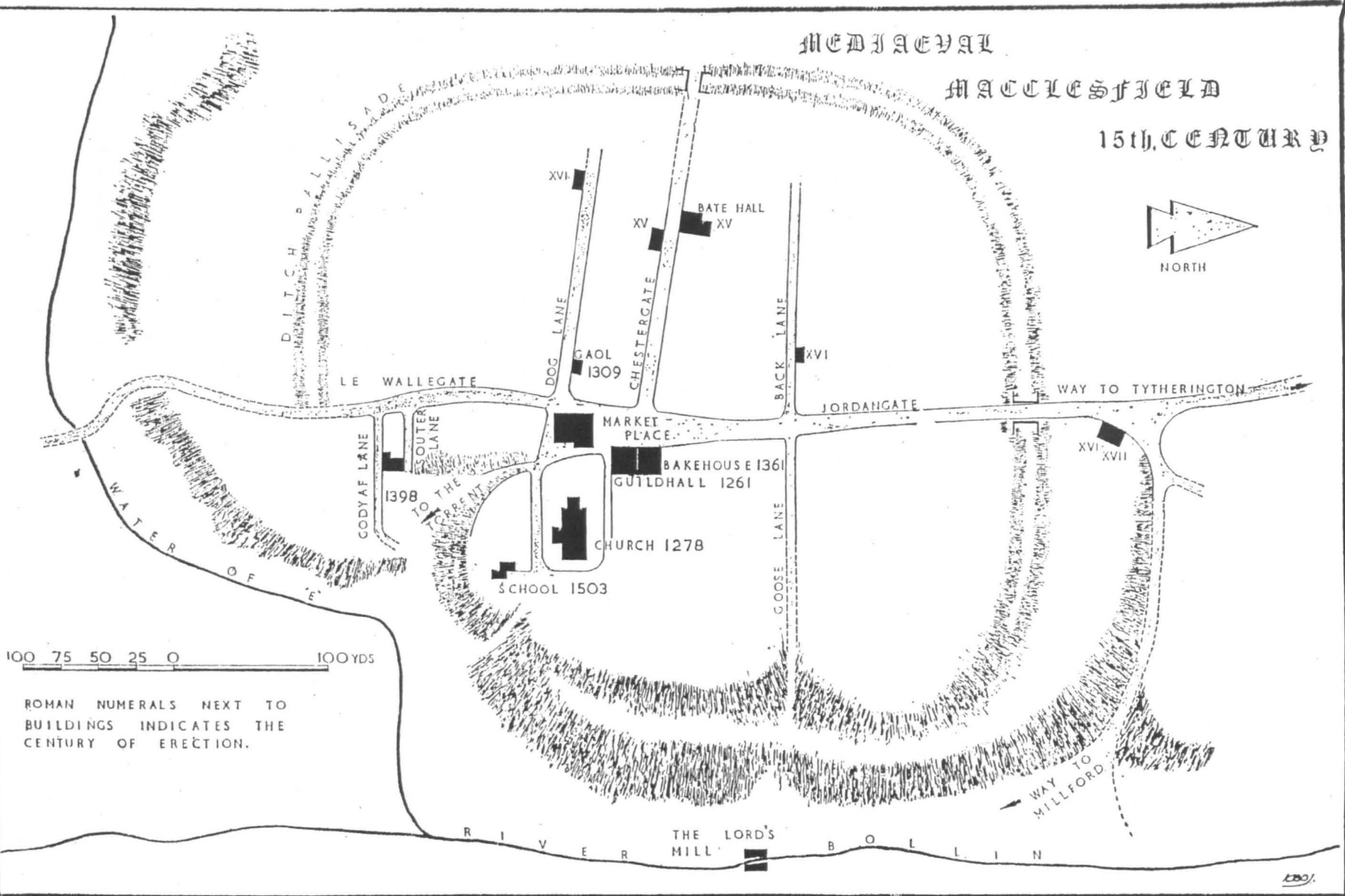
⁶¹ Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVII, vol. III, p. 740; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 8. See Appendix A for a transcript of the 1261 Charter.

⁶² Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 9 – 10, 169. See p. 96 n.56 for further details about the mossrooms.

MEDIAEVAL

MACCLESFIELD

15th CENTURY



100 75 50 25 0 100 YDS

ROMAN NUMERALS NEXT TO BUILDINGS INDICATES THE CENTURY OF ERECTION.

Map 1.5: Medieval Macclesfield, after Davies.

During Edward I's conquest of Wales, he and Queen Eleanor made numerous visits to Macclesfield. Royal patronage included the foundation of a chapel in 1278.⁶³ The original dedication was to All Saints. This chapel remained subject to the parish church at Prestbury, see Map 1.6. This building remained largely intact until 1739 when it was reconstructed and dedicated to St Michael and All Angels. Macclesfield chapelry did not become a parish until 1835, but was responsible for chapels in nine townships. It was not until 1775 that another Anglican church was consecrated in Macclesfield, Christ Church.⁶⁴

Royal interest in Macclesfield did not end with the spiritual wellbeing of the townspeople. In the fourteenth century there was a stud farm and vacary, which received considerable investment from Edward, the Black Prince and provided him with revenue and warhorses: in 1356 there were over 300 head of cattle, two stallions and some thirty mares, some of which were sold at the 'Barnaby' fair.⁶⁵ This fair may have been the precursor to the horse fair discussed in chapter 8. Macclesfield men were also recruited by the Black Prince as archers for the war in France.⁶⁶

During the fifteenth century, royal interest in Macclesfield declined which permitted the local Savage family to establish a dynastic interest. In the middle of the century, Sir John Savage, himself the son of a mayor of Macclesfield, married Catherine Stanley, sister of Thomas, Lord Stanley and later earl of Derby. Catherine bore him ten sons. Sir John, junior, the eldest son, commanded Henry VII's left wing at the Battle of Bosworth. The second son, Thomas, became Archbishop of York and endowed the Savage Chapel at Macclesfield Chapel, while the sixth son, Christopher,

⁶³ *CLP 1272 – 1281*, 25 January 1279.

⁶⁴ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 308 – 9, 310, 312 – 5. Ormerod states that the chapel was rededicated to St Michael during Henry VIII's reign. Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVII, vol. III, p. 751. It was not uncommon for large towns and cities to be part of a parish based in a smaller settlement. Liverpool was subordinate to Walton-on-the-Hill from 1399, M. Power, 'Politics and Progress in Liverpool, 1660 – 1740', *Northern History*, xxxv (1999), pp. 119 – 38, on p. 128.

followed his grandfather to become mayor of Macclesfield.⁶⁷ In 1513, Christopher with many of his burgesses, was killed at the battle of Flodden. This disaster had the effect of removing the town's external protection at a time when the corporation was weakened through the loss of burgesses and possibly their sons in the battle.⁶⁸

The Stanley earls of Derby took the opportunity to usurp the town's liberties. By this time the town was governed under a charter of 5 Edward IV (1465).⁶⁹ The Stanley's interest in Macclesfield stemmed not just from their tie of kinship to the Savage family, but also from offices they held in Macclesfield Forest. Richard III granted Lord Stanley the Stewardship of Macclesfield Forest, which became an hereditary office under Henry VII. Richard III had also granted to Stanley the 'messuages, lands, rents and services' in Macclesfield forfeited by the duke of Buckingham.⁷⁰ Macclesfield's liberties do not appear to have been restored until 1564. The following statement was made before an enquiry of 1569:

Thomas Pylkinton of Macclesfield of the age 80 yeres or there aboute sworne and examined upon the holy evangelists upon his oathe sayth That he hath heard read in auncient recordes in the Court of the Mayor of the sayd boroughe that the Mayor and burgisses have used to kepe 3 weekes courts from the tyme of kynge Edward the fyrst untill the tyme of Kynge Henrye the eight, and also this sayd deponent sayth that he dothe perfectly know that from the begynninge of the ragne of Kynge Henrye the viiith untill the Scots field the Mayor of Macclesfield dyd kepe 3 weekes Courts at wch tyme Christopher Savage esquire, then Mayor of the sayd Boroughe, was slayne and many other substantiall burgisses also, synce the wch tyme for want of men of perfect knowlage the offycers of the ryght honourable the Erle

⁶⁵ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 26 – 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38 – 40; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, p. 485.

⁶⁸ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 43; Macc. Coll. B/IV/6; CCRO DDX 484/2 is an account of Macclesfield in 1513. Savage and the Macclesfield men may have been on the right flank of the English line, commanded by Edmund Howard, nephew of the earl of Surrey. This formation was driven from the field by the Scottish left flank. The English right was only stabilised with the arrival of Lord Dacre and his contingent of Borderers. P. Cornish, *Henry VIII's Army* (London, 1987), pp. 6 – 9.

⁶⁹ There had been another charter granted under 8 Edward III (1334). The first charter of Elizabeth I granted in 1564 mentions a lost charter of Richard II.

⁷⁰ *CLP 1476 – 1485*, 17 September 1484. Earwaker suggests that Derby was buying or leasing property from Buckingham in the sixteenth century, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, p. 476 and n. u. The most recent account of the Stanleys does not mention their role in Macclesfield. B. Coward, *The Stanleys, Lord Stanley and Earls of Derby, 1385 – 1672*, Cheetam Soc., xxx (1983); Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 43 – 4.

of Derby usurped the liberties of the sayd Boroughe untyll that our charter of Macclesfield was confirmed.⁷¹

The jurisdiction of the respective courts, the Portmoot headed by the earl of Derby and the Mayor's court presided over by the mayor, was clarified by the enquiry in 1570. Stella Davies sees this as provoking the need for a new charter, although this was not granted until 1595 and it created 'a corporate body to be known as The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Macclesfield'. The basic tenets of this Charter laid down how the town would be governed until the 1830s. It made provision for a mayor, two aldermen, twenty-four capital burgesses, a high steward with one or more deputy/ies and a sergeant at mace. Initially, Sir John Savage was high steward for life (although this conflicts with the annual election required by the Charter) and Edward Wood mayor. Shortly afterwards the Portmoot was discontinued. This charter also granted the right to hold a fair, an integral part of urban life. The Barnaby Fair was held in June and although as has been shown above there had been a livestock fair in the mid-fourteenth century. The May fair and Wakes in October were granted in 1685.⁷² Markets were also held. This charter was confirmed by James I in 1606 and Charles II in 1666, who also added a clause that the outgoing mayor remained as a Justice of the Peace for the following year.⁷³

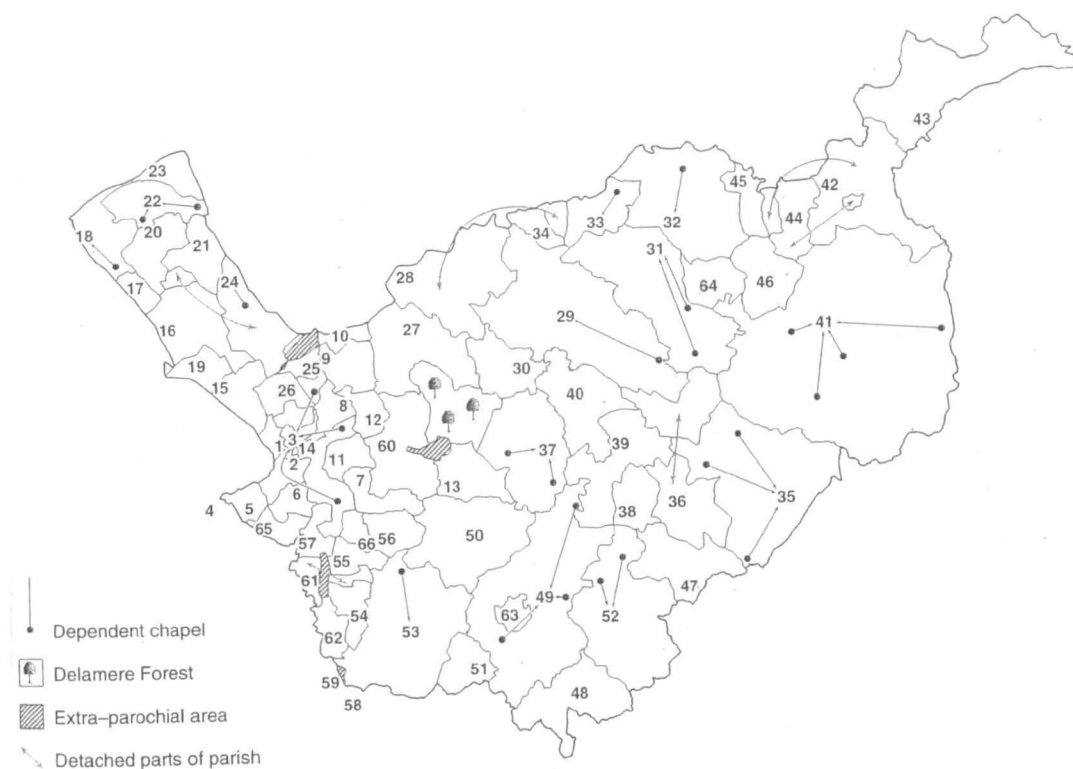
The town possessed a Guild Hall, also known as the Motehall, where the Portmote and Mayor's Court were held. It stood in the Market Place near the chapel. From here the borough, forest and hundred were administered. Nearby stood a tenement known as 'The King's Bake-house', undoubtedly the 'furnus villæ' which the burgesses were required to use under the 1261 charter. Across the Market Place in

⁷¹ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 43 – 4. Earwaker sees this document as being the source of the confusion between the battles of Bosworth and Flodden, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, p. 469.

⁷² Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 50, 64. *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II, pp. 424 – 7 confirms 5 fairs in 1756.

⁷³ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 43 – 50; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, p. 461.

Map 1.6: Location of Parish Churches, by medieval parish.⁷⁷



Map 1.7: Places with Populations over 1000 in 1664 and c. 1720, by township.



⁷⁷ Phillips & Phillips, *Historical Atlas of Cheshire*, pp. 39, 83. Prestbury is number 41.

Dog Lane stood the goal, which was in existence from 1310 and was noted in a *quo warranto* inquiry of 24 Edward III.⁷⁵ South of the chapel and the Back Wall Gate stood the remains of a castellated palace attributed to be a medieval residence of the dukes of Buckingham and later the earls of Derby. It was originally built by John de Macclesfield, clerk, local landowner and Keeper of the Great Wardrobe for Richard II but was described as being in ruins in 1621.⁷⁶ Opposite a door in the wall stood the Town Well which was blocked up in the early-eighteenth century in an attempt to improve the quality of the town's water supply.⁷⁷ The manorial mill where the burgesses were obliged to grind their corn was situated on the Bollin near the bottom of the present Brunswick Steps. A deed of 1438 noted 'the way which leads to the Mill Ford' which is now Hibel Road. In 1361, the tenancy of two water mills and one windmill was leased for seven years at £18 *per annum*. The mill was still on the Bollin in the eighteenth century when a map showed a mill with two wheels. A fulling mill was constructed in 1356 on the 'Pool of Macclesfield', apparently off Mill Green in Sutton.⁷⁸

Macclesfield Grammar School was established under the will of Sir John Percyvale of 1502.⁷⁹ Percyvale had been born in Macclesfield *circa* 1437 and had made his fortune in London as a merchant tailor, becoming Lord Mayor of London in 1498. Lands valued at £10 *per annum* were left for a chantry chapel and a priest 'to keep a free grammar school for evermore'. Those lands fell to the Crown when the chantries were dissolved, and the school was re-founded under letters patent of 6

⁷⁵ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 15 – 6, 35; Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVII, vol. III, p. 741; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, p. 474.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, p. 477.

⁷⁷ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 18 – 20; Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt XVII, vol. III, p. 741. See pp. 113 – 4 for the blocking up of the well.

⁷⁸ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 16 – 7.

⁷⁹ CCRO SP 3/14/1 is a copy of this will; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 211 summaries the terms of the will.

Edward VI without reference to the original foundation. The lands were then valued at £21 5s.⁸⁰

1.5 Population⁸¹

The population of Macclesfield has been calculated from the Hearth Tax records as being 2628 in 1664. In 1720 there were 925 families living in Macclesfield, perhaps 4500 persons. Jon Stobart estimated 6000 inhabitants in 1774. J. Corry in *The History of Macclesfield* mentions a count ‘by two intelligent residents in 1786 when the population amounted to seven thousand persons.’ The 1801 census gives the population at 8743 inhabitants.⁸² Chart 1.8 plots these statistics with an exponential line to predict the population at any one point. Despite the variety and uncertainty of sources used, the results show a steady and continuous population growth. There seems little doubt that Macclesfield qualifies as a town. John Leland described Macclesfield as a market town around 1539.⁸³ Gregory King, writing in 1696, considered that a town could consist of as few as 150 households, some 600 inhabitants, and that of the 794 ‘towns’ outside of London, 650 fell into this category.⁸⁴ Macclesfield falls comfortably above this 150 household level. Peter Borsay estimated that by 1700 there were ‘scarcely seventy settlements of over 2,500

⁸⁰ *CLP 1550 – 1553*, 25 April 6 Ed VI; Ormerod, *Cheshire*, pt. XVII, vol. III, p. 742; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 210 – 2; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, pp. 511 – 25.

⁸¹ See Map 1.7 for a cartographic representation of urban population growth across Cheshire throughout this period.

⁸² Stobart, ‘An Eighteenth-Century Revolution?’ p. 40; J. Corry, *The History of Macclesfield* (London, 1817), p. 120; Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 144 – 5, 374. Bishop Gastrell of Chester noted at least 2000 families in the town and precinct in 1705, but as this significantly exceeded the other estimates and included families outside of the town, it was not used, F. Gastrell, *Notitia Cestrianisis*, vol. 1, Chetham Soc., viii (1845).

⁸³ *John Leland’s Itinerary*, ed. J. Chandler (Stroud, 1993), p. 55.

⁸⁴ Clark & Slack, *English Towns in Transition*, p. 5; Clark & Slack, ‘Introduction’, p. 4. Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 1 also states between 600 and 700 towns in 1700.

inhabitants' and only three cities with over 20,000 inhabitants, most towns possessing just 1000 inhabitants.⁸⁵

Jon Stobart, in his study of urban populations and population growth, placed Macclesfield into an urban hierarchy for 1664 for thirty towns in north Cheshire and south Lancashire.⁸⁶ He placed Macclesfield fourth in the regional hierarchy, behind Chester, Manchester and Nantwich. Macclesfield, with an estimated population of 2628, was significantly behind Chester (7817) but not that much smaller than Manchester (3690) and Nantwich (2826). A century later in 1778, Macclesfield had slipped just one position. The new arrivals were Liverpool (from twelfth in 1664 to first in 1778) and Warrington (from eighth to fourth) while Nantwich fell from third to twelfth. Even in 1801, Macclesfield was still tenth in the hierarchy of towns.

In terms of the rate of population growth for the region, Macclesfield always under performed. For the period 1664 to 1778, Macclesfield grew by 128 per cent, only half the regional average of 245 per cent. Between 1778 and 1801, the average rate of increase fell to 115 per cent. It is clear that Macclesfield held a prominent position in the regional early modern urban hierarchy. Its early prominence enabled it to maintain this position throughout the period covered by this dissertation despite below average population growth. But its mild population growth perhaps saved it from some of the insanitary urban conditions experienced in fast growing late-eighteenth and nineteenth century towns and cities.

Jon Stobart estimates a rate of increase of 245 per cent for the north Cheshire and south Lancashire region between the 1660s and 1770s, but it exceeded 2500 per

⁸⁵ Borsay, *Urban Renaissance*, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Stobart, 'Urban growth', particularly Tables 2 and 3. Stobart then compared population growth for 1778 and 1801 to compare net and percentage growth and relative changes within the hierarchy. The criteria to determine the towns to be studied came from contemporary gazetteers and which settlements they considered to be 'market towns'. In all, thirty-five market towns were identified but only thirty appeared consistently over the 150 years covered by the following gazettes: R. Blome, *Britannia*

cent in Liverpool. This regional rate of increase fell to 115 per cent for the period 1778 to 1801 and even Liverpool's phenomenal growth slowed to close to the regional average, at 125 per cent.⁸⁷ Initially, urban expansion was through infilling within the existing town parameters. Map 1.10 shows Chelmsford in 1591 as a mixture of domestic, industrial and agricultural plots with a more suburban feel than a modern suburban estate: for Clark and Slack, towns were 'permeated by the countryside' while Norwich, the second city in terms of population for much of this period, could be described as 'a city within an orchard' in the eighteenth century.⁸⁸ Christopher Chalkin has identified the physical growth of a number of towns between the mid-eighteenth century and 1820. These show that the original core of the town took up only a small portion of the town by 1820.⁸⁹

Early modern towns were afflicted by plague, disease and fires.⁹⁰ Macclesfield does not appear to have been affected by fire but there was a visitation of plague in 1602 – 3. In total, one hundred and thirty people died with over seventy in the month September 3 to October 3 1603. Of the fatalities, the street of residence of ninety-three are known.

(London, 1673); J. Adams, *Index Villaris* (London, 1690); T. Cox, *Magna Britannia et Hibernia* (London, 1673) and D. & S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia* (London, 1810).

⁸⁷ Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Rentury Revolution?', p. 40.

⁸⁸ Clark & Slack, 'Introduction', p. 6; Norwich quote from K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715 – 1785* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 304.

⁸⁹ Chalkin, *Provincial Towns*, pp. 63, 69, 75, 83, 99 for Manchester, Hull, Bath, Birmingham and Liverpool; Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 77.

⁹⁰ Fires destroyed large areas of Chester (1564), Stratford-upon-Avon (five times between 1594 and 1641), Tiverton (1598), Bury St Edmunds (1608), Dorchester (three times between 1613 and 1625), Banbury (1624), Oxford (1644), London (1666), Northampton (1675) and Warwick (1694). Plague decimated the populations of Loughborough (1558), Norwich (1579), Salisbury (1604), Leicester (1610 – 11), Exeter (1625), Newcastle (1636) and London (1665). For accounts of town's responses to fires see, for example, P. Borsay, 'A county town in transition: the Great Fire of Warwick, 1694' in Borsay & Proudfoot, *Provincial Towns*, pp. 151 – 70; M. Reed, 'The Cultural Role of Small Towns in England, 1600 – 1800', in Clarke *Small Towns*, pp. 121 – 47, on pp. 132 - 3; D. Underwood, *Fire From Heaven: The Life of and English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1992), for Dorchester.

Chart 1.8: Population growth in Macclesfield, 1664 - 1801.

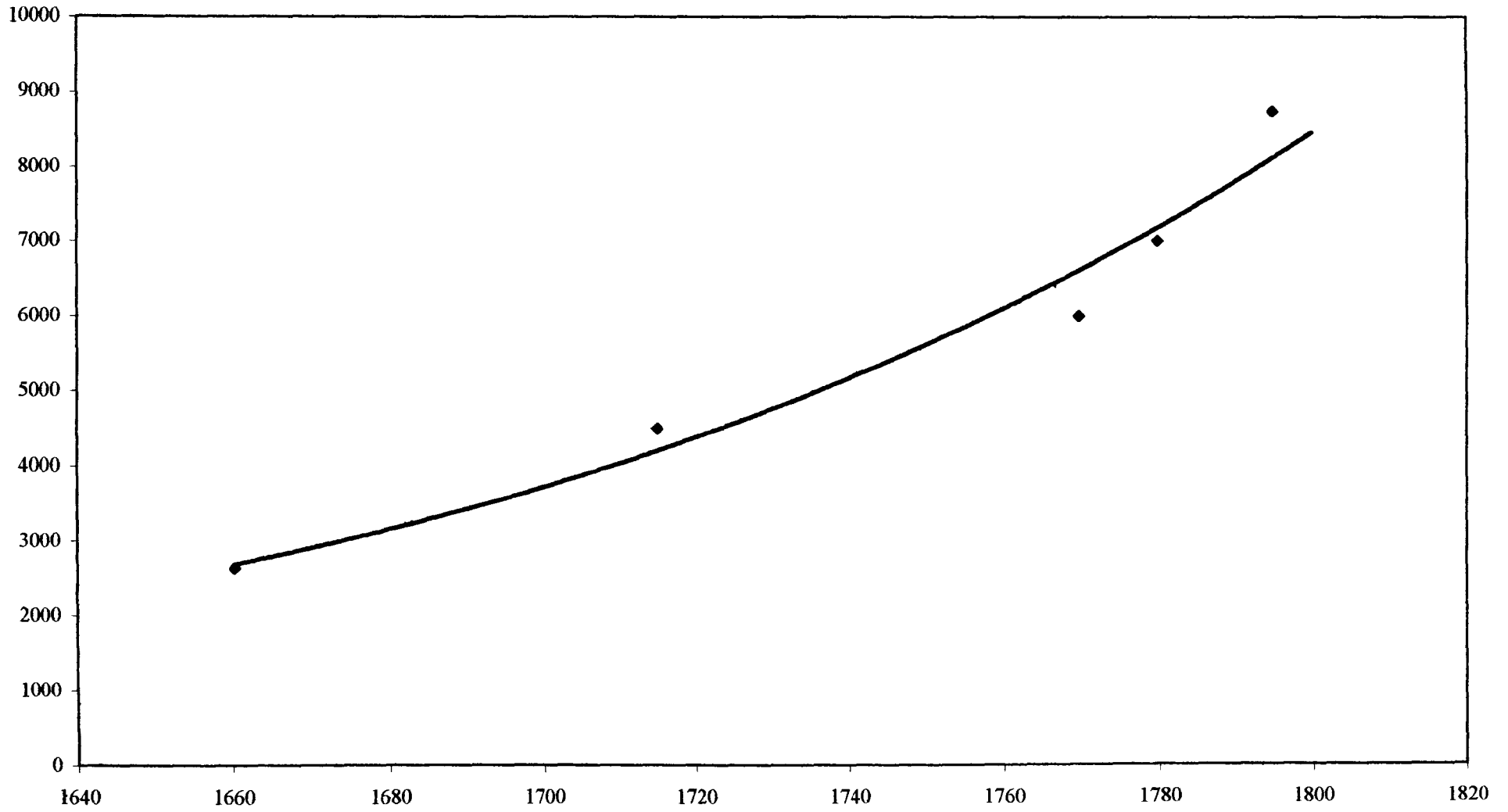


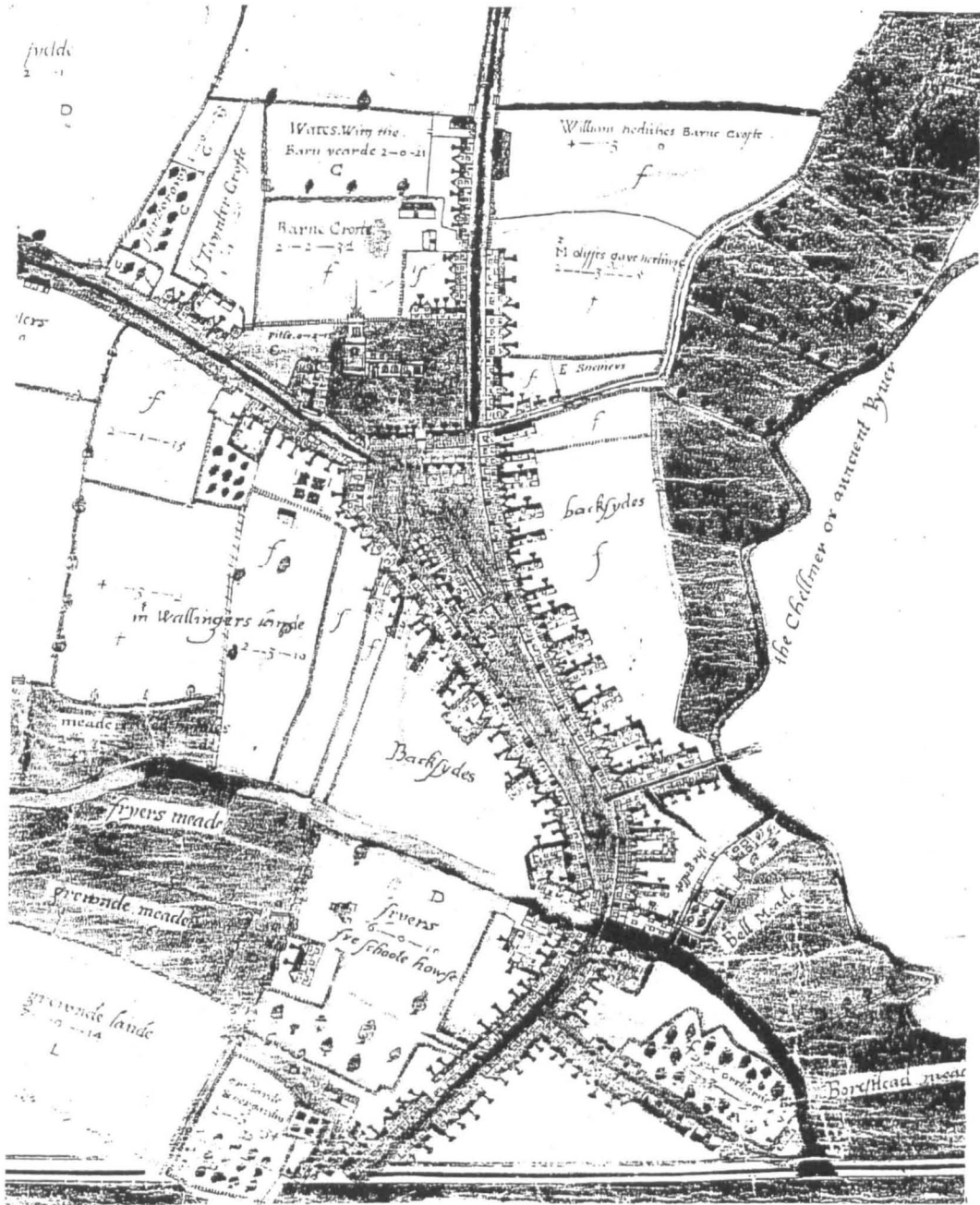
Table 1.9: Fatalities during the Plague of 1602 – 3.

Street	Fatalities	Houses
Chestergate	8	4
Mill Street	10	4
Jordangate	5	4
Dog Lane	56	20
Back Street	13	6
Church Street	1	1

Assuming that the highest mortalities afflicted the poorest and that they were zoned away from the more affluent parts of the town, it is evident that the poor of Macclesfield were residing in Dog Lane. Nine members of the Pott family of Dog Lane died in the visitation, for example Margaret daughter of Thomas Pott died in August 1603. However, the poor were not alone in their suffering as Richard Lowe, alderman, who was named in the 1595 charter, was amongst the fatalities.⁹¹

In summary, early modern Macclesfield was amongst the largest towns in north Cheshire and south Lancashire, and maintained this position throughout the eighteenth century. It was an administrative centre for east Cheshire and was also responsible for the ecclesiastical affairs of local townships despite not being a parish itself. As a corporate, but not a parliamentary borough, the Crown had granted Macclesfield the right to administer its own internal affairs. This could be a double-edged sword as it permitted the Crown to interfere in its internal affairs but in this Macclesfield was no more victimised than any other corporate borough. In common with other proto-industrial towns, Macclesfield's economy was focused on one industry, in this case the silk button trade, but Macclesfield was also able to maintain its position as a market town supporting the rural hinterland through the market, leather industry and the horse

Map 1.10: Walker's Map of Chelmsford, 1569.



⁹¹ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 71 – 2. CCRO MF 69-1/-2. A transcription of the marriages for 1699 to 1754 exists as MACC PAR. The *Macclesfield Parish Magazine*, No 87 (November, 1893) also printed the registers for 1572 to 1620, and can be accessed as MF 69/1.

fair. Although there is no adequate definition of an early modern town, Macclesfield surely fits into the category of substantial town. It was not the largest town, nor the fastest growing in terms of population or economy, but developed in the early modern period helped by an industry now long since gone. Macclesfield was in no position to influence national affairs, but was still influenced by national policies: war, rebellion and political intrigue. All in all, Macclesfield is representative of many towns reinventing themselves to deal with the new economic opportunities as well as being forced to deal with the problems of population growth and politics.

Chapter 2: Sources and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to make a brief introduction to the nature of the sources used in this dissertation, their characteristics and also the methods used to convert primary source material into usable information for research purposes. The original remit for this dissertation was for a study of the probate material from Macclesfield before 1760. This project was laid down by the *Victoria County History of Cheshire*. In this format, the project would have become a study into the use of probate material with Macclesfield as a case study. However, it was my intention to write a study of Macclesfield using the probate material to form the core of the research. To provide a more balanced and rounded account of the town's economic and political life, it has been necessary to consult further primary source material.

2.2 Macclesfield's Probate Files¹

The probate material for Macclesfield is held at the Chester and Cheshire Record Office (CCRO), Chester. Their computerised record system lists all of the files by name, abode, occupation, date (proved), a limited summary of the material contained in each file and a note on whether the file is 'supra', 'infra' or 'contested'. By limiting the survey to 'Macclesfield' (which included 'Macclesfield Forest') 2720 files were identified. (See Fig 2.1 for the first page of this database). Seventy-four of these were 'Macclesfield Forest' which leaves 2612 for 'Macclesfield'. Two Gerard, earls of Macclesfield are listed but they were removed as being atypical of the town as a whole and unlikely to have been representative. For the purposes of this study, the

¹ For a recent study of all aspects of probate see T. Arkell *et al.* (eds), *When Death Do Us Part* (Oxford, 2002).

research was initially limited to files proved in or before 1770, which amounted to 1016 files. Later, when the end date for the dissertation was fixed at 1740, the material to be studied was limited to probate material proved in or before 1760. This left a sample of 992 files. Fig. 2.2 shows the number of probate files proved per decade.

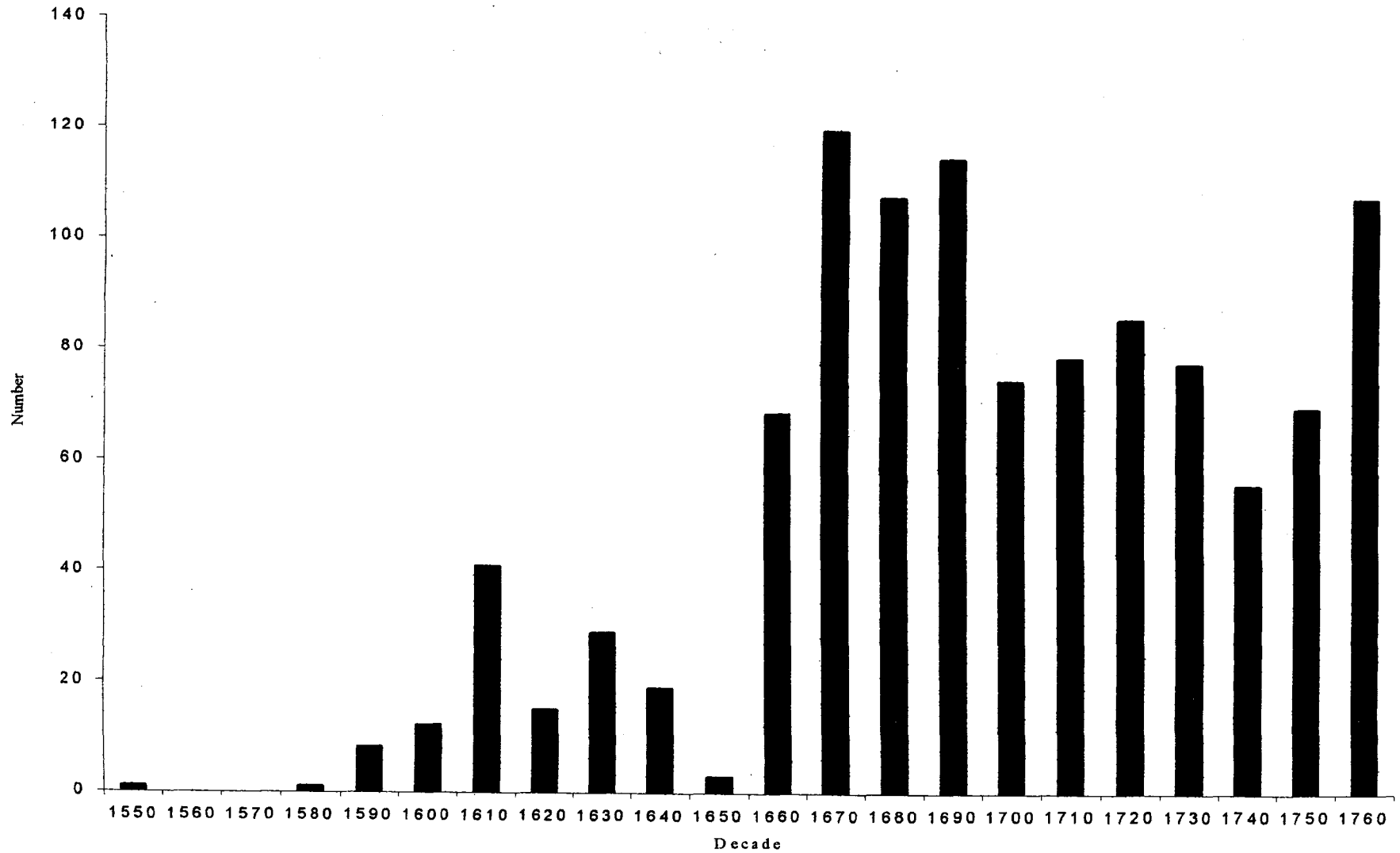
Individual files are identified as either WS (*supra* for will proved with an inventory valued at over £40), WI (*infra* for will proved under £40) or WC (contested, where an additional file has been created for legal documents produced in conjunction with additional legal proceedings). This classification is followed by the year the will was proved. In cases of WC files it is normal for the corresponding WS or WI file to have survived. So, the will belonging to John Partington of Macclesfield, tanner, which was proved on 14 June 1690, is located in file WS 1690. For the purposes of footnotes, these files will be identified using this classification. More than one will was proved in 1690. It will be possible to identify which WS 1690 file is being referred to by the bibliographical and occupation data in the main body of the text.

A probate file could contain all or a selection of the following documents: the will, a probate inventory, an account, a certificate of administration, the original cover page and a selection of correspondence concerning the estate. The probate material was initially transcribed onto the Bekon Idealist software installed on a laptop computer. After experimentation with the different types of documentation, it was found that in most cases the key points could be summarised. However, probate inventories needed to be transcribed verbatim. This proved to be a particularly time consuming procedure.

Name:	Abode:	Occupation:	Date:	Type:	Notes:
ABBOTT, BETTY	MACCLESFIELD	WIDOW	1830	1	
ACTON, WILLIAM	MACCLESFIELD	INNKEEPER	1772	1	
ADAMSON, WILLIAM	MACCLESFIELD	GENTLEMAN	1848	1	
ADSHEAD, ANN	MACCLESFIELD		1766	2	
ADSHEAD, MARTHA	MACCLESFIELD	WIDOW	1812	2	
ADSHEAD, MARY	MACCLESFIELD	SPINSTER	1774	1	
ADSHEAD, THOMAS	MACCLESFIELD FOREST	YEOMAN	1727	3 1 2	
ADSHEAD, WILLIAM	MACCLESFIELD	SILK THROWSTER	1764	1	
AGNEW, ANN	MACCLESFIELD	WIDOW	1851	1	INFRA
AINSWORTH, FRANCIS	MACCLESFIELD	SURGEON	1856	1	
AINSWORTH, GEORGE	MACCLESFIELD	STONE DEALER	1852	1	
AINSWORTH, SAMUEL	MACCLESFIELD	GENTLEMAN	1856	1	
AINSWORTH, THOMAS	MACCLESFIELD	GENTLEMAN	1843	1	
AINSWORTH, WILLIAM RICHARDSON	MACCLESFIELD	GENTLEMAN/BACHELOR	1843	2	
AIREY, THOMAS	MACCLESFIELD	BREWER	1847	1 4	
ALCOCK, GEOFFREY	MACCLESFIELD	CHAPMAN	1715	2	
ALCOCK, GEORGE	MACCLESFIELD	APOTHECARY	1748	2	
ALCOCK, JOHN	MACCLESFIELD	YEOMAN	1769	2	
ALCOCK, JOHN	MACCLESFIELD		1769	2	
ALDRED, MARY	MACCLESFIELD	WIDOW	1800	1	
ALDRED, RICHARD	MACCLESFIELD	CHAPMAN	1800	1	
ALLCOCK, PETER	MACCLESFIELD	YEOMAN	1827	1	INFRA
ALLEN, ALICE	MACCLESFIELD	WIDOW	1646	3	
ALLEN, ANN	MACCLESFIELD	TWISTER	1833	1	
ALLEN, EDWARD	MACCLESFIELD		1677	3	
ALLEN, HENRY	MACCLESFIELD	WHEELWRIGHT	1640	3 1 4	
ALLEN, JAMES	MACCLESFIELD	SILK THROWSTER	1820	1	
ALLEN, JOHN	MACCLESFIELD	LABOURER	1855	1	
ALLEN, JOHN	MACCLESFIELD	SILKMAN	1815	1	
ALLEN, JOHN	MACCLESFIELD	SHOPKEEPER	1759	1	
ALLEN, JOSEPH	MACCLESFIELD	SILK THROWSTER	1857	1	
ALLEN, JOSEPH	MACCLESFIELD	GENTLEMAN	1705	1	
ALLEN, SARAH	MACCLESFIELD	WIDOW	1837	1	
ALLEN, THOMAS	MACCLESFIELD	ESQ	1852	1	

Fig. 2.1: Example of a Page from the CCRO Database of Probate Inventories.

Chart 2.2: Number of Probate Files by Decade, 1550 – 1770.



Wills are documentary dispositions for the distribution of the testator's real estate. Strictly speaking, the 'last will and testament' were distinct legal documents. The testament disposed of personalty i.e. real estate, household goods, personal effects like clothing, trade goods, livestock and ready money. It is the testament which came into effect by a grant of probate by the Consistory Court in Chester (for Macclesfield) to the executor/s appointed by the testator. For practical purposes, in early modern England, the 'last will and testament' was one and the same document, usually referred to as a will. The will became a legal document once signed by the testator, an act which was witnessed by two or three named persons. Wills could be revoked at any time or remain extant for large periods of time. Codicils, if separately dated and witnessed, could make alterations to the original provisions of the will to account for changing circumstances. In a few cases, sworn affidavits exist to confirm 'death-bed' wills which were not committed to paper in the normal fashion. These affidavits stated that the conditions were made verbally in front of witnesses, and that this reported verbal will was accepted in lieu of a signed and witnessed will by the Consistory Court.

In practice, wills could be either very short, leaving all to just one person, or frustratingly long with legalistic jargon, statements in triplicate and multiple provisions to cover all eventualities (usually in the event that a beneficiary died before coming of age or failed to produce legitimate offspring). Wills invariably begin with stock religious phrases and confirmations of belief: 'In the name of God, Amen', and continue with a name (usually including place of abode and occupation) and a self-certification of mental capacity. The will then specified the conditions for the disposal of the testator's body. Next came the conditions for the distribution of the realty and personalty before concluding with the nomination of (usually) two executors. The

relationship between the testator and the executors varied. The executor could be a kinsman of the testator, or a friend and neighbour, business associate or ‘upstanding member of the community’ whose position could be used to provide weight in the event of a contested will.

Apart from the obvious information concerning the testator’s bequest, wills are able to provide valuable information about the testator’s religious beliefs, particularly if bequests were made to congregations or chapels. Information about the nature of the testator’s family can also be deduced as familial beneficiaries were usually identified by kinship rather than occupation. If a sufficient number of wills survived for a particular family, it is possible to reconstruct the passage of estates and bequests, or to begin family reconstructions

Probate inventories are lists of goods compiled on the death of an individual as part of the process whereby the deceased’s will is proved. As such, they provide an invaluable insight into the material nature of an individual’s life at a specific moment in time. Before the benefits of probate inventories are examined, it is essential to identify what information they can not provide. Firstly, unlike Scottish ‘testaments’, probate inventories only deal with ‘moveable property’, e.g. goods, chattels and leasehold land. The probate inventory does not include ‘realty’ or ‘real property’ or ‘movable estate’, that is freehold or copyhold land or ‘fixtures and fittings’ associated with such property. As such, the probate inventory under-estimates real wealth. Other sources need to be employed to quantify the value of freehold and copyhold estates.² Secondly, again unlike Scottish ‘testaments’, probate inventories only give the gross values of moveable estates: debts owed by the deceased are not recorded while those owed to the deceased are recorded. Unless the administrator’s account has survived,

² J. Moore, ‘Probate Inventories - Problems and Prospects’ in P. Riden (ed.), *Probate Records and the Local Community* (Gloucester, 1985), pp. 11 – 12.

which is far less frequent than probate inventories, debts are not quantifiable. Therefore the net value of the estate is often impossible to assess. In the accounts which have survived, the net value of the estate has been shown to have been substantially reduced, and even outweighed, by the presence of debts.³

It has, however, been argued that outstanding debt should be viewed in terms of the deceased's 'credit-rating'. Outstanding debts would be added to the gross value of the estate, rather than subtracted, in order to identify the real net value.⁴ Perhaps a modern example could be the mortgage on a house. Although this is a debt to the mortgage lender, and would be recorded as such in an inventory, it is a debt which exists under certain conditions. These allow for the debt to be repaid over a period of years. This is also a debt which could only have been created if the mortgage lender was convinced of the 'debtor's' credit rating.

Moore argues that the changing nature of 'landlord's fixtures and fitting' creates another variable, and he uses the example of window glazing in Gloucestershire. Window glazing is less commonly recorded in probate inventories after the Civil War than before, yet in the increasingly materialistic society of post-Restoration England it cannot be argued that window glass was becoming less common. Rather, window glass was becoming so common that it no longer warranted an individual mention.⁵

The listing of clothing and ready money invariably occur at the end of the inventory in Macclesfield, not at the top, which Moore states is the most common format. In both cases, 'wearing apparel' or 'his apparel' or 'in ready money' or even

³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12 – 13. See, for example, Richard Bamford, alderman, WS 1597, one of the few Macclesfield examples of window glass being listed in an inventory.

‘purse and apparel’ are the catch all phrases to cover both these subjects.⁶ (Wills of female testators are noted for making individual bequests of small gifts, and so ‘wearing apparel’ is often broken down into individual garments.) Foodstuffs for domestic consumption appear to be omitted from probate inventories. Where food is listed, it is invariably in large quantities and in a context associated with food production or processing, e.g. ‘corn threshed and unthreshed’. However, amongst the real estate are often items which indicate the consumption of foodstuffs which are not listed, like tea services, coffee cans, pestle and mortars for spices. Inventories of shopkeepers and similar documents show that people certainly had access to a wider variety of produce, even from exotic sources, than is indicated in probate inventories, although admittedly at a price which would exclude their consumption by most of the population.⁷

There was no legal obligation to provide a probate inventory for estates valued at below £5, although they are known to exist. This sub-£5 cohort means that the poorest section of society is invariably excluded from research using probate inventories.

What of the reliability of the inventory? Were articles disposed of or pilfered prior to the inventory’s compilation? How accurate are the values attributed to the goods? To answer the second question, there is no practical way to determine fraud. Any item which one could expect to reappear on two separate documents could equally have been legitimately disposed of in the intervening period. In at least one Macclesfield inventory an item has been recorded in the probate inventory as already

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷ D. Hey, *Packmen, Carriers and Packhorse Roads* (Leicester, 1980), pp. 187 – 195; Moore, ‘Probate Inventories’, p. 13; E.H. Phelps-Brown & S.V. Hopkins, ‘Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, compared with Builders’ Wage-rates’, *Economica*, n.s., xxiii (1956), pp. 296 – 314, on 297 – 8; J. Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living* (1969), pp. 30, 43, 125 – 6, 129, 135 – 6, 138 – 9, 206, 273.

sold. Moore is of the opinion that while values for similar goods in the same year in the Bristol area may vary, they do not vary significantly and can be taken as evidence of a current market price.⁸

Inventories normally begin with details of the deceased and of the (normally) two appraisors. The list of goods can vary between the frustratingly short, where the deceased's entire estates are condensed into two or three lines, to the frustratingly detailed (from the transcription point of view) where every pair of sheets are individually marked and valued. Listing by room or outbuilding can break up the inventory. This has the additional benefit of identifying room usage. A word of caution: only rooms used by the deceased will be appraised; other rooms in the same building, for example leased out to a widow, will not be recorded.⁹

What, therefore, are the benefits of probate inventories? As stated above, they provide a snapshot insight into an individual's material position at a specific moment. Occupational status is a common early modern descriptor but the inventory can indicate not only the scale of operation but also indicate dual occupancy. Also the material contents of a dwelling can indicate the nature of the deceased's social standing.

Accounts were created when the value of the estate was insufficient to meet the discharges required by the administrators. Most commonly these were trade debts, although the expenses of probate and the funeral were also included. Their primary importance is that they included debts owed by the deceased, which were not normally recorded in the probate inventory. Unlike the inventory, which always showed a positive balance, the accounts always show a negative balance. This should not be taken as evidence that all estates were in debt because the very purpose of the

⁸ Moore, 'Probate Inventories', pp. 14 – 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

account was to show evidence of this debt. Estates where there was a positive balance did not require an account.

Bonds of administration exist to authorise the executors named in the will to take control of the estate in order to meet the requirements of the will. They could also account for discrepancies between the list of executors and the actual administrators, for example if an executor had died or did not wish to accept the responsibilities. They can be either in manuscript or printed formats, the later making the collection of the essential details significantly easier. For the purposes of this research, their main use was to reinforce the terms of the will with regards to the executors. The bibliographical details about the deceased served to strengthen our knowledge of the deceased. Like the inventory, the bond was compiled shortly after death and recorded the deceased's social or economic position at the end of their life. This could differ from that recorded in the will, which represented the deceased's opinion of themselves at an earlier point in their life.

Original covering pages are often contained in the modern protective files. This contains basic bibliographical details about the testator, usually, name, occupation, date proved and to whom administration of the estate was granted.¹⁰ This bibliographical data is also to be found inside the file, but the value of the covering page is that the key details are readily available.

Correspondence concerning the estate normally occur in WC probate files, when they are usually affidavits. Alternatively, they can be found in all types of probate files, when a named executor relinquished his or her rights or was no longer living in Macclesfield. Under the last situation, any required oaths could be taken at a convenient local ecclesiastical court. These documents were of limited value to the

¹⁰ Sometimes this information was written directly onto the back of any large document, like the will, rather than a separate piece of paper.

research except in the last case when they identified relationships outside Macclesfield.

2.3 The 'Macclesfield Collection.'¹¹

The Macclesfield Collection is housed at Birkenhead Public Library, although microfilm copies are available there and at the CCRO. They came from the office of an eighteenth century Macclesfield attorney, John Stafford, and were later in the possession of a local antiquarian, Peter Brown.¹²

The Collection includes documents from the Middle Ages to the early-twentieth century. They are largely filed chronologically by subject. The subject matter contained is diverse, including legal cases, matters pertaining to the church, private papers, genealogical accounts and borough affairs. Geographically, the Collection covers a large proportion of east Cheshire, not just Macclesfield and its immediate surrounds. The Collection is catalogued according to its own system, consisting of letter/roman numeral/arabic number. For example, the first document is B/I/1, a copy of a Writ Patent by Henry VII, to the freemen of Macclesfield on ages for qualification for jury service.

Many of the documents are copies, probably made for legal purposes although an antiquarian interest in older documents may account for their transcription and, incidentally, survival into the modern period. In only a few cases has it been possible to locate an original copy. One example is the will of Samuel Mottershead, gentleman, WS 1691, which is copied in the Collection as S/III/4. In such cases,

¹¹ CCRO MF 122/1 – 4; C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), p. 384.

¹² Stafford appears in a number of the probate files as a witness, executor or administrator, for example as administrator for Margaret Tatton, spinster, WS 1740, when Stafford was described as 'gentleman'. Stafford also served as an alderman from April 1736 until at least December 1744, the penultimate entry in the Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, and was also appointed Town Clerk in 1748, J. Earles, *Streets and Houses of Old Macclesfield* (Leeds, 1990), p. 109.

where a version of the same document with a better providence is known to exist, the version in the Collection has not been used. However, as many of the copies in the Collection were compiled for legal reasons, there should be no doubt as to the accuracy of their transcription.

2.4 Corporation Minute Book, 1619 – 1744.¹³

This bound manuscript book provides minuted information about town government, manufacturing regulations, the fairs and markets, dealings with the wider world and general minutiae of urban life. It contains 216 pages in chronological order with the horse fair toll book inserted and bound in the middle.¹⁴ There is no index to this work, which meant that the whole contents had to be read. It would be fair to say that the wealth and variety of information provided by this book could form the basis of a dissertation in its own right. For the purposes of this dissertation, the Minute Book has two uses. Firstly, through the aldermen's signatures, the structure of the aldermanic bench will be examined further in chapter 3 and, secondly, the details of their decisions can be used to provide supporting evidence for other sources. The exception to this is the horse fair toll book, see below and chapter 8.

2.5 Horse Fair Toll Book

As stated above, the horse fair toll book is bound in the middle of the corporation minute book. The presence of a toll book is not recorded in its own right. Although its existence is mentioned in Stella Davies' *A History of Macclesfield*, the significance of this toll book was not realised until the book itself was viewed. When

¹³ CCRO LBM 1/1.

¹⁴ See below.

Fig. 2.3: Sample from the Horse Fair Toll Book, 11 June 1652.

June the ~~11th~~ 11th before James
 Lincoln Bar

Therell Ridge in the Parish of Stamford
 at night Bay hagg flayed for Steyld took
 Opans' age about 4 or 5 years

Wouther George Shawe
 in Stamford

Hugh Stubbles of Nottingham sold to George Hare
 of Ashford in the Water in Derbyshire at Bay
 2 years of Age some gray haggd in the forehead
 fine

Wouther Ald. Nathome
 Congleton

Richard Stables of Loughwood in Lookfield
 to Robert Middleton of Brough Bridge in Der. A
 Bay ~~hagg~~ filly, A white hogg behind
 3 years of Age

Wouther Willelm Lord
 & John Blant of Boff

Thomas Hordern sold to Thomas Jones of Aore
 at night Bay hagg low white hogg behind
 white breast some hagg Age 5 years

Fig. 2.4: The Idealist Database transcription of the Horse Fair Toll Book for 11 June 1652.

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11 June 1653

Theilwell Ridge of Stopford sold to William Bramall of Gt Longstone, Derbys., 1 flaxen nag 59/-
V: George Shawe of Stopford

Ric Stables of Barneswood, Leek, sold to Robt Middleton of Brough Bridge, Derbys., 1 bay filly £3 10/-
V: Wm Lees and John Blant of Bosley

Tho Horderne sold to Tho Jones of Alderley 1 bay nag £6
V: George Burge

Hugh Stubbes of Northrode sold to George Hareid of Ashford in the Water, Derbys., 1 bay filly £4 3'4
V: Alderman Lachome of Congleton

Wm Lymme of Butley sold to Wm Watson of Leek 1 bay mare £6 10/-
V: Edward Mosse

Roger Whitticare of Hulmewalfield sold to Hugh Bore of Little Hucklowe, Derbys., 1 chestnut nag £5 1/-
V: Edward Blagge

Roger Strettell of Moberley sold to Steven Bramall of wardlowe, Derbys., 1 bay nag £3 9/-
V: Rich Hankinson in Ashley, Bramall

Arthur Worsley of Ashley sold to George Hulme of Wardley w/i Blackwell 1 grey mare 39/-
V: Richard Hankinson

Raph Barber of Adlington sold to Francis Parrott of Bignall End, Staffs., 1 bay gelding £6 1/-
V: John Pownall of Bollington

Thomas Birch of Waringlowe in Marsturder sold to William Dampport of Franline Heys, Leek 1 bay nag £6 3'4
V: Thomas Thorniley

Edward Gandy of Northrode sold to Tho Hulme of Wardlowe, Derbys., 1 mare £4
V: James Lees of Northrode

William Hollinpriest of Bowden sold to John Lowe the eld of Chelford 1 bay chestnut £3 4/-
V: John Dean of Alderley

John Brownsword of Eaton by Congleton sold to Capt Bosley 1 bay filly £5 V: James Heyes the eld

John Fox of Further Bradshaw, Chaple sold to Robert Heald of Tidswall 1 grey mare £3 5/-
V: John Barlow

Edward Davenport of the Hough sold to Nic Creswell of Chaple 1 grey mare £4 13'4
V: John Hulme & Robt Davenport of Wilmselew

it became clear that Peter Edwards had missed this fair from his history of the horse trade, the real significance of the toll book became clear.¹⁵ Map 2.5 shows the horse fairs used by Peter Edwards. There is noticeable gap in east Cheshire which would have been served by Macclesfield's horse fair.

The toll book consists of 401 pages in manuscript form between 1619 and 1670.¹⁶ There are also details of sales of cattle with accounts of tolls received at fairs. This book provides the primary research for part of chapter 8. An example of the toll book is found in Figure 2.3. This photocopy shows the recorded sales, toll receipts and expenses for the fair of 11 June 1652.¹⁷ The details of the toll book were recorded in an Idealist database. This followed the same format as that for the probate material with the exception that the various table titles were not inserted. In this case, all that was required was for a file number specific to the database, the date of the fair and details of the transactions. (See Figures 2.3 and 2.4).

2.6 Hearth Tax

The Hearth Tax came into being under an Act of Parliament in 1662.¹⁸ In theory, it listed heads of households and the number of hearths for which they were liable to be taxed upon. These lists commenced in 1662 and were initially compiled by local authorities. Petty Constables drew up list of taxable hearths, which were

¹⁵ P. Edwards, *The Horse Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1988). The horse fair is also omitted from *AHEW*, Vol. V. Pt. I (Cambridge, 1984), p. 147.

¹⁶ According to the *AHEW*, after 1700 toll books 'cease or deteriorate badly' so the Macclesfield toll book's cessation in 1670 is to be expected, *AHEW*, Vol. V. Pt. II (Cambridge, 1985), p. 442.

¹⁷ Courtesy of CCRO.

¹⁸ 14 Charles II, c. 10. See Maps 2.6 and 2.7 for representations of the Hearth Tax in Cheshire.

Map 2.5: Early Modern Horse Fairs used by Edwards.



checked by the Justices of the Peace. The tax was also collected by the petty Constables and passed to the High Constable of the Hundred, together with a list of defaulters, who passed the tax to the county Sheriffs and then on to the Exchequer. Almost immediately, amendments were required to clarify several issues: for the second assessment, the Petty Constable's lists were checked by two 'substantial inhabitants'. This improved recording, but yields fell due to increased exemptions.¹⁹ Property owners were distinguished from occupiers, and exemptions for the poor were introduced. An Act of 1663 stipulated that the listings should include both those liable to and those exempt from taxation.²⁰ These changes, together with known examples of tax evasion and changes in the methods of collection make direct comparison of individual listings problematic.

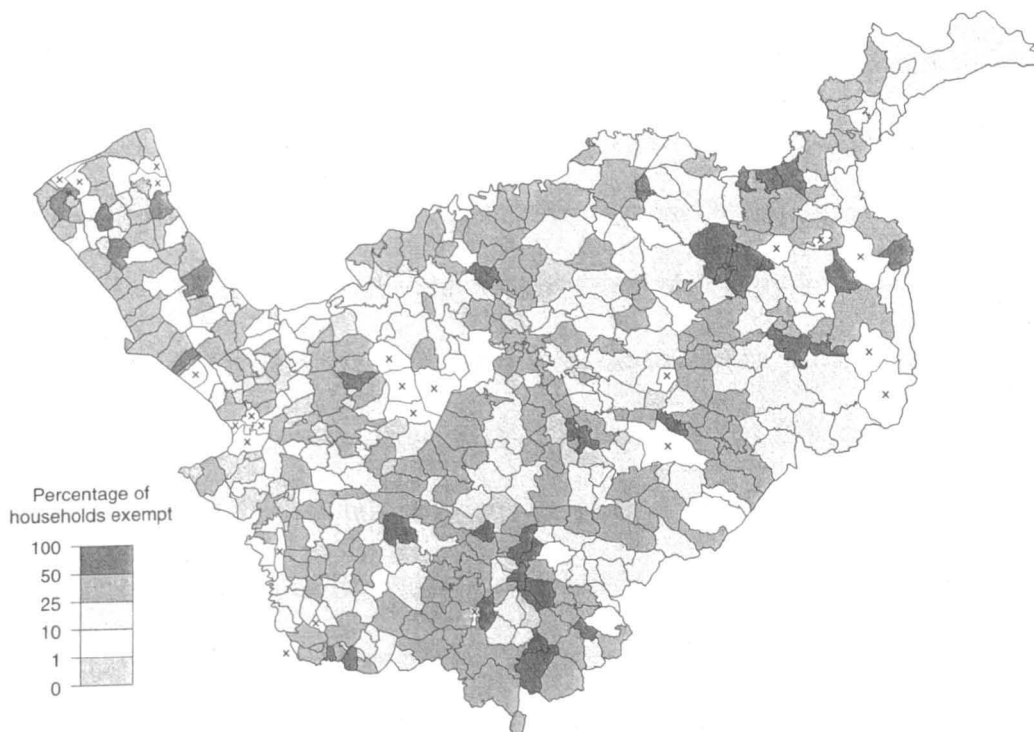
Fortunately, for the purposes of this dissertation, population totals have already been calculated for Macclesfield in 1664 based upon the Hearth Tax returns. Jon Stobart, in his article 'An eighteenth-century revolution?' has calculated populations for thirty north-western towns in 1664, 1778 and 1801.²¹ This article proved particularly helpful both in producing estimates of Macclesfield's population, and also in placing the town in a regional context.

¹⁹ The first collection, in 1661, was made by the Petty Constables. As the revenue was only a third of the sum expected, the collections for 1664 and 1665 were placed in the hands of commissioners appointed by the king. Again this proved unsatisfactory, and the collection was farmed out to London merchants, who surrendered it at the first opportunity, 1669. Sub-collectors returned before royal commissioners were appointed again between 1684 and 1689, when the tax was abolished. J. Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Century Revolution? Investigating Urban Growth in North-West England, 1664 – 1801', *Urban History*, xxiii, pt. 1 (May, 1996), pp. 26 – 47, on pp. 30 – 1.

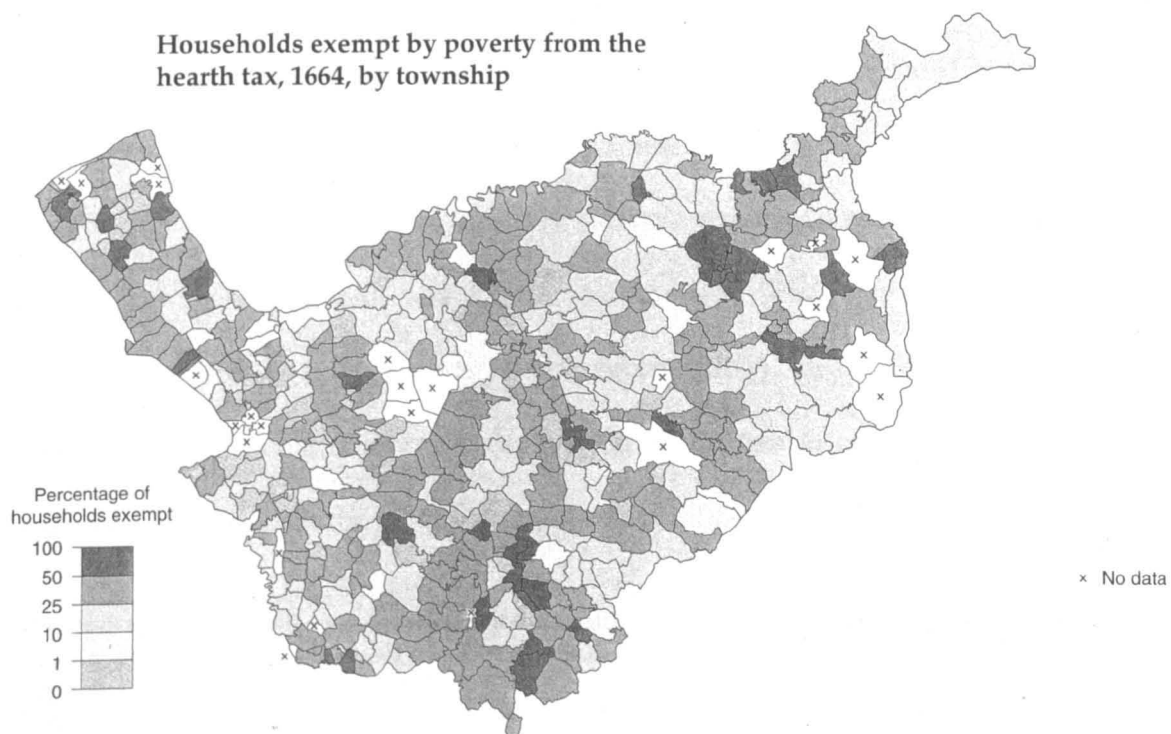
²⁰ 15 Charles II, c. 13.

²¹ Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Century Revolution?', pp. 26 – 47.

Map 2.6: Hearths per Household as Recorded in the Hearth Tax, 1664, by Township.²²



Map 2.7: Households exempt by Poverty from the Hearth Tax, 1664, by Township.



²² Phillips & Phillips, *New Historic Atlas of Cheshire*, pp. 93, 97.

2.7 Macclesfield Parish Register²³

Before the advent of national census in 1801 and civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in 1837, the only continuous source available to assess the demographic behaviour were the parish registers. From 1538, parish registers were required by law to register the baptism, marriage and burial of every inhabitant in the parish. As a source of documentation established nationally by law with a limited but fixed number of requirements for some three centuries, the parish registers represent a vast source of consistent demographic information. To the statutory requirements could be added further information like place of birth, occupation and names of parents depending upon individual clergymen. However, there are limitations with the system. Earlier registers may not have survived, or be illegible, or may not have been kept through the failure of individual clergymen.²⁴ The registers recorded baptisms and burials, not births and deaths, and so could miss those vital events when death took place before baptism or burial took place away from the parish of residence. Registers are best able to show the life cycle when an individual resided in one parish for their entire life, but migration was very much a feature of early modern life.²⁵ Finally, and most importantly as the early modern period progressed, non-registration during the Commonwealth and by non-conformists, Jews and Catholics (whose registers, if kept at all, have a poorer survivability) meant that an increasing proportion of the community was excluded from the parish registers. Nevertheless, parish registers remain the most important source of demographic information for the

²³ CCRO MF 69-1/-2. Also a transcription of the marriages for 1699 to 1754 exists as MACC PAR. The *Macclesfield Parish Magazine*, No 87 (November, 1893) also printed the registers for 1572 to 1620, and can be accessed as MF 69/1.

²⁴ See E.A. Wrigley, 'Family Limitation in Pre-Industrial England', *EcHR*, xix (1966), pp. 82 – 109, on pp. 82 – 3; M. Drake, 'An Elementary Exercise in Parish Register Demography', *EcHR*, xiv (1961), pp. 427 – 445, on pp. 427 – 8; E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, 'English Population History from Family Reconstruction: Summary Results 1600 – 1799', *Population Studies*, xxxvii (1983), pp. 157 – 184, on pp. 157 – 8.

early modern period by allowing comparisons to be made over time and against other localities.

The only surviving parish register from Macclesfield is that of the Anglican chapel of St Michael's, although throughout the period covered by this dissertation it was dedicated to All Saints'. No registers have survived for the dissenting chapels known to have existed in Macclesfield at this time nor for the catholic community. Anglican registers survive from 1572 until after 1740.²⁶ Prior to the suspension of parish registers during the Commonwealth period, the quality of the registers are generally poor and illegible. Quality and legibility improved after 1660. From 1699 registration of marriages resumed, probably due to the Marriage Act of 1695. In June 1685 a new register was begun and from that date until after 1740, the quality of the registration became both consistent and legible. This register was chosen for the commencing of the baptism and burial survey due to the quality of the information available, and because they also allow comparisons to be drawn with the marriage registration when it resumed fourteen years later.

2.8 Ecclesiastical Population Estimates

There were three national ecclesiastical census's carried out during or shortly before the period under review which should provide the researcher with figures from which to rebuild population statistics: 1563, 1603 and 1676 (Compton's). There is also a diocese-wide census carried out in 1722 by Bishop Gattrell. As with the Hearth Tax, each population census or tax assessment was carried out to slightly different terms and aimed to measure slightly different subjects. Consequently, estimating a

²⁵ See P. Clark, 'Migration in England during the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *P&P*, lxxxiii (1979), pp. 57 – 90.

finite population and drawing comparisons between censuses can be problematic. However, from the perspective of Macclesfield, these national ecclesiastical censuses turned out to be disappointing.

Returns from only two Chester Diocese parishes have survived from the 1676 census, both in Lancashire. The 1603 census has no returns for the whole diocese.²⁷ Initially, the 1563 census was more promising. The returns for households in Prestbury parish are:

Prestbury	212
Macclesfield	100
Adlington	36
Marton	27
Chelford	26
Bosley	24
Pott Shrigley	14
Siddington	11
Newton	8

Across the parish as a whole the figures look reliable. However, Macclesfield's 100 households is suspiciously round, although statistically some townships must have had 100 households. What is more telling is the relationship between Macclesfield and Prestbury (212). Given that Prestbury never appears to have gained the prominence which Macclesfield attained, it would be strange if

²⁶ 1740 was chosen for the end date for baptisms and burials to coincide with the end of the dissertation. 1754 was chosen for the end date for the marriages as they ceased to be carried out in Macclesfield due to Hargreave's Act of that year.

²⁷ B.L. Harl. MS. 280, ff. 157 – 172v. See also R.G. Usher, *The Reconstruction of the English Church* (London, 1910), I, p. 241.

Prestbury were the larger settlement. Therefore, this census has had to be dismissed as unreliable, but only for the Macclesfield township.²⁸

2.9 Other Sources

These come under two main categories, antiquarian accounts and modern academic histories.²⁹

The antiquarian accounts were produced in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and can be seen within a national trend for exploring local urban and county histories. The main accounts used are J. Aikin's *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles around Manchester*, J.P. Earwaker's *East Cheshire* and Thomas Helsby's 1882 edition of George Ormerod's *The History of Cheshire* (Volume III for Macclesfield Hundred). None of these accounts are contemporary to the period under review. As Rachel Kemsley observed in her thesis on four of the townships within Macclesfield chapelry, given their concentration on 'the descents of the larger or older estates, and the institutional histories, architecture, and the endowments of Church of England chapels' their work is 'thorough and reliable - an admirable achievement given that their research pre-dated county record offices and many of the lists and indexes available to the present-day historian.'³⁰ It is difficult to disagree with her with regards to Macclesfield. A degree of caution is required to ensure that the overall reliability is not taken for granted, especially with those accounts which are not footnoted and therefore difficult to authenticate. Aikin,

²⁸ A. Whiteman, *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition* (London, 1986), pp. 630 – 1; for 1563 BL MS. Harley 594 f. 100; personal correspondence with Professor Palliser and Dr Dyer who kindly gave me their finding on Macclesfield in 1563 and 1603 from their forthcoming edition: A. Dyer & D.M. Palliser (eds), *The Diocesan Returns for 1563 and 1603* (OUP for British Academy, forthcoming 2003).

²⁹ For a summary of county histories for Cheshire, see the chapter on Cheshire by A.T. Thacker in C.R.J. Currie & C.P. Lewis (eds), *A Guide to English County Histories* (Stroud, 1997) which describes Ormerod as a 'milestone' and that Earwaker was 'no real advance upon Ormerod'.

for example, speaks of a poor box for alms for the dead of the battle of Bosworth.³¹ No other account mentions Macclesfield inhabitants participation at Bosworth, but the effect of the battle of Flodden were deeply significant on the town in the early-sixteenth century. Aikin may well have confused the two battles, although without references to his sources it is difficult to be certain.

The main recent historical work on Macclesfield's history is C. Stella Davies' *A History of Macclesfield*. This work which covers the Anglo Saxon period to the mid-twentieth century contains a great deal of well researched material and transcribed documents. There is, however, a major flaw in that there are no footnotes with which to corroborate her findings. Gail Malmgreen's *Silk Town* is the monograph of her thesis, which marks the end date for this particular piece of research. It was necessary for her to make reference to events which preceded her own time frame in order to place her own research into context. Both of these works have proved to be particularly useful in providing the outline for my own research.³²

Other studies have tended to be of county-wide or regional studies, for example, A.D.M. and C.B. Phillip, *A New Historical Atlas of Cheshire*, C.B. Phillips and J.H. Smith's *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540* or Jon Stobart's 'Regional Structure and the Urban System: North-West England, 1700 – 1760' in *The Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*.³³ While these works were able to provide only limited information directly relevant to Macclesfield, they

³⁰ R.M. Kemsley, *Landowners and communities in the east Cheshire Pennines from the 13th century to the 20th* (unpublished University of Liverpool Ph.D. thesis, 1999), p. 12.

³¹ J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles around Manchester* (London, 1795), p. 436. This story has been repeated elsewhere, for example in Earle, *Old Macclesfield* (Leeds, 1990), pp. 10 – 11. It should be noted that Aikin is not one of the antiquarian accounts praised by Rachel Kemsley, in n. 30, above.

³² G. Malmgreen, *Silk Town: Industry and Culture in Macclesfield, 1750 – 1835* (Hull, 1985); G. Malmgreen, *Economy and Culture in an Industrialising Town: Macclesfield, Cheshire, 1750 – 1835* (unpublished Indiana University Ph.D. thesis, 1981).

were able to provide regional information within which Macclesfield could be placed. In this way, it is possible to place the relevance of findings about Macclesfield into a national or regional context.

2.10 Occupational Classifications

One of the principal uses of probate records was in the establishing of occupational classifications. With a source of about one thousand files from probate files spread over two centuries, several hundred surname groupings and dozens of occupations, it was essential to subdivide the data into manageable cohorts. ‘Occupation’ (which also included status descriptors) based upon the CCRO database was chosen as the criterion for subdivision.³⁴ This choice of criteria oversimplifies the whole issue of occupational and status descriptors in early modern records. At the most basic level there are errors and omissions within the CCRO’s database, of which the most noticeable is ‘Charles Earle of Macclesfield, no occupation’.³⁵ He is, in fact, Charles, earl of Macclesfield and his occupation (in fact, in this case, it is a title) should have read ‘earl’.

Patten expressed doubts about the reliability of occupational descriptors: ‘the true nature of urban occupations in the pre-industrial period are always likely to remain blurred, and often confusing.’³⁶ In part this confusion arises from the nature of the material evidence. Patten sees two types of documentary evidence. Firstly, there are those which are likely to include occupational information as part of the ‘control of what people did.’ These records include admissions to town freedom, enrolment as

³³ A.D.M. & C.B. Phillips, *A New Historical Atlas of Cheshire* (Chester, 2002); C.B. Phillips & J.H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540* (London, 1994); J. Stobart, ‘Regional Structure and the Urban System: North-West England, 1700 – 1760’, *THSLC*, cxlv (1996), pp. 45 – 74.

³⁴ See Fig. 2.1. It is possible to carry out limited searches based on any relevant keyword.

³⁵ WS 1701.

apprentices or lists of the poor. Secondly, occupation, or details inferring the occupation, is sometimes recorded incidentally. These include probate records and parish records.³⁷ Vaisey, in a study of probate inventories in Lichfield, observed that their 'primary value rests in the fact that among them will be found examples of virtually every class of citizen which one would expect in a city of the size and location of Lichfield.'³⁸ 'Virtually every class' excludes those without sufficient worldly goods to necessitate the expense of probate i.e. the poor and economically marginal. This second category of records has the advantage that they represent an almost continuous series: their survival to the present day is another matter altogether. Patten's first group included lists which may be drawn up for a specific purpose, but the incidence of these lists are often erratic, and may even have been compiled using different operating criteria. This produces problems in comparing different sets of data. Norwich in 1570 and Ipswich in 1597 compiled lists of vagrants; in 1589 Norwich compiled a list of all householders; in 1560 Ipswich had compiled a list of all 'foreign' tradesmen.³⁹ Not only are these lists infrequent and compiled for different purposes but there may even have been different criteria for 'vagrant', 'householder' or 'foreign' which make an accurate comparison impossible. Probate material, while excluding the poor, does provide an almost continuous series of data to a reasonably fixed criteria (especially given the timescale involved). In Macclesfield, no such lists exist and the closest is the Freeman Rolls which commence in 1770.⁴⁰

³⁶ J. Patten, 'Urban Occupations in Pre-Industrial England', *Institute of British Geographers Transactions*, new series, 2, 1977, pp. 296 – 313, on p. 296.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 300 quoting from D.G. Vaisey, 'Probate Inventories of Lichfield and District, 1568 - 1680', *Staffs. Rec. Soc.*, 4th series, iii.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁴⁰ CCRO LBM 2703/55.

Eighty-two different occupations or statuses are recorded in the CCRO database. This list includes variations on a theme (innholder/innkeeper, mould throwster/buttonmould turner) but excludes variations based on sex (chapman/chapwoman, widow/widower). 'No occupation' is considered to be a status at this stage. Initially, it was planned to follow one of the occupational classifications described in Patten and Glennie or as used by Ascott rather than developing an entirely new criteria unique to Macclesfield.⁴¹ However, the larger issue of occupation definitions and dual occupations needs to be addressed first. 'The problems of inaccurate, incomplete, partial and poorly surviving sources are compounded in the snares and delusions presented by the occupational designations used in the records themselves.'⁴² Multiple occupations and social descriptors which are not in themselves occupations (e.g. alderman, mayor, widow) all serve to confuse the issue of occupation. The scale of operation implied by an occupational description is largely one of perception. What distinguished a husbandman from a yeoman, or a yeoman from a gentleman? John Mutchall is described as both husbandman and yeoman.⁴³ Is a 'tailor', to use Patten's example, a freeman merchant tailor or a poor bodger?⁴⁴ By-employment was common in early modern England. It is not uncommon to find townsmen with evidence of agricultural activities, or for rural workers obtaining industrial by-employment in slack periods of the agricultural year. James Barber, for example, is described as both chapman and yeoman in different documents in the same file.⁴⁵ The extent to which agriculture or industry

⁴¹ Patten, 'Urban Occupations', pp. 308 – 310; P.D. Glennie, 'Industry and Towns, 1500 – 1730', in R.A. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin (eds), *An Historical Geography of England and Wales* (London, 1978), pp. 199 – 222; D. Ascott, *Wealth and Community: Liverpool, 1660 – 1760* (unpublished University of Liverpool Ph.D. thesis, 1996), p. 149, Fig. 4.6.

⁴² Patten, 'Urban Occupations', p. 301.

⁴³ WS 1677.

⁴⁴ Patten, 'Urban Occupations', p. 301. See also P.J. Corfield, 'Defining Urban Work', pp. 207 – 30, on p. 218 in P.J. Corfield & D. Keene, *Work in Towns, 850 - 1850* (Leicester, 1980), pp. 207 – 30.

⁴⁵ WS 1682.

predominates is difficult to determine; to contemporaries it was probably an irrelevant question. The situation is further complicated when the two occupations are seemingly unrelated: Samuel Jepson was a tailor and grocer.⁴⁶ It has been observed in a re-interview study by the U.S. Bureau of Census that different occupations were given in between 17 per cent and 22 per cent of cases.⁴⁷

Social descriptors add an additional layer to this picture. Adam Mottershead, gentleman, is also described as chapman, which at least explains where the money to finance Mottershead's gentility originated.⁴⁸ It is therefore entirely possible to find an individual with an industrial concern (chapman) and agricultural holdings, either as hereditary holding from which he diversified into industry as by-employment, or investing proceeds from the industrial concern into land. The same individual might also hold a social position within the town which reflects his wealth and social standing, such as alderman. Thomas Parsons of Macclesfield is one such example. Described as an alderman in his probate file, his inventory showed hair, gimp, silk and buttons worth £192. He also possessed corn, oats, barley and husbandry ware worth another £7.⁴⁹

Michael Katz argued that both horizontal and vertical scales are required to accurately determine occupational status: the builder and carpenter are both grouped horizontally in the building trade but separated vertically by wealth. Wealth is not an accurate guide to a person's position, as it ignores social status and the individual's point in his life cycle.⁵⁰ Katz, however, was writing about the mid-nineteenth century which would allow for a degree of specialisation which was perhaps not in evidence a

⁴⁶ WS 1749.

⁴⁷ Cited in M.B. Katz, 'Occupational Classifications in History', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, iii, no. 1 (1972), pp. 63 – 88, on p. 70.

⁴⁸ WS 1680.

⁴⁹ WS 1677.

⁵⁰ Katz, 'Occupational Classifications', p. 65.

century earlier. Nevertheless, this idea would allow for a distinction to be made between scales of operation within the same professional field.

What did contemporaries mean by a certain description? Some, like widow or wife, are self-explanatory and have not changed. The definitions of other descriptors have changed, and also changed over the period under review. Inconsistency also makes it difficult to determine exactly what contemporaries meant. What was the difference between George Blackwell, cordwainer and William Carter, shoemaker?⁵¹ John Patten discusses the issue of occupational meanings and occupational classifications in greater detail than is possible here.⁵² As in the case of defining a ‘town’⁵³, Patten found that contemporaries had little success in defining occupations. The *Discourse of the Commonwealth of This Realm of England*, first published in 1581, could do no better than ‘three sorts of Misteries’: those who brought money into the country, those who spent money and those who took money out of the country.⁵⁴ Equally, modern concepts of ‘industry’, ‘wholesale’ or ‘retail’ do not fit into early modern practices. Indeed, both Patten and George Unwin doubt if there was such a distinction: ‘There was no wholesale firms upon whose constant supply and regular prices he could rely, as the modern manufacturer relies upon the leather merchant or timber merchant.’⁵⁵ Patten’s solution is to divide occupations into ‘professions and services’, ‘merchants and traders’ and ‘manufacturers and craftsmen’, but again finds significant overlap between the last two categories.⁵⁶ There is no reason why a manufacturer might not sell direct to the public (retail) and in bulk via carriers to other towns (wholesale).

⁵¹ WI 1739; WS 1702.

⁵² Patten, ‘Urban Occupations’, pp. 301 – 11.

⁵³ See chapter 1.

⁵⁴ E. Lamond, *A Discourse on the Commonweal of This Realm of England* (Cambridge, 1893) quoted in Patten, ‘Urban Occupations’, p. 302.

Furthermore, in at least one town there has been found to be no significant difference between 'grocers', 'merciers' and 'merchants trading overseas'.⁵⁷ Grocers, merchants and merciers all occur in Macclesfield. Patten noted the lack of attention by scholars to what occupations actually entailed and their concentration in allocating occupations to classifications rather than identifying their real meaning.⁵⁸ He uses the example of the apothecaries who are normally medical practitioners and provided a professional service. In the City of London, apothecaries were not separated formally from the Grocers Company (who themselves developed from the Spicers and Pepperers) until 1617. This date can be expected to be delayed in the provinces. Grocers sold 'physic goods' while merciers carried stocks of medicinal preparations. Apothecaries could continue to import and sell dry goods (as a merchant) after being made up in medicinal preparations (a craft activity) by grocers.⁵⁹ Therefore, the question needs to be asked, how much medicinal practice is lost to the historian because it was undertaken under the profession of a grocer or mercer?

The simplest solution to this question is to assess the probate material case by case to try to determine exactly what an individual's economic activities consisted of. The starting point for this is the occupations listed by the CCRO database. Although this is not without flaws, as briefly discussed above, it does provide a convenient starting point.

As mentioned above, eight-four occupations or social descriptors are listed in the CCRO database. Using the classification system shown in Fig. 2.8, below, a classification scheme was produced for this study of Macclesfield, Fig. 2.9. This was

⁵⁵ G. Unwin, *Industrial Organisation in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (reprinted London, 1957), p. 10 quoted in Patten, 'Urban Occupations', p. 304.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 303 – 5.

⁵⁷ A.L. Merson, 'A Calendar of Southampton Apprenticeship Registers, 1609 – 1740, *Southampton Record Series*, xii, pp. xxi – xxii quoted in Patten, 'Urban Occupations', p. 304.

⁵⁸ Patten, 'Urban Occupations', pp. 300 – 6.

further refined to fit into the format of this dissertation, as Fig. 2.10. A number of caveats need to be made. Firstly, a number of generalisations have been made without reference to the contents of the deceased's probate material. This will inevitably necessitate a subsequent revision of the probate material. Secondly, certain trades could be placed in multiple categories. These have been placed in the category for the craft which is deemed most critical to that trade. Gunsmiths, for example, employ woodworking techniques for the stock, but metal working skills for the lock and barrel. The metalworking skills are considered to be the more critical in the manufacture of firearms, and therefore gunsmiths are recorded as metal workers rather than woodworkers.

Thirdly, all trades relating to the button trade are placed together chapter 6. Other trades which would normally be found elsewhere such as gimp-twisters who used non-ferrous metals, mould turners who produced the wooden buttons, the silk merchants and distributors who would be classed under Dealing were place together to create a coherent source of material for the silk button industry.

Figure 2.11 is a photocopy provided by CCRO of the will of Mary Booth of Macclesfield, widow, dated 4 December 1738.⁶⁰ Figure 2.12 shows the format into which this will was transcribed onto the Bekon Idealist database. Mary Booth's probate file is in file 1106 and also includes the biographical data on the original covering page.⁶¹ The will itself notes that Mary Booth lived within Macclesfield Forest (MACF), despite the details on the covering page. This was a continual problem, but given the close proximity between the borough and Forest and the lack of more specific places of abode, it was insoluble. Christian names have been

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 302 – 3.

⁶⁰ WS 1738.

⁶¹ Unfortunately, due to the problems with the Idealist database a number of the files lost their subject headings and were left with just 'Text'.

abbreviated (for example, Jno: for Jonathan), as have reoccurring common surnames (in this case N for Nixon) and kinship indicators (bro for brother).

Figure 2.13 is a photocopy, again provided by CCRO, of the inventory of George Orme of Macclesfield.⁶² No occupation is given. The estate was appraised on 25 November 1634. It is a fine example of a short and concise inventory, which also suggests that Orme was a farmer of some capacity. This inventory has been transcribed in Figure 2.14. Unfortunately, attempts to print out inventories from the Idealist database tended to be less than satisfactory. This was due to the methods used during the original transcription. ‘Tabs’ were used to produce a separate column for the valuations which various printer settings were unable to reproduce without distorting or destroying the desired effect.

By highlighting any sub-heading, it is possible to scroll through the first line of that sub-heading for all of the files. This allows rapid identification of all files which were, for example, proved in 1700. All of the critical data was stored on one line with the exception of the Text. Here the first line contained name, occupation/s and/or social descriptor/s which are, in any case, the essential details most likely to be required.

After initially transcribing wills verbatim, it was realised that all of the legalistic ramblings could be omitted and most of the bequests summarised into single lines. Similarly, most documents, like bonds of administration, could be concentrated in the same way. Probate inventories and accounts, however, were already prepared in single line entries and had to be transcribed verbatim, which proved to be a particularly time consuming process.

⁶² WS 1634.

2.9 Conclusion

A wide variety of sources have been consulted in this dissertation in order to provide a well-rounded account of Macclesfield. No one source is without its faults. Possibly the main drawback with the sources is the lack of inclusivity of the probate files as they exclude the poorest in society. As faults like these are consistent throughout the country and therefore will affect all probate-based studies equally, this should not affect the relevance of the findings. The only way to assess how representative Macclesfield's probate files were of the town's society as a whole would be to make a comparison with the parish records. This has been partially achieved by the extraction of the demographic data from the parish register, although only a full family reconstruction project will allow the parish register to fully complement the extent of the research undertaken into the probate material for this dissertation. However, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, this is a study of Macclesfield based upon probate files, and other sources, not a study of the reliability of those sources. Therefore by consulting a variety of sources, the impact of the failings of individual sources should be reduced.

Fig. 2.8: Occupational Classification Scheme⁶³

I	Primary Occupations	N.	Textiles
A.	Agriculture	1.	Wollens
B.	Fishing	2.	Silk lace cotton calico
C.	Mineral Extraction	3.	Flax hemp
		4.	Finishing
II	Building	O.	Others
A.	Houses	IV	Transport
1.	Masonry	A.	Water
2.	Wood & Plaster	B.	Land
3.	Metal & Glass	V	Dealing
4.	Others	1.	Food and Drink
B.	Roads	2.	Cloth and Clothing
C.	Tools & Instruments	3.	Other
1.	Watches clocks tools	B.	Specialist Wholesale
2.	Others	1.	Food & drink
D.	Shipbuilding	2.	Wool yarn cloth
E.	Clothing	3.	Other
1.	Cloth	C.	Itinerant
2.	Leather	D.	Indefinite
3.	Others	VI	Public & Professional Services
F.	Victualling	A.	Public Service
1.	Materials preparation	B.	Professional Service
2.	Production & purveyance	1.	Church law education
G.	Iron	2.	Medicine
H.	Non-Ferrous metals	3.	Arts & amusements
1.	Precious	VII	Menial & Domestic
2.	Base	VIII	Status Descriptors
I.	Earthenware	1.	Male
J.	Glass	2.	Female
K.	Furs & Leather	3.	Poor
1.	Leathermaking	4.	Other
2.	Saddlery etc.	IX	Unidentified
L.	Glue tallow wax bone horn		
M.	Wood		

⁶³ A version of P.D. Glennie, 'Industry and Towns', pp. 186 – 7.

Fig. 2.9: Occupational Classification Scheme for Macclesfield based upon the Probate Files

I	Primary Occupations		
A.	Agriculture:	i.	Yeoman
		ii.	Husbandman
		iii.	Farmer
		iv.	Milkman
C.	Mineral Extraction:	i.	Collier
		ii.	Stoneminer
		iii.	Brickmaker
II	Building		
A.	Houses		
	1. Masonry:	i.	Mason
		ii.	Slater
	3. Metal & Glass:	i.	Glazier
		ii.	Plumber
III	Manufacture		
A.	Tools & Instruments		
	1. Watches etc.:	i.	Watchmaker
E.	Clothing		
	1. Cloth:	i.	Tailor
	2. Leather:	i.	Shoemaker
		ii.	Cordwainer
		iii.	Glover
F.	Victualling		
	1. Material Prep.:	i.	Cook
		ii.	Baker
		iii.	Miller
	2. Prod & Purvay:	i.	Ale seller
		ii.	Butcher
		iii.	Malster
		iv.	Tobacconist
		v.	Victualler
	3. Grocer & Mercer		
	4. Innkeeper/ Innholder		
G.	Iron:	i.	Blacksmith
		ii.	Ironmonger
		iii.	Gunsmith
		iv.	Nailor
H.	Non-Ferrous		
	1. Precious:	i.	Goldsmith
	2. Base	i.	Whitesmith
K.	Fur and Leather		
	1. Leathermaking:	i.	Skinner
		ii.	Tanner
		iii.	Currier
	2. Saddlery:	i.	Saddler
L.	Tallow, wax:	i.	Chandler
		ii.	Tallow chandler
M.	Wood:	i.	Joiner
		ii.	Wheelwright
		iii.	Carpenter
		iv.	Cooper
N.	Textiles:		
	1. Wollens:	i.	Webster
		ii.	Weaver
		iii.	Shearman
	2. Silk:	i.	Chapman/woman

		ii.	Silkweaver
		iii.	Silkthrowster
		iv.	Dyer
		v.	Thread Dyer
		vi.	Twister
		vii.	Button Dyer
		viii.	Buttonmould Turner
		ix.	Buttonman
		x.	Throwster
		xi.	Gimptwister
		xii.	Mouldthrower
		xiii.	Dealer in Silk
		xiv.	Silktwister
	3. Flax, hemp etc.:	i.	Feltmaker
IV	Transport		
	B. Land:	i.	Coal Carrier
V	Dealing:		
	B. Wholesale/Retail	i.	Linen Draper
		ii.	Merchant
		iii.	Tradesman
		iv.	Shopkeeper
		v.	Badger
	C. Itinerant:	i.	Traveller
VI	Public & Professional Services		
	A. Public Service:	i.	Mayor
		ii.	Alderman
	B. Professional Service:		
	1. Church etc.:	i.	Clergy
		ii.	Schoolmaster
	2. Medicine:	i.	Apothecary
		ii.	Bonesetter
		iii.	Barber
		iv.	Barber Surgeon
		v.	Practitioner in Physik
		vi.	Surgeon
	4. Military	i.	Soldier
VIII	Status Descriptor		
	A. Male:	i.	Knight
		ii.	Esquire
		iii.	Gentleman
	B. Female:	i.	Wife
		ii.	Widow
		iii.	Spinster
	D. Other:	i.	Minor
IX	Unidentified:	i.	No Occupation

Fig. 2.10: Occupational Classification Scheme for Macclesfield used in chapter 7.

Part I: The Leather Industry	Skinner Tanner Currier Shoemaker and Cordwainer Glover
Part II: Other Occupations	
Coalmining	Coalminer Collier
Building Trades	Masons Brickmaker Slater
Plumber and Glazier	
Manufacturing	Watchmakers Goldsmith Gunsmith Whitesmith Tallow Chandler Woodworkers
Victualling	Tobacconist Butcher Grocer Mercer
Textiles	Shearman Weaver Feltmaker Draper
Retail	Shopkeeper
Public and Professional	Clergy Schoolmaster Medical
Military	
No Occupation	

Fig. 2.11: Photocopy of the Will of Mary Booth, WS 1738, courtesy of CCRO.

In the Name of God, Amen, Mary Booth of Mairlesfield —
 fforest in y^e County of Chester widow being moved wth —
 y^e Consideration of y^e frailty & uncertainty of y^e lives of all
 People in generall & more particularly of my owne life doe
 in good health & perfect memory & understanding praised
 be God for y^e same make ordaine & declare this my last
 will & Testament in manner & forme following; —
 And first I resigne my soule into y^e hands of almighty
 God my Creator & Jesus Christ my redeemer by whose
 alone merits & good to obtaine everlasting salvation
 And as touching my temporall Estate wherewith —
 almighty God above my deserts hath blessed me I
 dispose thereof as followeth, And first it is my will & mind
 & I doe direct & appoint that all such Debts as I shall
 Justly owe ~~unto~~ into any Person at y^e time of my decease
 & my funerall expences shall in y^e first place be paid
 & discharged out of my personall Estate, Also I give
 & bequeath to George Nixon ~~(being my Brother)~~ y^e summe
 of five pounds; Also I give & bequeath to Joshua
 Kingd Children (being three of them) twenty shillings
 apiece, Also I give & bequeath to Jm. Ashhead my sero^t.
 if he live wth me at my decease of twenty shillings; —
 Also I give & bequeath to John Booths Children —
 twenty shillings to be divided amongst them, Also
 I give & bequeath to Thomas Chantlers Children
 ten shillings to be divided amongst them, Also —
 I give & bequeath to George Goodwinds Children —
 twenty shillings to be divided amongst them, Also —
 I give & bequeath to y^e poor of Mairlesfield fforest y^e
 summe of twenty shillings to be divided amongst them,
 Also I give & bequeath to Elizabeth Drunt Widow
 & her son William & to Elizabeth & Anne two of
 her daughters all severally twenty shillings amongst
 them, Also I direct & appoint that all my wearing
 Apparel both linen & woollen be given amongst all —
 my owne relations at y^e discretion of Elizabeth Drunt
 (late William Drunts wife) Also I give & bequeath to —

William & Anne Booth two of y^e Children of y^e said -
 John Booth a Guinea betwixt them, if they be -
 living at the time of my decease & if they be not then
 I give it to y^e said John Booth their ffather; Also -
 all y^e rest residue & remainder of my personall -
 Estate after my Death & all my said Legacies -
 be paid & discharged I doe give & bequeath unto
 y^e said George Nixon & Daniel Nixon ~~my~~
~~children~~ to be equally divided betwixt them but -
 before such Division be made, I also give -
 to Robert Clowes of Langley gentleman one
 Guinea, and by those I do utterly revoking
 all former Wills and Testaments by me -
 heretofore made and declared; I doe hereby -
 constitute, ordaine & make the said Robert
 Clowes gentleman & George Nixon my Brother of
 Rushton my Executors of this my last will and Testam^t.
 hoping they will see all things performed according to
 y^e trust I repose in them, In witness whereof I y^e
 said Mary Booth have herewith sett my hand &
 seale the ffour & twentieth day of May in the year
 of y^e Reigne of our Sovereigne Lord George y^e second
 now King of great Brittain &c. In y^e Eleventh
 year of our Lord 1738.

Signed sealed and delivered
 and declared by y^e said Mary
 Booth for her last will and -
 Testament in the presence of

William Cross

Elizabeth + Ann
 Inwit.

Mary
 Booth

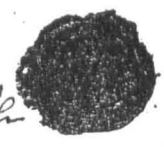


Fig. 2.12: Transcription of the Will of Mary Booth, WS 1738.

Text 1106
Text MACC
Text
Text WS 1738
Text
Text
Text Mary Booth, widow

1. Coverpage
2. Will

1. late of MACC, widow, dd, to Robert Clowes & George Nixon, first sworn
4 December 1738

2. of MACF widow
To George Nixon, bro, £5
To JOshua N's 3 children 20/- ea
To Jno: Adshead, my servant, if wt me at my dd 20/-
To John Boothe's children 20/- between them
To Tho Chantlere's children 10/- between
To george Goodwin's children 10/- between
Poor of MACF 20/-
To Elizabeth Armit, widow, & Wm her son, & Elizabeth & Ann 2 of her daughters 20/- e
Apparell to relations at the discretion of Eliza A (late Wm A's wife)
Wm & Anne Booth, 2 of the children of John B 1 guinea ea, if dd to their father
Residue to Geo N & Dan N
Robert Clowes of Langley, gent, 1 guinea
Ex: Robert Clowes & George N of Rushton, bro

24 May 1738
Signed: MB (mark)
Witnessed: Wm Clowes Elizabeth Armit (mark)

2 Nov 1738 RC & GN took oath of Ex

4 Dec Probate issued

Text

Fig. 2.13: Photocopy of the Inventory of George Orme, WS 1634, courtesy of CCRO.

Alme p^o p^ost^o Inventory of all the goods of George
Orme s^{on} of Marysches vnter his prayse —
valued the 25th of November 1634. by Thomas
Kerry, William Andrus, John Williams /

Item in his apparill	—	iiij ^l 10 ^s
Item in bedding	—	xxij ^l 10 ^s
Item in vintages	—	xl ^l 8 ^s
Item in wools & kersey	—	xl ^l
Item out w ^o olfe: 3 tables, 1 dishboard, 1 dupperboard	—	iiij ^l 10 ^s viij ^d
Item in chiefe	—	xxvij ^l 8 ^s
Item in boord, breeder & bedstowes	—	xl ^l
Item in clothe & hvy	—	viij ^l 10 ^s 8 ^d
Item out clothe	—	xxij ^l 10 ^s viij ^d
Item in husbandry ware	—	xxvij ^l 10 ^s viij ^d
Item in Iron ware	—	xxvij ^l 8 ^s
Item in woodden ware	—	xx ^l 8 ^s
Item out putat malt clark	—	xxij ^l 8 ^s
Item in fornes stools & chayres	—	xl ^l 8 ^s
Item in Cushes & wools	—	lxij ^l 8 ^s
Item in Cushes & Carpette	—	lxij ^l 8 ^s
Item in lwoke	—	lxij ^l 10 ^s viij ^d
Item in Iron	—	lx ^l 8 ^s
Item out chiefe w ^o olfe	—	ij ^l 10 ^s viij ^d
Item out Saddle	—	ij ^l 8 ^s
Item in tawther ware	—	iiij ^l 10 ^s viij ^d
Item in money	—	xl ^l 8 ^s

Item in lease or tenke of a certain p^ort^o of
ground called the clark haw fields for
vicarid on thir about yit to rowe
with sturte other ch^ourches of the graua^o
scholl^o laud^o of Mantle fields for vicarid
detrauuall^o vpon liues

Item in fute humer fudeu vnter his prayse
et addendo et subtrahendo p^o p^o p^o
die mensis Novemb^o 1634

Fig. 2.14: Transcription of the Inventory of George Orme, WS 1634⁶⁴

A true & p'fect Inventory of all the goods of George Orme Senior' of Maxfield
 dacased prayed & valued the 25th of November 1634 by Thomas Berry,
 William Andrew, John Williams

al his apparill	£4 10s
in beddinge	£12
in Linnins	40s
in pewter and brass	£10
1 presse 3 tables 1 dishboard 1 cupboard	£3 4s 8d
in Cheese	24s
in board & breades & bedstockes	40s
in Corne & hay	£6 16s
1 Calfe	23s 4d
in husbandry ware	32s 6d
in Iron ware	24s
in woodden ware	20s
1 great malt Ark at	16s
in formes stooles and Chayres	11s
in Turfes and wood	7s
in Cushins & Carpetts	6s
1 book	6s 8d
old Iron	5s
1 Cheese presse	2s 6d
1 Saddle	2s
earthen ware	3s 4d
in money	40s
a lease or rent of a certen p'cell of	}
ground called the Clapham feidle for	}
[blank] yeares or therabout yet to come	}
with certen other Closures of the grammar	}
School lands in Macclesfield for years	}
Determinable upon lives	}
	[No valuation]

⁶⁴ Note: numbers have all been converted into arabic numerals and values converted into the format £ s d. 'Impremis' and 'Item', at the beginning of each entry have not been transcribed. Spellings remain unmodernised. The Latin passage at the bottom of the inventory, dated 27 November 1634, has not been transcribed.

Chapter 3: Macclesfield, Urban Government and National Politics

3.1 Introduction

According to Paul Halliday, monarchs ‘created corporations to administer justice and maintain peace in populated areas where it might be inconvenient for country justices and sheriffs to act.’¹ This corporate government of the early modern English town is supposed to have declined from medieval inclusivity to an increasingly oligarchic system whereby the percentage of the electorate in the population decreased following the increase in the propertyless working urban poor. Concurrently, office holding became increasingly concentrated in the hands of those who could afford the entry fines and incumbent financial responsibilities. This presupposes that the community possessed an adequate system of local government prior to its population explosion: the twice yearly meetings of Manchester’s Court Leet may have been adequate for a rural parish, but were likely to have been ineffectual for the embryonic city.²

How did Macclesfield’s Corporation operate? Was it oligarchic? And, regardless of whether or not the Corporation was representative, did it perform the functions and duties expected of it? This last question will be answered by comparing infrastructural innovations with those carried out by other towns.

¹ P. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England’s Towns, 1650 – 1730* (Cambridge 1998), p. 221.

² Defoe noted that Manchester’s senior official was just a constable, D. Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London, 1971), p. 544; for a general discussion on similar forms of government, see P. Clark & P. Slack, *English Towns in Transition, 1500 – 1700* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 41 – 4.

3.2 The nature of Macclesfield Government - Chronological

The information available to us about the nature of Macclesfield's government largely comes from moments of change and confrontation. Unfortunately for the historian (but probably fortuitous for the early modern inhabitants of Macclesfield), these events were few and far between. Only four such events have been identified, and two of those fall outside the chronological parameters of the dissertation. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that re-occurring themes did, in fact, continue over the intervening years.

Macclesfield attained borough status in the mid-thirteenth century. The process towards urban autonomy was slow and required legal proceedings and unauthorised initiatives.³ The process was also beset with reverses, as with the aftermath of the battle of Flodden, see below. For the period covered by this dissertation, the borough was governed by the second Elizabethan Charter of 1598, James I's Charter of 1606, and then under the Charles II Charters of 1666 and 1684. This last Carolingian charter was still in force until the municipal reforms of the mid-1830s. How did this Charter work in practice and how did this effect the government of the town? There is no surviving definitive document to answer this question, but the following sections will examine snap-shots of evidence which will illuminate various processes and attitudes of Macclesfield's government

³ The right to sell or exchange burgages implied freedom not serfdom for the burgesses. This right was not granted by the charter, but has been adopted by 1350, when the practise was queried by Edward III. The right was granted for a permissive fine. C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), p. 10. See 3.4 for the construction of a waterworks for water for which the corporation did not have the right to draw.

3.2.1 Flodden, Stanley Government and the Return of Corporate Government

Although Macclesfield enjoyed a Corporate status from the middle of the thirteenth century, in 1600 Corporate government free from the intervention of a noble party was a relatively new phenomenon for the townspeople. For a large part of the sixteenth century, Macclesfield was dominated by Stanley government, under which the Edward IV Charter appeared to have lapsed. The Battle of Flodden (1513) was particularly calamitous for Macclesfield. The mayor, Christopher Savage, and many burgesses were killed. The decimation of a sizeable proportion of an oligarchic elite would have left a void which was difficult to fill. This would have been particularly so if sons had accompanied their fathers to Flodden as inheritance of the freedom of the borough from father to son was one method of maintaining the numbers of freemen.⁴ The impact of Flodden was to permit the Stanley, earls of Derby to dominate the town. They had previously held quasi-governmental positions through Macclesfield Forest, the courts of which sat in Macclesfield.⁵ The nature of Stanley rule in Macclesfield is outside the scope of this dissertation but it appears to have persisted until the late-sixteenth century.⁶ A new Charter was issued in 1564 and a statement made five years later confirms the presence of Stanley involvement in the town at least until the issue of the 1564 Charter.⁷ Stanley influence may to have persisted until the 1590s when Sir Thomas Savage wrote to compliment Mayor

⁴ Macc. Coll. B/VI/6. Savage and the Macclesfield men may well have been on the right flank of the English line, commander by Edmund Howard, nephew of the earl of Surrey. This formation was driven from the field by the Scottish left flank and the English right flank was only stabilised by the intervention of Lord Dacre and his contingent of Borders. P. Cornish, *Henry VIII's Army* (London, 1987), pp. 6 – 9.

⁵ Richard III granted Thomas, Lord Stanley the Stewardship of Macclesfield Forest. Henry VII promoted his step-son Stanley to earl of Derby and made the Stewardship an hereditary office. Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 39.

⁶ The most recent account of the Stanleys does not mention their relationship with Macclesfield except for their offices concerning Macclesfield Forest. B. Coward, *The Stanleys, Lord Stanley and Earls of Derby, 1385 – 1672*, Chetham Soc., xxx (1983). For a commentary, see Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 39, 43 – 52.

⁷ See the statement of Thomas Pylkinton, 1569, pp. 25 – 6.

Davenport on his election, and to pledge his support especially in the issue of the Charter.⁸ This Charter was issued in 1598, only to be replaced in 1606.

3.2.2. Late Stuart Instability

In 1682, the Whigs provoked the Second Exclusion Crisis. Anthony Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury declared for the duke of Monmouth. Monmouth was subsequently arrested and tried and then toured through the North West of England⁹ (which it was hoped would provoke a rebellion). Against this background the Rye House Plot of 1683 led to treason trials of prominent Whigs. It is not surprising to find that Charles II was paying an interest in nature of his town's governments.¹⁰ The aim of this section will be to look at how Macclesfield's government operated during the 1680s and early-1690s, and also at how it dealt with the demands placed upon it by successive monarchs. I will begin with a report on the mayoral election of 1682 which was a response to Monmouth's tour through the North West of England throughout that autumn. Monmouth's tour does not affect corporate government. However, acts of 'high politics' of this nature do potentially impact on local affairs, as is shown by Charles II's unprecedented interest in Macclesfield's mayoral election. Charles did not act against Macclesfield, but James II and William and Mary did. So, while this chapter is largely concerned with local government, Macclesfield can not always be assessed in isolation from national affairs.

The *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* includes a report on the 1682 election. The report begins by confirming the existence of a Common Council of 24, of which the common burgesses chose five from which were elected the mayor and his two

⁸ Macc. Coll. B/V/1.

⁹ See p. 82.

¹⁰ N. Fellows, *Charles II and James II* (London, 1995), p. 88; J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History, 1550 – 1760* (London, 1997), pp. 341 – 2.

aldermen. While the nature of the national politics for this election will be discussed below, what does come out from the report is that there was a healthy system of balances and checks in operation.

Of the Common Council, all but three had signed the ‘late loyal Abhorrence’ against the Exclusion of James, duke of York from succeeding Charles II. These three Whigs were amongst the five capital burgesses chosen by the common burgesses for the election of the mayor and two aldermen. The Common Council showed Tory tendencies by favouring a Tory mayor and aldermen, but were limited in their choices. The two Tories were elected: Mr Deane, ‘a young man of 22 or 23’ was elected mayor and Mr Barbour as one of his aldermen, ‘to no little discontent of the discontented party’.¹¹

The report also lists some of the more significant common burgesses present for the election, which included Lord Brandon, Captains Booth of Twemlow and Needham, Sir Robert Leicester, Mr Lucy of Henbury, Mr Downes of Shrigley and Mr Thomas Leigh of Lime.¹² It is to be expected to find evidence of extra-urban and noble involvement in urban politics in this period. These people do not appear to have taken a seat upon the Common Council, which was the controlling body, although this should not rule out informal influence.¹³ Extra-urban and noble involvement in civic government should not automatically be perceived as one sided and purely to the benefit of the non-urban element. This is indicated in the following section where assistance is offered to the corporation in its undertakings for a new charter.¹⁴

¹¹ *CSPD*, 1682, p. 458.

¹² This list would support Halliday’s statement that gentlemen rarely lived in towns and had a reduced involvement in the affairs of the town were they were freemen; *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 42 – 3.

¹³ *CSPD*, 1682, p. 458.

¹⁴ See Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 39, 43, 46 – 7 for the apparently mutually beneficial relationship between Macclesfield and the Savage family.

Late in October 1682, reports appear in the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* of unrest in Macclesfield. This should not have come as any great surprise as the town had been quietly Parliamentary during the Civil War and, following the Restoration, the King's arms had been cut out of royal proclamations. A 'violent non-conformist' preacher named Bradshaw had been active and refused to celebrate thanksgiving for the Restoration.¹⁵ However, this view differs from that given by J.S. Merrill who found that of 453 sureties obtained by the Major-Generals with an identifiable parish, over half were from Broxton (120) and Macclesfield (119) Hundreds. There was an especially high concentration in Prestbury parish, including Macclesfield (which Merrill erroneously described as a parish). Cheshire has also been described as 'hard-core' royalist.¹⁶ It appears that a pragmatic compromise was reached whereby there is evidence for both republicans and royalists, but that the society at large proceeded as quietly as possible.

In the autumn of 1682, Monmouth was actively touring the North West of England. It was hoped that this tour would inspire rebellion against Charles II and his successor, James, duke of York. In September 1682, Monmouth visited Macclesfield where an estimated 3000 people came out to meet him.¹⁷ A visit to Nantwich, Cheshire, in late October was equally well received with men travelling from Macclesfield to see Monmouth. In the intervening weeks, Macclesfield held its mayoral election, discussed above.¹⁸ As an election, that of 1682 showed that the town was able to conduct its civic affairs normally despite the wider political

¹⁵ *CSPD*, 1662.

¹⁶ J.S. Merrill, *Cheshire, 1630–1660: County Government and Society During the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 281–2, esp. n. 1 and n. 2.; J. Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform, 1640–1832* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 19, n. 2.

¹⁷ Stobart estimates the population for 20 years earlier as 2638. If 3000 is to be taken as an accurate figure, there must have been an influx of people into Macclesfield from the surrounding area. J. Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Century Revolution? Investigating Urban Growth in North West England, 1664–1801', *Urban History*, xxiii (1996), pp. 26–47, on p. 40.

¹⁸ *CSPD*, 1682, pp. 415, 416, 458, 510; Fellows, *Charles II*, p. 88.

turbulence. Of the Common Council, twenty-one were, or purported to be, Tories, loyal to Charles II and his heir, James. The common burgesses, however, displayed Whig tendencies and were opposed to James' succession. It would be from this class and below that the 3000 who met Monmouth in September 1682 were drawn.

Although Macclesfield's electoral system withstood the pressures of national politics and royal observers, there were other methods by which it could be corrupted. The letter of 7 October 1682 noted that on Charles' instructions, Sir George Jeffreys visited Macclesfield and was made a freeman of the borough. That night he departed for London. This election was opposed by the three Whigs but to no avail.¹⁹ This enforced election of a royal nominee took place despite a Common Council ostensibly loyal to Charles, and which had sent a loyal address earlier in the year.²⁰

It was James II who would take more direct action against the Corporation, despite their professed loyalty to his brother. On 22 July 1688 an Order of Council ordered the removal of six 'aldermen' (capital burgesses) and the Town Clerk.²¹ Their named replacements were to be elected without administering any oaths except for the usual oaths. The three Whigs who had refused to sign the 'loyal Abhorrence' six years previously were not amongst those to be removed. The Order was delivered in the presence of four Common Burgesses, the body which had previously displayed anti-James sentiments.²² Overall, the relative disinterest in Macclesfield (except for when Monmouth visited the area) from central government would suggest that, in national terms, Macclesfield was insignificant. Macclesfield was of no strategic importance and, as the town elected no Members of Parliament, there was no need to influence local elections in order to control national politics. Halliday sees James II as trying to

¹⁹ *CSPD*, 1682, p. 458.

²⁰ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 4 April 1682; 2 Oct 1682.

²¹ When compared with the removals experienced by other towns, Macclesfield was comparatively untouched; Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 248.

control boroughs as a means of controlling their elections of MPs but he too is confused by James' targeting of non-parliamentary boroughs. Basingstoke, Doncaster and Kingston-upon-Thames were also purged along with Macclesfield. Halliday could only surmise that 'as the regulating machine ground through the nation's towns it is unsurprising that a few hapless bystanders were caught in its maw'.²³

The flight of James II did not end demands for oaths of allegiance.²⁴ In 1690, two capital burgesses were removed for failing to take two oaths of allegiance to William and Mary. One of these, Samuel Blackleach, alderman, was noted as having been living in Hulme, Lancashire, 'for some time' and therefore incapable of performing his duties on the Council. Blackleach's refusal to take the oaths and his subsequent removal from office should be seen as a convenient reason to remove an otherwise non-effective member. It should not be seen as an indication of Jacobite tendencies. Edward Moorcroft, gentleman, simply refused to take the oath and was removed from office. In the absence of any other information to explain his non-attendance, Moorcroft can be classed as a Jacobite.²⁵

3.2.3 The Disputed Mayoral Election of 1716

The next incident to disrupt Macclesfield's corporate government co-incided with the Hanoverian Succession and subsequent Jacobite Rebellion. There is another potential link between national and local politics. Yet there the similarities end. The Crown's response was disinterest, rather than provoking the crisis. The paper trail of

²² Macc. Coll. B/IV/13.

²³ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 248, n. 46; Basingstoke lost 3 aldermen, Kingston 26 out of 28.

²⁴ The Glorious Revolution passed without incident in Macclesfield, in contrast to the importance established by Kathleen Wilson in 'Inventing Revolution: 1688 and Eighteenth-Century Popular Politics', *JBS*, xxviii (October, 1989), pp. 349 – 86.

²⁵ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 3 July 1690; 1 W&M, c. 8; Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 268 – 9.

affidavits (rather than States Papers) show that the corporators themselves were the main players, rather than victims, in the crisis.

Mayoral elections took place annually on 5 October. On the whole, they do not appear to have produced any litigation or similar disturbances, which means that there is little evidence of electoral procedures for the early modern period.²⁶ The exception to this was the mayoral election of 1716 where procedural irregularities produced litigation which allow the election procedures to be examined. What is important here is not that the electoral system broke down on this occasion (fortuitously, as it turned out, for it allowed an insight into the electoral system) but that this is the only recorded occasion where the electoral system is known to have broken down in the 140 years under review. Prior to the mayoral election, there were indicators of things to come. In July 1716, the election of the Recorder was held. Henry Booth and his friends brandished swords to intimidate his opponent's supporters and gained office.²⁷

The mayoral election of 1716 was disputed following procedural irregularities. The subsequent legal documentation illustrates the key details of the election of the mayor and his aldermen.²⁸ Mr Barber was elected mayor on 5 October 1716, with Messrs Johnson and Philips as his aldermen. The outgoing mayor was Mr Boulton with Messrs Clayton and Hooley as his aldermen. Fourteen capital burgesses participated in the election of the new mayor and aldermen, with seven abstaining and three absent. The Common Council consisted of twenty-four members and from this membership were provided the six mayors and aldermen for 1715 and 1716. Eight surviving affidavits described the 1716 election. One of these affidavits was that of

²⁶ See 3.2.4 for the Royal Commission's finding on the electoral proceedings, although those findings post-date the end of this dissertation.

²⁷ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 333 – 4.

²⁸ Macc. Coll. B/IV/2 – 14.

Richard Worthington, alderman, who had been mayor in 1698.²⁹ He had been a capital burgess for about twenty-five years and a burgess for more than forty years. Worthington claimed to have read several charters of the borough and by the charter of James I there were always one mayor, two aldermen and twenty-four capital burgesses.³⁰

The dispute revolved around the system whereby the common burgesses nominated five capital burgesses from which the Common Council then elected the mayor and aldermen. In 1716 Henry Booth's supporters declared to the clerk 'I vote for the recorder's five'. Booth's opponent's named their candidates. During this, Booth 'leaped and jumped about, and thumping the table, answered that he cared not for our customs but would proceed whether we would or not'. Booth then stopped the poll and ordered the clerk to proceed and return all the names polled.³¹ There was a drawn election with one capital burgess, Adam Endon, receiving 145 votes and seven receiving 143 votes. (Exactly how this voting system operated has not been satisfactorily determined.) The Town Clerk then returned the eight names polled to the Common Council for the election. In his affidavit, Edward Cherry, alderman, stated that he did not know that returning in excess of five names nullified the election. Cherry was one of the capital burgesses named as voting at the election.³² Fourteen capital burgesses then debated whether to proceed with the election with the eight candidates or to do nothing. Henry Booth, Adam Endon and the outgoing

²⁹ 'Alderman' appears to have been retained as an honorific title as Worthington was not one of the four aldermen elected in 1715 or 1716.

³⁰ A literal interpretation of this suggests twenty-seven in total, but all other sources show that the mayor and aldermen were part of the twenty-four; Macc. Coll. B/IV/7. Macc. Coll. B/IV/2, for example, lists all capital burgesses voting, abstaining or absent from the 1716 mayoral election and 24 are named.

³¹ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 333 – 4.

³² Macc. Coll. B/IV/7; B/IV/8.

mayor, Roger Boulton, were amongst those absent. In the end, the fourteen decided to vote but without the outgoing mayor's approval, this vote was also against custom.³³

Both parties took legal recourse. Mayor elect Barber launched a case against former mayor Boulton, but the case went against Barber on the grounds that Barber's election was contrary to custom. However, this ruling was not made until 1720, and so clearly irrelevant to Macclesfield in 1716/7. There were arguments that the charter was void and that the corporation was in abeyance. However, this was the eighteenth century, not the seventeenth, and the Crown was no longer as readily eager to issue new charters. Indeed, Holmes and Szechi considered that after 1688 the Crown 'virtually abandoned its rights to tamper with municipal independence'.³⁴ The corporation did remain in abeyance until 1725 when a mandamus from King's Bench ordered a new mayor to be elected. The corporation minute book is devoid of entries between 16 February 1715 and 7 September 1727, and the mayoral accounts show a break between 1714 and 1734, both of which would support the notion that the corporation was effectively 'dead'. Exactly how the town was governed during this period is unclear but life did go on. Earwaker states that in 1718/9 one Richard Tompkinson appears to have acted as mayor and in 1725 Richard Johnson, one of Booth's opponents, was elected mayor. This conclusion coincided with the passing of 'An Act for the Quietening of Corporations' and was probably part of an effort to tidy up outstanding conflicts. Indeed, this coincided with the establishment of Whig supremacy in national politics in the 1720s, which saw the end of the wholesale

³³ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 334.

³⁴ G. Holmes & D. Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain, 1722 – 1783* (London, 1993), pp. 183 – 4.

dismissals of local government officials and where central government became less interested in local administration.³⁵

The affidavits, from Richard Worthington and Edward Cherry, which are representative of all eight, show the way in which Macclesfield's electoral system had run, at least for the previous twenty-five years. They also show that there was a (probably genuine) mistake by most of the capital burgesses over the legality of the Town Clerk returning more than five names to the Common Council. Halliday gives examples of the two possible scenarios facing the borough if the borough failed to lawfully elect a new mayor and aldermen on the 'Charter day'. In the first instance, the charter would be voided as the terms of the charter would have been broken, for example at Leominster in 1682.³⁶ In this scenario, the corporation would be treated as a person who died intestate, with litigation to provide settlements for the corporation's assets, for example, charitable bequests. The monarch would have to be approached for a new charter to be granted before the borough could function again. In the second scenario, the outgoing mayor would retain office for another year. In an extreme case, Alexander Johns, mayor of Lostwithiel retained office between 1705 and 1710, often because of the absence of an election. Finally, in 1710, Queen's Bench issued a writ of mandamus ordering the corporation to elect another mayor.³⁷ In Macclesfield, the former scenario appears to have occurred, with the corporation being effectively 'dead', but the corporation was revived by a writ of mandamus.

In attempting to conceptualise this mayoral election, the obvious line to investigate is the co-incidence with the Hanoverian Succession (1714) and Jacobite

³⁵ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 334 – 5; B/IV/15; Corporation Minute Book CCRO LBM 1/1; Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II (London, 1880), p. 466; Mayor's Account Book CCRO LBM 2703/66; 11 Geo. I c. 4. Many thanks to Dr Paul Halliday for bringing the break in the mayoral accounts to my attention. F. O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History, 1688 – 1832* (London, 1997), p. 136; G. Holmes, *The Electorate and the National Will* (Lancaster, 1976), pp. 30 – 9; J.A. Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 36 – 46.

Rebellion (1715). Yet nowhere does either party accuse the other of sedition or treason, Hanoverianism or Jacobism, Whiggery or Toryism, or any other such political label. Nationally, there had been an escalation of tensions since the last years of Anne's reign and the Court had been active in promoting Whig candidates in constituencies with small electorates.³⁸ Against the backdrop of the Hanoverian Succession, there was a significant restructuring of government officers: Tory J.P.s were removed and between 1715 and 1717, 120 Excise officers were dismissed for political offences. Excise officers were the eyes of the government across the country. Rioting occurred in many but not all towns. Newcastle was noted as divided, but there was no violence, while in Dorchester on George I's Coronation Day, the Jacobites rioted to rescue an effigy of the Pretender from being burned, and then attacked a nonconformist meeting house. Later, however, Daniel Defoe would comment that Dorchester was 'les divided onto factions and parties, than other places'.³⁹ But there is no evidence of rioting in Macclesfield in association with the Hanoverian Succession, nor was Macclesfield a parliamentary borough so neither national case seems relevant for Macclesfield unless there was a wider movement of either Whig confidence or Tory desperation. The mayor's accounts for 1713 – 4, the last for which there is an account before the 1716 election, shows that money was spent for 5th November, a noted date for anti-Jacobites as it coincided with William of Orange's landing in

³⁶ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 229 – 30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 313 – 4.

³⁸ N. Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), p. 366; W.A. Speck, 'The Electorate in the First Age of Party', in C. Jones, (ed.) *Britain in the First Age of Party* (London, 1987), pp. 45 – 62, on p. 60. See also W.A. Speck, 'The General Election of 1715', *HER*, xc (1975), pp. 507 – 22; N. Rogers, 'Riot and Poplar Jacobitism in Early Hanoverian England', in E. Cruickshanks (ed.), *Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobinism, 1689 – 1759* (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 70 – 88.

³⁹ J. Brewer, *Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688 – 1783* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), p. 74; O'Gorman, *Long Eighteenth-Century*, pp. 67, 68; Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp. 93 – 103; P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660 – 1730* (London, 1989), p. 262; D. Underwood, *Fire from Heaven: The Life of an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1992), pp. 261 – 2; D. Hayton, 'Contested Kingdoms, 1688 –

1688, Queen Anne's Birthday and the anniversary of her accession, the proclamation of peace with Spain, the proclamation of King George and his arrival.⁴⁰ Each of these celebrations would have provided an opportunity for popular unrest and riot, but all appear to have passed without incident. Rogers is also of the opinion that in 1715 (and presumably 1716 too) riot was 'essentially generated from below' and recorded examples where 'Jacobite toasts were drunk by smugglers and debtors at odds with the law and also by disappointed men.'⁴¹ Neither of these descriptions support the idea of a faction of the aldermanic bench usurping power in a non-parliamentary borough.

These arguments pre-suppose that there were political divisions in Macclesfield. Table 3.1 shows the voting patterns of those aldermen present at the 1716 mayoral election. With only ten voting lists from fifteen years, the evidence from which to build voting patterns is limited. All of the abstaining 'faction' voted on 16th February 1715 while almost all of Mr Barber's 'faction' voted on 28th July, 1714 and 1 July, 1712. None of these events really constitute major political issues, being concerned with such issues as the water supply or the river bank, and with votes occurring only once every eighteen months it is highly unlikely that the Common Council would have become a hotbed of political debate.

Economic background may equally provide a source for discontent if there were a division between agricultural and industrial interests. As I will show on pages

1756', pp. 35 – 70, on pp. 51 – 2 in P. Langford (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century 1688 – 1815* (Oxford, 2002); Rogers, 'Jacobite Riots', p. 78.

⁴⁰ Mayor's Account Book, CCRO LBM 2703/66. The money spent were: 5 November, £6 14s 7d; Anne's Birthday, £4 5s 8d; Anne's Accession, £4 5s 1d; Proclamation of George I, £2 15s 3d; George's arrival, 15s 5d. See also Underwood, *Fire From Heaven*, pp. 93, 126, 152, 231, 261 – 2 for early-seventeenth century Dorchester where collections taken on 5 November went to fund a new hospital while for George I's Coronation Day churchbells were rung, bonfires were lit and there was an ox-roast and ale for 2000, which contrasts with the Restoration when there was just churchbells and donations to the poor; D. Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700 - 1870* (London, 1997), p. 26.

⁴¹ Rogers, 'Jacobite Riots', pp. 71, 76.

148 to 157, the relationship between industrial and agricultural concerns was a dynamic one and, towards the end of the period under study, there was a disassociation between the two elements. But to consider that a town like Macclesfield could be divided into these industries would be anachronistic, as is shown in the section on the parish registers which clearly show a correlation between the agricultural seasons and baptisms and weddings. Furthermore, in one of only two occasions when all of the aldermen voted (5th November, 1736) the issue concerned a legal dispute with a chapman and which would have been of concern to the silk button industry.⁴²

If there was a division within the aldermanic bench, it must have been along personality lines, rather than political or economic.⁴³ By the autumn of 1716, when the election took place, George I had already overcome his first challenge. Had the dispute taken place in 1714 or 1715 then a stronger case could have been argued for a direct correlation between the Hanoverian Succession or the Jacobite Rebellion. As Geoffrey Holmes observed, ‘Why, indeed, neither from 1681 down to the summer of 1688 nor from 1689 down to the 1720s – not even in 1715 – was there any significant support in England from any section of the higher orders of society for any decent to desperation or violent political solutions?’⁴⁴ Macclesfield’s decent only occurred after the Jacobite Rebellion had been suppressed, which suggests other motives. Perhaps the most telling phrase comes from Gary Stuart de Krey, who wrote that the Succession crisis in London ‘confirmed....the entrenchment’ of the Whig-mercantile magistracy and the popular opposition in the Common Council.⁴⁵ This phrase is

⁴² Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 5 November 1736.

⁴³ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 340 makes the same point and contrasts the situation with that in Norwich where there is a clear Whig/Tory division.

⁴⁴ G. Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679 – 1742* (London, 1986), p. 251

⁴⁵ G. S. de Krey, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party, 1688 – 1715* (Oxford, 1985), p. 270.

Table 3.1: Aldermen's Voting 1700 – 1715: for Mr Barber⁴⁶

	16 Feb 1715	10 Feb 1715	28 Jul 1714	1 Jul 1712	14 Aug 1712	22 Jun 1709	3 Dec 1708	17 Sep 1706	21 Aug 1702	28 Mar 1700
William Clayton			X		X	X	X	X		
Jasper Hooley	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Richard Johnson				X		X			X	X
Edward Cherry			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Stephen Phillips	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Samuel Eccles			X	X						
Thomas Lowe		X	X	X						
John Barber	X	X	X	X						
John Glover			X							
Roger Bancroft	X		X		X		X	X	X	
Francis Bostock		X	X	X						
William Mottershead	X		X	X						
John Condliffe	X	X								

abstaining from the election

	16 Feb 1715	10 Feb 1715	28 Jul 1714	1 Jul 1712	14 Aug 1712	22 Jun 1709	3 Dec 1708	17 Sep 1706	21 Aug 1702	28 Mar 1700
Roger Boulton	X	X				X	X	X		
Adam Endon	X	X	X	X			X	X		X
Nicholas Thornley	X	X	X		X		X			
William Booth	X		X				X	X		
Richard Worthington	X									
James Luigard	X									

⁴⁶ Two aldermen, Hollinpriest and Birtles, do not appear to have voted at a council meeting in 15 years. One each voted for Mr Barber and abstained.

equally relevant to Macclesfield. The politics of the 1710's did not create division within the aldermen. Rather it provided a catalyst in which existing tensions were magnified and broke out of the confines of ordered corporate government. This is a point which David Eastwood would undoubtedly agree with when he observed a victory of the locality over the intrusions from central government from the Major-Generals to James II.⁴⁷

3.2.4 *Report for the Select Committee on Municipal Corporations, 1835*

The *Report for the Select Committee on Municipal Corporations* was a Royal Commission set up to describe the state of urban government in England and Wales in the mid-1830s prior to legislation intended to clarify and codify urban government.⁴⁸ Although this *Report* post-dates the end of the dissertation by almost a century, it provides a reliable source to set beside the information from 1716. In the intervening 119 years, it is entirely possible that changes will have been introduced to the electoral system, so caution still needs to be exercised

In 1835, Macclesfield was still being governed under Charles II's Charter of 1684. There were a definitive 360 'corporators'. These included all common burgesses or freemen, and capital burgesses, also known as councilmen.⁴⁹ Freedom of Macclesfield came from birth, nomination or election by the capital burgesses. The mayor and two aldermen were chosen annually by the outgoing mayor, the outgoing two aldermen and the capital burgesses from a short list of five capital burgesses nominated by the common burgesses. There was a Common Council of 24, comprising the mayor, aldermen and capital burgesses. The *Report* also states that this

⁴⁷ Eastwood, *Government and Community*, p. 16.

⁴⁸ British Parliamentary Papers, *Municipal Corporations of England and Wales, 1835*, Vol. 2 (Irish University Press, 1969).

council contained sixteen common burgesses nominated by the common burgesses. This statement suggests a development in the composition of the Common Council as the presence of common burgesses in it has not been previously mentioned. A Recorder, being a man ‘learned in the law’, and a Town Clerk, being a ‘discreet man’, were elected by all of the corporators. The sitting and preceding mayor with the two sitting aldermen and the recorder sat as borough magistrates. Their jurisdiction was limited to misdemeanours.⁵⁰ A Treasurer read the accounts publicly and explained them to the burgesses. The accounts were also audited and reported on by a committee of capital burgesses. Unfortunately, the *Report* contained no details of annual income or expenditure, but recorded a debt of £15,350 for mortgaged lands, water works and the town hall. The water works were a project begun in 1681 (see 3.4, below) while the town hall has been rebuilt in 1823.⁵¹

A condensed summary states that entry to the Common Council, upon the creation of a vacancy, was by the nomination of candidates by the common burgesses. From these nominees, the existing council chose the new capital burgess. The corporation minute book only appears to list entries when they were extraordinary. So, in 1666, Edward Brundreth, capital burgess, was removed from the Common Council because he was non-resident in Macclesfield, being ‘beyond the Sea’ and was replaced by Edward Lunt.⁵² An entry two years before shows that elections were taking place for capital burgesses at least. Reginald Blagge, freeman, was elected as a capital burgess, but refused to take up the position and was replaced by Henry

⁴⁹ The wording of affidavits from 1717 make it clear that common burgess equated to freeman, and capital burgess equated to councilman. Macc. Coll. B/IV/7; B/IV/8.

⁵⁰ Aldermen were also described as J.P.s. See Macc. Coll. B/IV/7.

⁵¹ Municipal Corporations of England and Wales, Vol. 2, p. 130.

⁵² Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1666. See also p. 102 for Samuel Blackleach’s removal for residing in Lancashire.

Barber.⁵³ This summary states that the number of freemen was 3602, which may be a typographical error for 360.⁵⁴ The *Report* states that there was no Court of Record but a series of historical notes, compiled after 1801, from the Macclesfield Collection states that this was held once a month.⁵⁵

On balance, therefore, the *Record* from 1835 seems to reflect the basis of Macclesfield's government from over a century previously. The disparity in the number of the corporators may be a simple typographical error while the disagreement over small details, the Court of Record, can be explained by lapses or changes over time.

3.3 Nature of Government – Thematic

The previous section looked at Macclesfield's government from a chronological viewpoint based upon four key-events. This section aims to pull together specific themes about Macclesfield's government when it was not being distorted by key events. Here I intend to look at the everyday running of corporate government, but as these periods have produced much less documentation than the four events discussed above, it is necessary to resort to a wider chronological spread of material and to make generalisations about what was the norm.

The Freedom of the Borough was, in early modern England, the act which brought the holder the privileges and responsibilities of a corporate town or city. Freedom was normally gained through birth (inheritance from a father who was a freeman), election or purchase, or a combination of two or more. The exact nature of the privileges and responsibilities varied from town to town, and were subject to

⁵³ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1664.

⁵⁴ British Parliamentary Papers, Municipal Corporations of England and Wales, Vol. 7, 1839 (Irish University Press, 1969), p. 673.

⁵⁵ Municipal Corporations of England and Wales, Vol. 2, p. 130; Macc. Coll. B/II/6.

individual Charters. In the case of Macclesfield, the privileges were enfranchisement into municipal elections, privileges on the Commons (for example, grazing cattle and cutting peat for fuel) and exemption from tolls throughout Cheshire except on salt. These last two privileges were specified in the 1261 Charter (and there is no reason to suppose that they were not included in the lost first Charter). By the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, these were still real and valuable concessions worth paying for, both to gain freedom (see the Dashwoods of London, below) and to defend through litigation.⁵⁶

The *Report for the Select Committee on Municipal Corporations* of 1835 states that entry to the freedom of Macclesfield was through election or birth.⁵⁷ The corporation minute book listed only five examples of purchase of freedom. In 1681, the two eldest sons of William Blagge of Macclesfield, butcher, were to be admitted as freemen upon payment of 20s when they were 21 years old or could afford it. Francis Dashwood of London, esquire, and his son, who “doth drive a considerable trade within Macclesfield” were admitted to the freedom which gave them the right to trade in Macclesfield as any burgess in 1675.⁵⁸ This economic advantage was granted in exchange for a ‘consideration’ of £40. Three ‘Dashwoods of London’ (two being ‘esquires’) appear in late-seventeenth century probate files. Thomas Greaves repaid a ‘bond and judgement’ worth £53 while Charles Yarwood’s debts were paid out of monies already in Dashwood’s hand.⁵⁹ Thomas Wright, alderman, made provision in

⁵⁶ Examples from the Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, include: 25 May 1658 an order for inhabitants with Moss Rooms upon Dane’s Moss to contribute to scouring the moss ditches; 29 August 1679, ‘by ancient charter’ freemen of Macclesfield were quit all tolls in Cheshire except that on salt, but recently freemen had been distrained at Chester. This issue was to be addressed quickly through the courts and charged to the public chest. See also *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II (Cambridge, 1985), p. 418 for Leeds, Leicester and Nottingham for similar disputes.

⁵⁷ *Municipal Corporations of England and Wales*, Vol. 2, p. 130.

⁵⁸ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1675.

⁵⁹ Thomas Greaves of Macclesfield, chapman, WS 1678; Charles Yarwood of Macclesfield, yeoman, WS 1697.

his will for his daughter from a message 'late bought' from Dashwood.⁶⁰ This probate evidence shows that the Dashwoods were active in Macclesfield. Similarly, in 1686, Mr John Whiteman of London, silkman, paid another 'consideration' of £40 to be admitted as a burgess, provided he came before the court by Michealmas. As a burgess, Whiteman and his agent, James Nixon of Macclesfield, chapman, were entitled to free trade. No evidence of a London-based John Whiteman has been found in the probate material. Conversely, too many 'James Nixons' were identified to identify one as Whiteman's agent.

In the case of the Blagges there is no indication that William Blagge was a freeman which would have permitted his sons to become freemen by birth, although why they were required to pay fines after having apparently been elected is unclear. Fines for entry to freedom are not mentioned elsewhere with regards to Macclesfield. They were commonplace in other towns. For example, sixteenth century Lincoln raised its entry fines from £1 to £5.⁶¹ A £1 entry fine in the seventeenth century does not appear to have been unreasonable. The rationale behind the election of the Dashwood's and Whiteman with their much larger 'consideration' for economic advantage is self-evident.

Beginning in 1619 and continuing for fifty years, by-laws attempted to enforce attendance at mayoral elections. The corporation minute book recorded three fines of £5 and a fourth of 22s. The variable fines may reflect those given out to capital and common burgesses, as listed in 1654.⁶² Exemptions were given for non-attendance on good grounds; in 1621 this was specified as being on the King's business. By 1629/30, being absent from the town for five days before the Feast of St Michael

⁶⁰ Thomas Wright of Macclesfield, alderman, WI 1689.

⁶¹ P. Clark & P. Slack, 'Introduction' in P. Clark & P. Slack, *Crisis and Order in English Towns* (London, 1984), pp. 1 – 55, on pp. 20 – 1.

⁶² Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1654.

Archangel was punishable by a 40s fine. Abruptly, and coinciding with the Restoration, these by-laws ceased to appear in the corporation minute book. Incidents of fines for absenteeism were less common than by-laws proscribing absenteeism. The preamble to these by-laws usually contained advanced notice, delivered by the mayor, to attend, as in 1621, or berating their absence and negligence, as in 1651. Although the corporation minute book names only a few fined burgesses, it can be assumed that finings were a regular part of life as a burgess.

Concurrent with these anti-absenteeism by-laws were attempts to encourage burgesses to take up the offices to which they were elected, on pain of fine. In 1629/30, refusal to fill the office carried a £10 fine. The corporation minute book only lists the by-laws and does not record any incidents of fines. However, the need to reiterate these by-laws suggests that there was a persistent problem. The £10 fine prescribed above was reduced to £3 6s 8d in 1651, and further reduced to 10s for capital burgesses and 6s 8d for common burgesses in 1654. The need to re-issue this legislation suggests a serious issue but this impression is not supported by the reduction in fines. A fine of £10 in the difficult economic conditions of the 1620s may simply have been so excessive as to be unrealistic to enforce and collect.

How well attended were these corporation meetings? Charts 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 show the number of aldermen voting between 1619 and 1744.⁶³ A number of the motions appear to be copies of the motion only without any signatures. Excluding these copies, there was an average of just under twelve signatories for the period before 1660, rising to just under fifteen in the following years. In no cases are there details of aldermen opposing a motion. This would suggest an attendance level of 50 per cent rising to 62 per cent following the Restoration. In the earlier period, there were a

⁶³ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1.

Chart 3.2: Number of Aldermen Voting, 1619 - 1660.

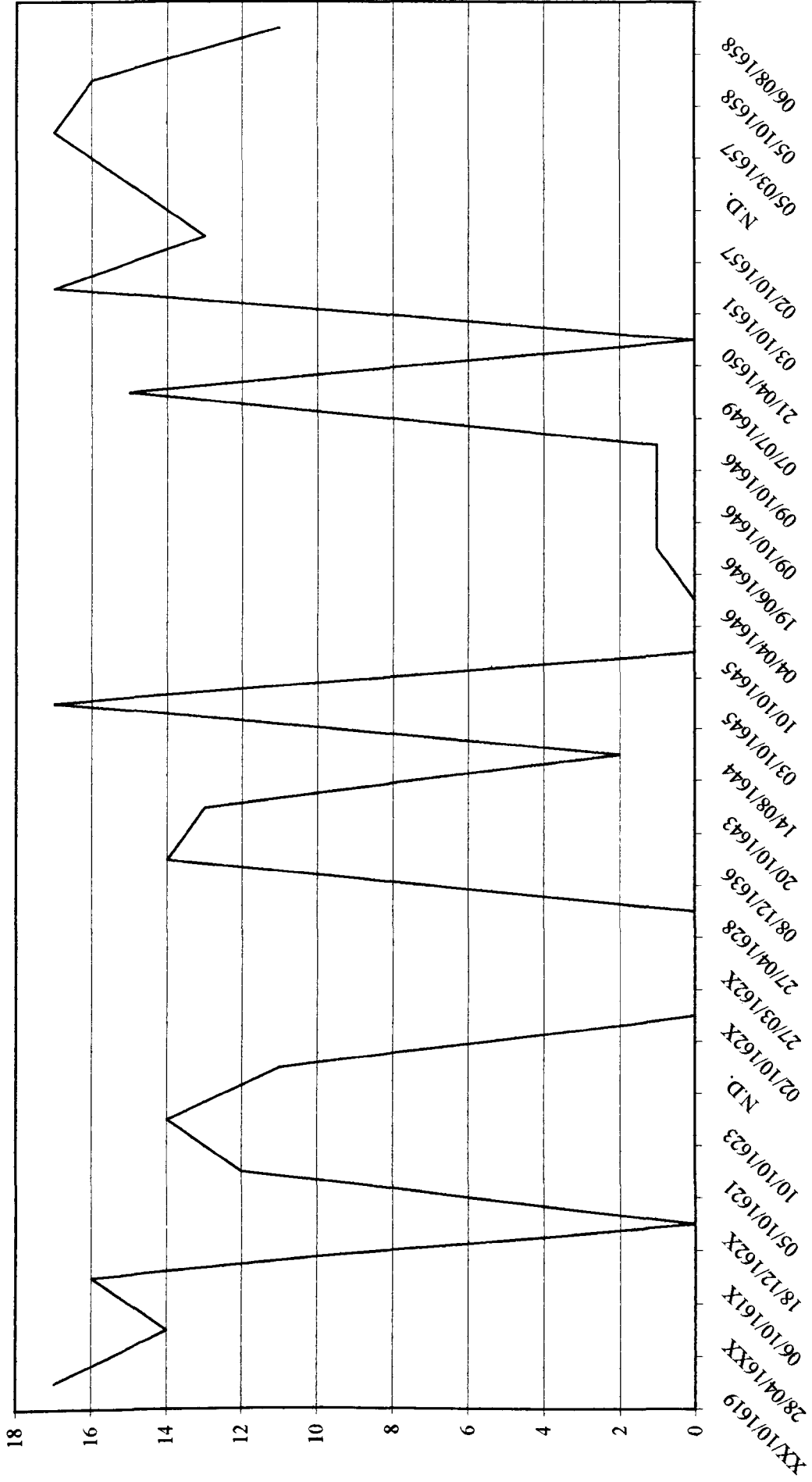


Chart 3.3: Numbers of Aldermen Voting, 1660 - 1715.

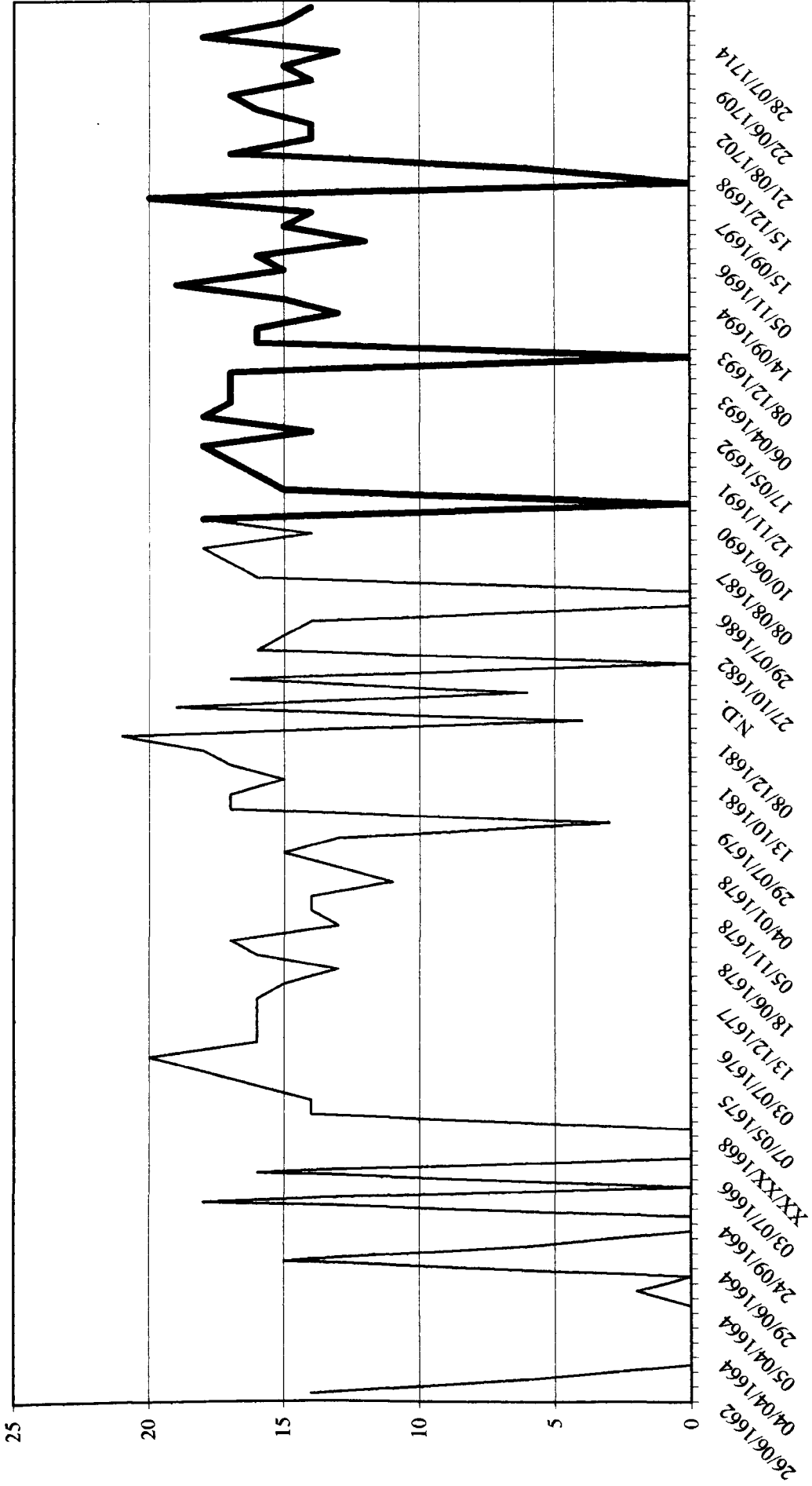
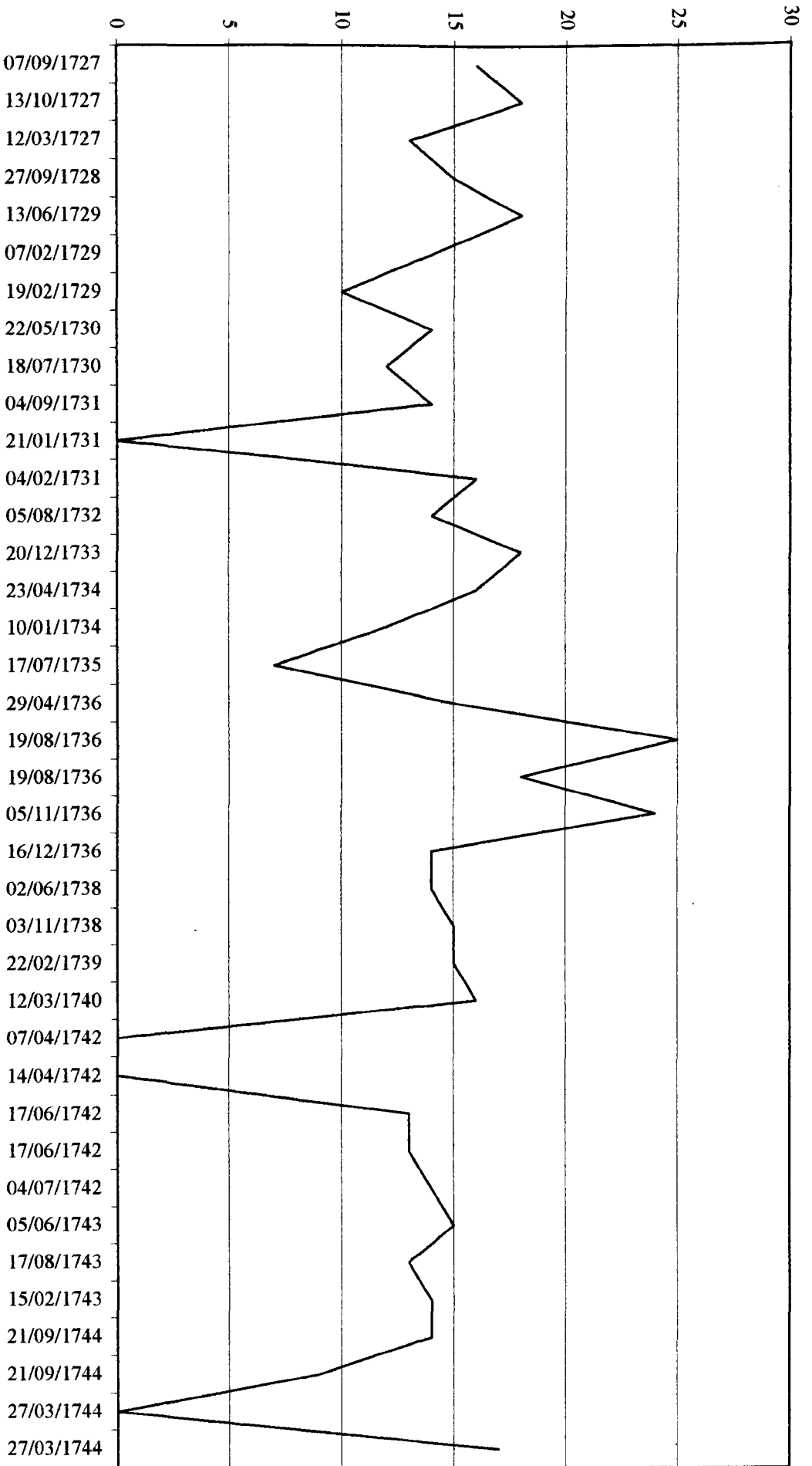


Chart 3.4: Numbers of Aldermen Voting, 1727 - 1744.



number of attempts to fine aldermen for non-attendance of council meetings which would reflect this poorer attendance.

Generally speaking, it was the aldermen who were the most visible target of the Crown's attempts to control corporate government in the period 1688 – 1690. In Chart 3.2, which covers this period, there is a significant gap in the Minute Book between December 1687 and June 1690. When the attendance figures were examined for the periods 1660 to 1687 and 1680 to 1715, there was an increase from an average of just over fourteen to almost sixteen. It would be wrong to assume that the actions of James II and William and Mary were aimed at improving corporate government through appointing conscientious aldermen. However, in the case of William and Mary, Samuel Blackleache was removed from the aldermanic bench for not swearing the required oath. The reason given was that he had been living in Lancashire 'for some time' and is not recorded as voting since March 1677.⁶⁴ Half of this increase could be accounted for by the removal of Blackleache for non-residence and replacing him with a Macclesfield resident. Ironically, political instability at national level served to improve corporate government

3.3.1 Characteristics of the Macclesfield Mayors

As will be shown later in this dissertation it would be erroneous to view Macclesfield as divided into either agrarian or industrial sectors therefore it would be of limited use to pursue this avenue of enquiry to determine election patterns.⁶⁵ Equally, it is difficult to find evidence of 'party' within the corporate politics. This point is made more clearly in the following section on the aldermanic bench where voting patterns prior to the disputed mayoral election of 1716 are examined based

⁶⁴ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1 14 March 1677; 3 July 1690.

⁶⁵ See pp. 90 – 93, 148 – 157.

upon the voting for that election. With reference to that election, Paul Halliday could see no evidence of party, but argued instead for personal groupings.⁶⁶ However, where it is clear that there are changes in the pattern of mayoral elections is in the number of times an individual was elected as mayor.

Appendix F is based upon the list of mayors of Macclesfield in Earwaker's *East Cheshire* for 1600 to 1740. Those mayors who sat in office more than once have been underlined. For the period 1600 to 1685, there were eighty-eight mayors elected for eighty-six years due to two deaths in office. Of these eighty-eight mayors elected, forty-four, or one-in-two, had served previously. After 1685 until 1727 (except for the nine years following the disputed mayoral election of 1716 when no elections occurred), there were very few mayors being re-elected. William Rowe was chosen following the death in office of Thomas Thornley in 1692. It was customary for the senior alderman to be chosen in such circumstances, so it is unsurprising that Rowe had been elected as mayor in 1685 at least.⁶⁷ Richard Johnson, who had been elected in mayor in 1710, was elected mayor in 1725 as part of the resumption of corporate government.⁶⁸ From 1728 to 1734, the seven elections provided only three new mayors. Thereafter, until the end of the period, all of the mayors sat for the first time.

Clearly, until the election of William Rowe in 1685 there were difficulties in persuading aldermen to stand as mayor when compared with the post-1685 period (except for the years 1728 to 1734). Explaining these changes is more problematic. After 1604, no mayor was re-elected in the following year nor were mayors re-elected on alternate years which would suggest a monopoly on power. Difficult economic conditions in the early-seventeenth century may have dissuaded all but the richest

⁶⁶ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 340.

⁶⁷ William Rows were elected as mayor in 1639, 1648, 1656, 1666 and 1673. A probate file exists for a William Rowe in 1676 (WS 1676, gentleman), so at least some of elections belonged to another William Rowe.

from the burdens of being a mayor, although the egalitarian response would have been to spread out the responsibilities and expenses so that nobody served twice. If the urban improvement projects being undertaken from about 1680 are taken as evidence of healthy corporate finances, which would have reduced the mayor's expenses, then this could explain an increased willingness to undertake the responsibilities of mayor should have occurred twenty years earlier. Similarly, the last bye-law to fine aldermanic non-attenders was passed in 1654 and, although it would have remained in force for years to come, the absence of subsequent bye-laws suggest improved attendance. Coinciding with these changes in Macclesfield, Borsay and Proudfoot note a 'dramatic turn-round in the membership of corporations'. Whatever the exact reasons for these changes, Macclesfield was not alone in increasing the participation in its own government.⁶⁹

1685 coincides with the accession of James II so it may be that this reign increased political awareness amongst Macclesfield's aldermen and therefore increased a desire to undertake political office, although it is unlikely that would believe that the mayoralty carried power to influence 'national' events. If 1685 inspired political involvement, then why not the Restoration or the Civil War? Conversely, if national politics could influence corporate politics, then how can the more even distribution seen amongst the Macclesfield mayors be compared with the 'Rage of Party' between the Triennial and Septennial Acts?

Undoubtedly, after 1685, a significant change occurred amongst Macclesfield's aldermen with regards their attitude to the mayoralty. This cannot be explained in political terms and there is insufficient evidence with which to examine

⁶⁸ See p. 87.

⁶⁹ See pp. 97 – 8; P. Borsay & L. Proudfoot, 'The English and Irish Urban Experience, 1500 – 1800: Change Convergence and Divergence', in P. Borsay & L. Proudfoot (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England: Change, Convergence and Divergence* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 1 – 27, on p. 20.

social changes but a reduced financial burden may have encouraged others to accept office. Within the constraints of the aldermanic bench, which was admittedly a limited expression of urban democracy, there is evidence of an increasingly equitable distribution of the office of mayor. This process was not without setbacks, as is shown with the 1716 mayoral election and the re-elections occurring between 1728 and 1734. Yet the process occurred at a time when corporate government was supposed to be becoming increasingly oligarchic.⁷⁰

3.3.2 Fairs and Markets⁷¹

There were five fairs in Macclesfield: April 25 (introduced in 1685), June 11 (St. Barnaby, introduced in 1595), June 30, September 23 (Wakes, introduced in 1685) and November 1.⁷² They were noted for cloth and peddler's wares. The main fair was St. Barnaby's.⁷³ The dates of the fairs and details of goods sold, listed above, are set out in a document in the Macclesfield Collection compiled after 1801. There would no doubt have been other changes and variations over time. It is clear that fairs were also active on 11 and 30 June, but it may be that many of these entries actually referred to markets.⁷⁴ The role of the fairs in the horse trade is discussed in chapter 8. The horse fair toll book, which forms the basis of chapter 8, initially also recorded

⁷⁰ Indeed G. Holmes and D. Szechi dated *The Age of Oligarchy* (London, 1993) as beginning in 1722; for K. Wilson, Norwich became increasingly nepotistic after 1740, *Sense of the People*, (Cambridge, 1998), p. 313.

⁷¹ For a recent, well illustrated and enthusiastic account of fairs, see D.K. Cameron, *The English Fair* (Stroud, 1998), reviewed in *Agricultural History Review*, xlvii, Pt. 2 (1999), pp. 219 – 220.

⁷² Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, II, p. 475. These were the 'Old Fairs'. He also lists the nine fairs in 1878 with their dates adjusted by eleven days. *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II, pp. 467 – 75 confirms 5 fairs in 1756. In c. 1690 there were an estimated 874 market towns in England and Wales, *AHEW*, Vol. IV (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 467 – 75; J. Kermode, 'The Trade of Late Medieval Chester, 1500 – 1550', in R. Britnell & J. Hatcher (eds), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 286 – 308, on p. 288.

⁷³ Macc. Coll. B/VI/6. See also G. Malmgreen, *Silk Town: Industry and Culture in Macclesfield, 1750 – 1835* (Hull, 1985), p. 133; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 64 only mentions three fairs in May, June and October.

⁷⁴ For example, see p. 24 for evidence of a 'Barnaby' fair in 1356.

tolls received and expenditure. This was done inconsistently, and declined as the importance of recording horse sales increased. But the format for recording receipts and expenses remained largely consistent throughout the seventeenth century. The earliest account, from 1619 or 1620, noted that 46s 6d was received for tolls of horses and beasts and 11s 2d expended on ten salaries leaving a balance of 36s 4d. A second account, apparently for the same fair, records 39s 6d received for weighing wool with 4s paid for four salaries, leaving 27s 6d.⁷⁵ Although the fairs were apparently known for the sale of cloth, it is clear from the wording of the tolls that what was actually being sold in the seventeenth century was raw wool as it was being weighed. Cloth, especially if sold wholesale, would have been sold in bolts and there is limited evidence of a cloth weaving industry around Macclesfield.⁷⁶

In the mid-1650s the toll accounts reappear after a hiatus. This may be as a response to an increase in the volume of horses sold which took place about the same time. The accounts were now presented in an enlarged format. For 30 June 1655, for example, the receipts were presented based upon their origin: for wool, standings (possibly rented stalls, as were recorded on 30 June 1659), for swine, at the Great Wallgate, at the Little Wallgate and at the Waters. The expenses were again for wages, mostly 1s each although a few at 18d. No mention of horses appears, unless their tolls were accounted for by one of the mentioned locations. Only occasionally were the duties of individual officers recorded. On 11 June 1660, Edward Orme was the recipient of tolls for the Great Wallgate and Edmund Hall for the Waters.

Non-payment of tolls resulted in the distraint of goods. Following the fair of 11 June 1659, the Corporation distrained a pair of hose, silk points and an inkhorn, all worth 9d. On 30 June 1659, the Corporation was left with two balls of soap, another

⁷⁵ There were twelve salaries of 1s each, and one each of 18d and 20d. These levels remained consistent throughout the century.

two silk points and a pair of hose, valued at 8d.⁷⁷ These goods illustrate the variety of small wares available at the fairs, beyond the livestock and wool which are normally recorded in the toll book.

Markets differed from fairs primarily by their regularity.⁷⁸ Fairs were annual events (although there could be more than one fair in the year, as in the case of Macclesfield, each fair was still an annual event) whereas markets were more regular, usually weekly. The increased regularity of markets effected the type of goods being sold, although there would have been some overlap. Generally, though, while fairs were for significant purchases (horses being a good example) or to coincide with seasonal events (the sale of raw wool), markets provided the day-to-day necessities, often perishables, as the case of Nicholas Chapman, butcher, shows.

In July 1758, Nicholas Chapman, butcher, greaseman and freeman of Macclesfield fell into a dispute with the Corporation concerning the setting up of a second stall at the market.⁷⁹ The case revolved around the right of freemen to set up stalls at the market without paying stallage and piccage – the liberty for selling meat upon the market ground. For a non-freeman, these cost 6d and 1 ½d per day respectively. The Corporation argued that the exception for freemen of the borough from stallage only extended to one stall, but if a second was required, stallage was due on it. Nicholas Chapman set up a second stall as his business grew and disputed his obligation to pay stallage. Complaints were made to the mayor who dispatched the Sergeants to order Chapman to remove the meat before the stall was taken down.

⁷⁶ See Roger Toft, *shearman*, WS 1676, on p. 298.

⁷⁷ Congleton was noted for the point production. If these distrained points were from the Congleton point industry then they would support the hypothesis that the pre-existence of a silk-based industry in Congleton and the existence of the supply network into east Cheshire would explain the choice of Macclesfield for the button trade. See p. 218.

⁷⁸ *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II, pp. 420 – 1.

⁷⁹ *Macc. Coll.* B/II/17.

Chapman refused, and in the ensuing dispute the meat fell on the ground, became dirty and was carried away by dogs.

Although this case post-dates the end of this dissertation, it illustrates well the terms and conditions under which the market operated: one free stall to each freeman and 6d per stall plus any addition fees from non-freemen. Unfortunately, as with all legal cases in the Macclesfield Collection, the outcome is unrecorded so it is unknown in whose favour the court found.⁸⁰

The Macclesfield Collection contains copies of four stallage court books and accounts for payments of fees for the years 1672, 1703, 1732 and 1735.⁸¹ The format of these stallage accounts varies over time which makes a direct comparison difficult. That for 1672, for example, concentrates on payments for stall's frontage per market day mainly for non-Macclesfield traders. By the eighteenth century, the accounts were increasingly concerned with payments without the details of their calculation, and listed the payers by occupation without reference to their place of origin. On 24 February 1672, fifty stallage payments were made to the mayor of which only three were noted as being from Macclesfield. The stallholders came from various towns in east Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire, like Wilmslow, Congleton, Reddish and Glossop.⁸² Only eight occupations were recorded, which were dominated by six butchers. There was also one turner and one shoemaker. Subsequent payments made throughout March, April and May by another five named stallholders (and others unnamed) included a hose seller, two farriers and a linen seller. Payments were made for stalls per market day. Rates varied depending upon the length of the frontage: 1 yard paid 1d per day, 2 yards paid 3d per day and 3 yards paid 4d per day.

⁸⁰ A similar legal case between Robert Clarke, stocking weaver, of Macclesfield against the Corporation, from 1736, against distraint of goods for non-payment of stallage was similarly without a conclusion. Macc. Coll. B/II/15.

⁸¹ Macc. Coll. B/II/10, /11, /12, /13. The 1672 stallage court book is also discussed on pp. 363 – 6.

Stallholders tried to keep the same 'patch' as two linen sellers were identified solely by their wares and where they sold them, one under Sander's window and another under the backhouse.

By 1703 a significant shift has occurred in the nature of the stallholders. Of fifty-nine stallholders, only fifteen were described as 'foreign'. The remainder were 'not free' Macclesfield tradesmen primarily identified by a street, Chestergate, Jordangate, Miln Street, Park Lane and Broken Cross, Barn Street and Dog Lane, Back Street and Goose Lane, Churchside and Waters. Whether these streets identify where a stall was set up or where the stallholder lived is unknown. Davies mentions the growth of the market along Wallgate to the Waters, and an Order of 1765 concerned stalls on Jordangate, Chestergate and Mill Street.⁸³ Only six occupations were listed: two tailors, two tradesmen, one cobbler and a husbandman. The butchers of thirty years before were absent. The style of accounting for the fees had changed also, and no mention is made of sizes of stalls.

By 1732, and again in 1735, there were no foreigners paying stallage.⁸⁴ Stallholders were listed by occupation, not street. There were sixty stallholders dominated by ale sellers (nineteen) and tailors (sixteen). The residue were twisters, masons, husbandmen (possibly a butcher), a cheesemaker, glover, button mould thrower, hatter, blacksmith and shoemakers. Payments were either 1s, 2s 6d, 5s or 10s but with no details of how they were calculated. Two of the 5s entries show that these were multiple payments of 2s 6d, but without identifying what either 2s 6d was for. The stallage payments for 1735 closely matches that of 1732.⁸⁵ The format, by occupation, and the size of the payments remain consistent. Overall, there were only

⁸² See chapter 8 for more details.

⁸³ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 58.

⁸⁴ Macc. Coll. B/II/12.

⁸⁵ Macc. Coll. B/II/13.

thirty-seven stallholders, down from sixty three years previously, but of those thirty-seven, twenty had retained their stalls from 1732.

The Macclesfield Collection contains details of the mayor's powers of enforcing peace during the fairs and markets. As early as 1509, for the walking of the fair, Christopher Savage ordered no breaking of the peace, no weapons and no sale of chargeable goods outside of the precinct. If anybody's enemies entered the fair, they could ask for the mayor's peace, who would arrest the enemies until surety was provided. This ordinance was repeated during Mary's reign.⁸⁶ The mayor was assisted by sergeants in enforcing the market regulations. In the eighteenth century, the sergeants were assisted by three officers to oversee the corn and grain, fish and fowl and sellers of leather.⁸⁷ No mention is made of who was responsible for the horse fair or how they were regulated. The officers were empowered to seize goods which failed to meet the standards. For example, the officers of corn and grain were empowered to seize all 'wheat cakes' made without butter under a by-law of 1630.⁸⁸

The main problem facing the market was the competition from shops where goods could be sold without the scrutiny and expense of the open market.⁸⁹ As early as 1677, the mayor forbade the sale of meal in shops.⁹⁰ In 1758 the tolls of the market were leased to a Mr John Wood for seven years at £70 *per annum*.⁹¹ Wood's queries about his right to tolls on hides reveal a deeper and more widespread problem. Wood was entitled to 1d per hide which, under an Act of 1 Jac. I, c. 22, sec. 7, could only be

⁸⁶ Macc. Coll. B/II/2, B/II/2. B/II/1 contains Latin copies of ordinances for courts, commons and markets for 1404 and 1430.

⁸⁷ Macc. Coll. B/VI/8; Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 54 – 6.

⁸⁸ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1630. The seized cakes were to be distributed amongst the poor.

⁸⁹ *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II, p. 406 states that after 1640 markets were losing their importance.

⁹⁰ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1677. See *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. II, pp. 417 – 8 for orders against private dealings at Neston, Hornby, Worcester, Devises and Ashburton.

⁹¹ Macc. Coll. B/II/18. The leasing of tolls was carried out on a number of occasions, for example in 1587 the tolls of the market of St Barnaby the Apostle, three stone mines and some parcels of land were leased for 21 years. Macc. Coll. B/II/6.

bought in open market or fair, except when a beast was slaughtered for a household. However, these tolls had previously been leased to a butcher who had neglected to collect the tolls and few were being brought to market by 1758. The only recommended action to enforce the legislation and tolls was to prosecute. The document adds that many corn, flour and meal sellers were operating in private houses to avoid tolls.

3.4 The Provision of Amenities

Initially it may appear that the subjects covered in this section are similar to those covered in the previous section. Both are amenities provided and regulated by the corporation for the good of the town. However, there is one specific factor which places these subjects in a different category from issues like the market. These subjects are new innovations for Macclesfield during the period covered by this dissertation. This allows a direct comparison to be made between the date Macclesfield introduced an amenity and when other towns introduced the same amenity.

If the Victorian industrial city was characterised by overcrowded insanitary conditions without access to adequate fresh water or sewage disposal, what then characterised the provision of amenities in the early modern town? Lower populations provided lower revenues with which to attempt to capital projects, while a lower population density reduced (but did not eliminate) the need for projects like the provision of fresh water supplies and waste disposal. This section will consider how Macclesfield, both corporately and privately, perceived the need for civic improvement.

On 31 January 1681, the Corporation Minute Book recorded that an agreement had been reached between Messrs Booth and Lunt and the Mayor regarding a waterworks 'late begun' by Booth and Lunt. The waterworks extended from Stone Pit Well on the Common to Macclesfield. Booth was reimbursed to the value of £44 9s and all lawsuits against the waterworks ceased and agreed. Materials bought by Booth for the waterworks were to be employed in it.⁹² The provision of running water into Macclesfield by a private concern had provoked a serious reaction from the Corporation. Whether there was an ethical objection to private individuals supplying amenities or, more likely, the Corporation saw the potential for profit to be directed to the general benefit of the town is unclear. Either way, the Corporation appears to have used its superior resources to launch lawsuits which would have reduced the profitability of the waterworks as a private concern. The Corporation's own report stated that the waterworks required a further £218 to complete plus running costs of £35 *per annum*. Booth and Lunt may not have been able, or willing, to face the expense of lawsuits coupled with the possibility of a lack of corporate co-operation in the future. The Corporation was operating on dubious grounds itself. In order to secure its position, when the Charter was renewed in 1684 one of the new heads was the liberty for the Corporation to bring water to the town from the commons and the waste. Liberty was required as the soil belonged to the Crown throughout this period.⁹³ Halliday states that the re-chartering of the boroughs in the later-Stuart period helped to 'clarify corporation privileges and expanded powers for corporate magistrates' which certainly agrees with Macclesfield's actions in the 1680s.⁹⁴

The Council planed a two inch lead pipe from the 'waterhouse' to the Croft and then one inch pipes to the corners of Jordangate, Chestergate, Milne Street and

⁹² Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1681.

⁹³ *CSPD*, 1684.

Churchyardside. At the Croft and the four street corners would be cisterns. To finance the system, £150 would be met from the common chest, the remainder being deferred against 'the town's growing revenue.'⁹⁵ The waterworks were a success. In September 1686 what amounted to a sub-committee headed by the mayor decided that the piped water did not go far enough and considered expanding the network. A month later they reported that the pipes would be extended further along Jordangate, Chestergate, Goose Lane and Milne Street, into Backstreet, to the head of Newgate, through Dog Lane and through Barn Street, and from the School to Richard Philip's House. In 1693 a 'Mr Saracold' made further, unspecified, proposals which were adopted together with a cistern at the Market Cross. Unfortunately, most descriptions of the extent of coverage refer to the house at the end of the pipe. This makes exact calculations difficult, except to say that the pipes extended part of the way down a particular street.⁹⁶

The corporation minute book is quiet on the waterworks until 1740, when a sub-committee looked into how the waterworks could be better regulated to supply the townspeople evenly with water. Two years later, possibly in response to these queries, it was proposed that the Waterbook should be assessed twice a year and that the subscribers signed the book when they paid their water rate, also twice a year. The 'common cocks' were to be leased to 'substantial neighbours' for them to make whatever profit they could from them.

In the intervening years a well in the Wallgate, called Townwall, which provided 'pernicious and jujurious water' which did 'perjudice the Health and

⁹⁴ Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 162.

⁹⁵ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1681.

⁹⁶ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 151; Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1693. Daniel Defoe mentions 'one Soracule, a man expert in making mill-work, especially for raising water to supply towns for family use.' George Sorocold also assisted in the establishment of Lombe's silk throwing mill in Derby. Defoe, *Tour*, p. 458.

Constitution of the Inhabitants' because it was used by all or most of the innkeepers, was a cause for concern. In 1736 it was blocked up at public expense. This action could only have been executed if other water supplies, like the waterworks, were considered sufficient to supply the town's needs. It may have been that by 1740, this was not the case, which provoked the enquiry into how best to supply the population with drinking water.

But just how innovative were Macclesfield's waterworks?⁹⁷ When Defoe visited Chester in the 1720s he observed 'a very grand waterhouse in the river, and the city plentifully supplied by pipes, just as London is'. Yet on an earlier visit in the 1690s, a decade after Macclesfield's waterworks were in operation, Chester's water was still being carried up from the river 'in great leather vessels'.⁹⁸ In comparison with the county town, Macclesfield's actions were about forty years ahead of the time.

An order of 1679 required inhabitants to pave the street outside their house. Other areas would be paved from the public stock.⁹⁹ Evidently, this had been a successful by-law in its day. By the 1740s there was evidence that the road surface was less than satisfactory. In 1744, Joseph Alsick sued the Corporation for not repairing the roads within the borough. Under charters of Elizabeth I and Charles II (it is not specified which of their two charters was referred to) the Corporation was found to be responsible for the repair of the roads, and breaks in the water pipes. The Corporation complained that it had maintained the streets 'as long as anybody now living can remember. But the Revenues being greatly reduced the Corporation is not now in a Capacity to action the expenses'. The previous year an attempt to raise a rate

⁹⁷ P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 – 1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 16, 70, 224, touches on the subject of water supplies but not in sufficient detail to compare with other towns. Only Bath is mentioned. For London, see Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727 – 1783* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 428 – 9.

⁹⁸ Defoe, *Tour*, p. 394.

⁹⁹ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1679.

at 6d in the pound had failed due to non-payment and intimidation. The Mayor's Account Book supports this statement, and the accounts for 1713 – 4 show that £4 4d had been spent on the road surfaces. The roads were surfaced with mill-stone grits taken from the quarry on the Common.¹⁰⁰

Peter Borsay highlights two main problems with road surface improvements, firstly, how to achieve an adequate surface and secondly, how to maintain the surfaces in the light of growing traffic.¹⁰¹ Despite these difficulties, a number of other towns made similar attempts to improve their road surfaces between 1680 and 1750, including Wisbech, Penzance, Nottingham, Bristol and Scarborough. Chester began the paving process in 1584 and had paved the main streets by the middle of the following century.¹⁰² Concurrent with improving the road surface were attempts to keep the surface clean scavengers were appointed in Preston in 1656, Leicester in 1686, Hereford in 1694 and Lincoln in 1707. Bideford in 1673 and Liverpool introduced public dustbins, with Liverpool going as far as to sign contracts for refuse removal in 1719. Bath went even further when, in 1742, a watercock was replaced with a pump to flush the streets.¹⁰³

In Macclesfield, the Corporation did improve the road surfaces through its order of 1679. The order required householders to pave the road directly in front of their properties absolved the Corporation of the need to raise the capital for the project, as it did for the water works. The presence of suitable stone close to Macclesfield would have avoided the expense of importing special raw materials,

¹⁰⁰ Macc. Coll. B/IV/24; B/IV/25; Mayor's Account Book, CCRO LBM 2703/66.

¹⁰¹ Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 68 – 9; E.L. Jones & M. Falkus, 'Urban Improvement and the English Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in P. Borsay (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century Town: A Reader in English Urban History: 1688 – 1820* (London, 1990), pp. 116 – 158.

¹⁰² Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, p. 69; J. Stobart, 'County, Town and Country: Three Histories of Urban Development in Eighteenth-Century Chester', in Borsay & Proudfoot, *Provincial Towns*, pp. 171 – 194, on pp. 175, 177.

¹⁰³ Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 69 – 70; for London, see Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, pp. 428 – 9.

which would have assisted the householders in funding the paving of the town in small units. The improvements were evidently successful without the expense of a private Act of Parliament, which many towns were obliged to resort to.¹⁰⁴ No further orders were made by the Corporation which also suggests that the 1679 order was conformed to. The date of the order suggests that Macclesfield was at the forefront of this movement for urban reform. But this early date may well explain why there was no attempt to introduce sewerage and drainage systems at the same time.

Another innovation was the erection of foul weather shelters to protect shoppers during the winter. In July 1676, Jonathan Pickford, gentleman, reached an agreement with the mayor to hang boards or shades at the side of his house to keep people dry. This was to take effect between 11 November and 25 March over the following seven years, for which Pickford would receive 30s *per annum*.¹⁰⁵ The foul weather shelter scheme is not known to have been repeated by other property holders or renewed in 1683, which questions the effectiveness of this initiative.

On 17 September 1706, the Corporation ordered the purchase of six convex lights to illuminate the town during the winter nights. A salaried official was appointed to maintain them, all financed from the public stock. They were to be located as the mayor and aldermen saw fit, which was not recorded in the corporation minute book. They were evidently a success as a further four convex lights were ordered in 1708. The Mayor's Account Book for 1713 – 4 shows that £10 3s 9d were spent on the light so they were evidently still in use at that date.¹⁰⁶

From the late-seventeenth century, improvements in street lighting were made possible through the introduction of oil-burning lamps. These replaced earlier

¹⁰⁴ Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, pp. 70 – 1.

¹⁰⁵ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1676.

¹⁰⁶ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1706, 1708; Mayor's Account Book, CCRO LBM 2703/66.

attempts to provide lighting which had usually been restricted to house-holders providing candle-lights at their own expense. The limitations of candle-power to illuminate a street are self-evident. Peter Borsay has identified sixteen towns which introduced street lighting between the 1680s and 1730s and Chester installed lights in 1725.¹⁰⁷ Despite these innovations, few towns were ‘suddenly transformed into evening oases of light’. Preston represents an early but a cautious approach to street lighting. Four convex lights were purchased in 1699 and initially maintained at the town’s expense. These costs continued to be met under orders of 1707 and 1710, and were repaired in 1711, so at least some lights were still in operation twelve years later. In 1731 a further eight lights were ordered. This approach contrasted with Liverpool, where forty-five were bought in 1718. York and Salisbury made similar large purchases in the 1720s.¹⁰⁸

In the chronology of this period of experimentation with public lighting, Macclesfield’s contribution appears mid-way between the 1680s and 1730s. When compared with the other provincial towns mentioned by Peter Borsay and Jon Stobart in the North West, Macclesfield followed Preston’s experiment with four lights seven years later, but over a decade before Liverpool’s much larger experiment and almost twenty years before Chester. But if Macclesfield could not afford a public lighting scheme on the scale of Liverpool (or perhaps did not consider it to be necessary), Macclesfield showed more commitment to public lighting than Preston, where the scheme was not enlarged for thirty-two years. Macclesfield’s initial lighting plan was larger than Preston, and enlargement took place two years later. Thereafter, the

¹⁰⁷ Canterbury and York (1687), Exeter (1689), Norwich (1692), Hereford (1695), Preston (1699), Bristol (c. 1700), Warwick and Bath (1701/2), Hull (1713), Wisbech (1715), Liverpool (1718), Coventry (1725), Salisbury (1727) Birmingham and Sheffield (1735). Borsay, *English Urban Renaissance*, p. 72; Stobart, ‘County, town and country’, p. 177; for London, see Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, pp. 428 – 9.

¹⁰⁸ Boray, *English Urban Renaissance*, p. 73

corporation minute book is silent on their fate although the mayor's accounts show that they were still a source of expenditure in 1713 – 4 and so still in use.

In August 1736, £20 of public money was allocated for the purchase of one or more fire engines from London, with additional money allocated for the salaries of 'engineers' to man them. No further mention is made in the corporation minute book of the fire engines which could indicate trouble free service for the remaining eight years of the corporation minute book. It appears that in 1736, Macclesfield was founding a municipal fire service for the benefit of the whole town.¹⁰⁹

3.5 Conclusions

At the beginning of this chapter, I set out to determine two things. Firstly, what format did corporate government in Macclesfield take and, secondly, what was the nature of corporate government. The corporation consisted of initially 120 but later 360 freemen or common burgages and also a Common Council of 24. The Common Council members were the capital burgages. The mayor and two aldermen were elected annually on 5 October.¹¹⁰ In the first round, the freemen elected five members from the Common Council. Their names were passed to the whole Common Council which then elected the mayor and two aldermen. These three, with the outgoing mayor, were the magistrates for the following year. Other officials were elected or nominated as required, and their numbers appeared to increase throughout the period.

Was this system democratic or representative? Jon Stobart gives Macclesfield's population at around 2628 in the middle of the seventeenth century.

¹⁰⁹ Corporation Minute Book, CCRO LBM 1/1, 1736. See Defoe, *Tour*, pp. 318, 319 for London's fire engines and hydrants in the previous decade. Borsay mentions a York fire service in 1711, *English Urban Renaissance*, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ There is some confusion whether the mayor and two aldermen were part of the 24 or in addition.

Assuming that half of these were female, and so ineligible to be franchised, and that of the males half were minors so again ineligible to be franchised, this would give a rough adult male population of 657. There were 384 capital or common burgages, although a number of these were taken up by non-resident gentlemen and London merchants. The franchise would have been extended to about 50 per cent of the possible electorate. This figure and the electoral system would clearly not be recognised as democratic by a modern model but, despite that, the political voice was extended to a not inconsiderable portion of the population. However, this system limited the number of voters so in the event that the population grew, whatever democracy there was in the system declined. By the time of municipal reform in the 1830s, Macclesfield's population had grown ten-fold which reduced the electoral to some 5 per cent. Within this electoral system few patterns have been identified for aldermen voting, but the significant shift in the mayors identified after 1685 shows that the office was more equitably distributed amongst those eligible to hold that office.

Regardless of the representativeness of the corporate government, how well did the government perform its duties? This can be best answered for subjects where a comparison can be drawn with other corporate towns. Issues like defending liberties and administering the market were clearly important and took up a lot of the Corporation's time and money, but it is difficult to make objective comparisons with other towns. New innovations and the provision of new or improved amenities provide more tangible issues with which to make comparisons. Street lighting and paving, foul weather shelters for pedestrians, piped water and a fire brigade all appeared in the years after 1680. J.H. Plumb is much quoted in deriding the cultural landscape of late-seventeenth century England: 'The cultural poverty of late

seventeenth century England was vast – no newspapers, no public libraries, no theatres, outside London, no concerts anywhere, no picture galleries of any kind, no museums, almost no botanical gardens and no organized sports'. In contrast, however, Paul Langford noted that while the French excelled at interiors, the English (in this case, London) excelled at exteriors with the construction and maintenance of pavements in London which were the envy of Parisians.¹¹¹ In the case of Macclesfield, however, those resources which could have been spent on cultural endeavours were being spent on utilities to improve the quality of life of the townspeople in a real, rather than cultural, form. Macclesfield's inhabitants enjoyed investment in many projects which would have improved their quality of life. It would be naïve to assume that all townspeople suddenly enjoyed piped water, lit streets and paving outside their houses. It must also be assumed that these projects failed to keep pace with the population growth. Given the limited number of streetlights available after 1700, they were probably concentrated where they could have been of most benefit i.e. the town centre. Despite the limitations of these schemes, by the standard of the day Macclesfield was certainly not left behind in either the scale of their undertakings, nor the date when the schemes were undertaken. Indeed, for street paving and lighting, Macclesfield appears to have been one of the pioneering towns.

Most of the initial population growth of early modern towns would have been absorbed within the medieval street plan through infilling and subletting well into the eighteenth century.¹¹² This is where the paving and water cisterns were located. Proximity to these facilities was probably not a problem before 1740. But in 1740, the

¹¹¹ J.H. Plumb, 'The Public, Literature and the Arts in the Eighteenth Century', in P. Fritz & D. Williams (eds), *The Triumph of Culture: Eighteenth Century Perspectives* (Toronto, 1972), pp. 27 – 48, on pp. 30 – 1; P. Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650 – 1850* (Oxford, 2000), p. 38.

¹¹² In the 1720's inside Norwich's walls 'much of that ground lay open in pasture-fields and gardens', Defoe, *Tour*, p. 87.

corporation minute book implies that demand was outstripping water supply which required measures to ensure a fair supply. Between 1680 and 1740, Macclesfield's population may have doubled, with an equivalent increase in the demand for water.¹¹³

If water, paving and street lighting are taken as an indicator of the general nature of corporate government, then Macclesfield appears to have been well served by its corporation when compared with other towns. From 1680, the corporation had the drive, and more importantly the finances, to improve the town. If the concern over the water supply in 1740 and the cost of maintaining the paving were indicators of things to come, then there were difficult times ahead.¹¹⁴ But for the period under review, there was a desire and ability to defend Macclesfield's privileges and expand the amenities and facilities available to the inhabitants. There is no evidence of the sort of fractious politics which has been identified in, for example, Preston during the same period.¹¹⁵ If there is a black mark on the corporate record, it is that the biggest disruption occurred not due to the policies of the Stuart kings, despite the reputation of James II, but through the direct actions of its own members in 1716.

¹¹³ Stobart estimates a 128% increase in Macclesfield's population between 1664 and 1774. It would be fair to assume that the population doubled between 1680 and 1740. Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Century Revolution?', p. 40.

¹¹⁴ In 1744, Joseph Alisick sued the Corporation for failing to maintain the road paving. Despite a rate for street repairs being levied (apparently ineffective as the supervisors were 'intimidated'), the Corporation's revenues were 'greatly reduced' and unable to 'action the expenses'. The Corporation argued it was not liable for repairs, but was found against under one of the Elizabethan charters; Macc. Coll. B/IV/24, 25.

¹¹⁵ M. Mullet, '“To Dwell Together in Unity”: The Search for Agreement in Preston Politics, 1660 – 1690', *THSLC*, cxxv (1979), pp. 61 – 81.

Chapter 4: Patterns of and Changes in Wealth.

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the distribution of wealth in Macclesfield as identifiable from the probate material. Once this has been achieved the results will be compared against figures provided nationally, and also for changes in Macclesfield over time. The data for Macclesfield will also be displayed by occupational groupings and compared for change over time to identify in which sections of Macclesfield's population these changes were occurring. The two trends being especially sought are the increased diversification of higher order functions (in this case, identified by occupational description) associated with urban growth and development, and also the polarization of wealth: 'many students of this period have argued that, nationally, society was becoming increasingly polarized between rich and poor.'¹

To provide the data for these findings, the Idealist database was searched for all of those probate files containing usable probate inventories, i.e. with a total legible figure or in an undamaged state so that a total figure could be calculated. In order to identify changes over time, two time frames were chosen: 1660 – 1680 and 1720 – 1740. The first period was chosen for two reasons: firstly, because the post-Restoration period was the first period for which a substantial and coherent selection of inventories existed and secondly because this period coincides with similar research undertaken by D. Riley. The second period was chosen because it marked the end of the period under review by this dissertation. The intervening 40-year period was expected to be sufficient to allow changes to become identifiable.

¹ D. Riley, 'Wealth and Social Structure in North-Western Lancashire in the Later Seventeenth Century: A New Use for Probate Inventories', *THSLC*, cxli (1992), pp 77 – 100, on p. 81.

In all, 150 inventories were used for the period 1660 – 1680 and sixty-four for the period 1720 – 1740. These figures immediately identify the first problem with the data sources: the eighteenth century provided only 42 per cent of the inventories available for the seventeenth century. This is despite an increase in Macclesfield's population over the intervening period which should have produced more probate files.² The eighteenth century material is, therefore, less representative of Macclesfield than the seventeenth century material.

There are always concerns about the representivity of probate material of the population as a whole. The reduced number of inventories from the eighteenth century exaggerates this. Other concerns, such as the exclusion of the poor, the geographically mobile and women, the exclusion of land and buildings and the presence of economically inactive (retired) people have been discussed previously.³ By comparing like sources with like sources, many of these concerns can be controlled with the result that trends may be identified.

4.2 Proportions of Probate Inventories Recorded by Wealth

Charts 4.1 and 4.2 are pie chart representations of the values of the probate inventories identified above. Chart 4.1 can also be compared with Chart 4.3, which shows comparable findings for the seventeenth century from six different regions across England.

The pie charts of Chart 4.3 show that the lowest level of valuations (below £40 to £60) accounts for up to 50 per cent of the inventories, with the exception of Cambridgeshire, at about 60 per cent. The middle ranking valuations (between £40 and £60 to £100) all accounted for a significantly smaller proportion. The highest

² See Chart 1.8.

³ Riley, 'Wealth and Social Structure', pp. 78 – 9.

Chart 4.1: Proportion of Probate Inventories by Wealth, 1660 – 1680.

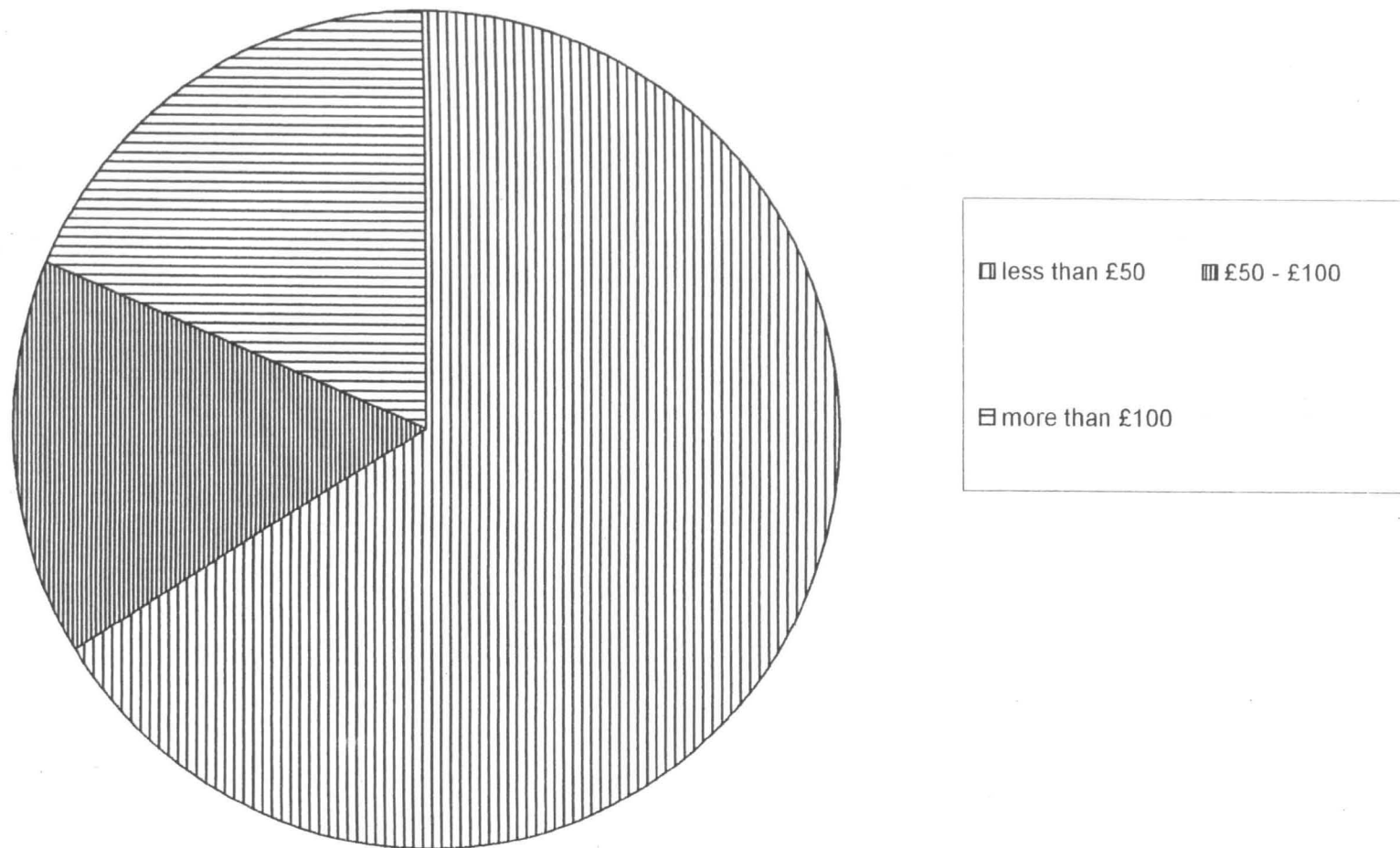


Chart 4.2: Proportion of Probate Inventories by Wealth, 1720 – 1740.

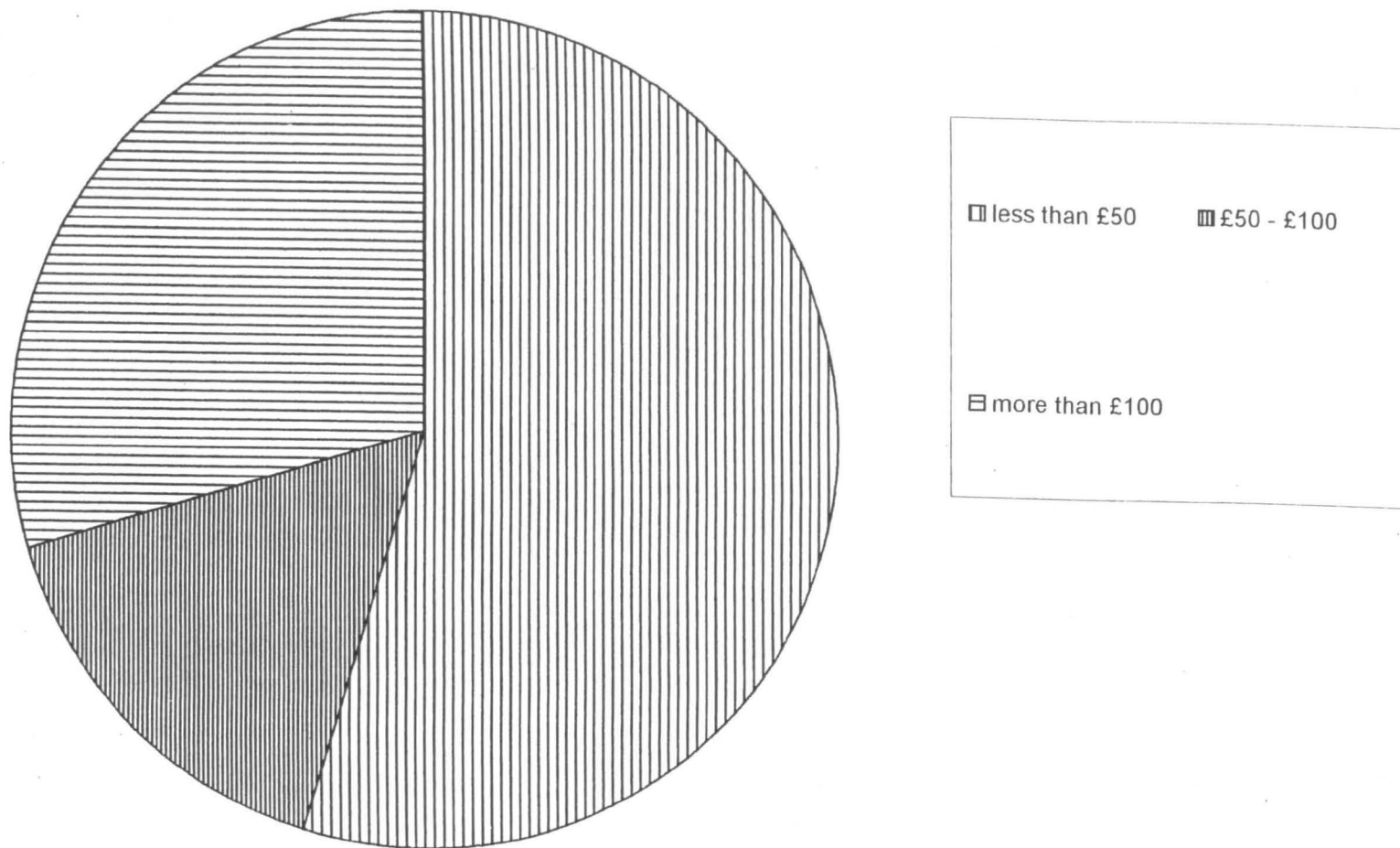
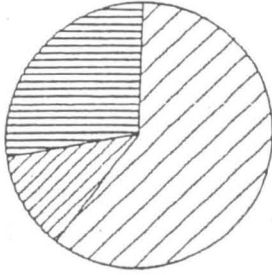
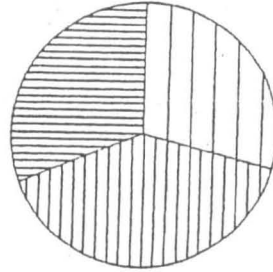
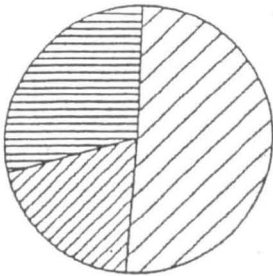
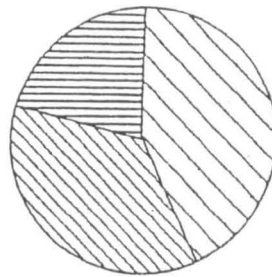
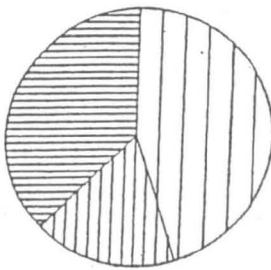
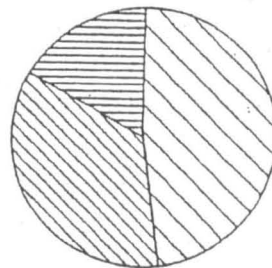
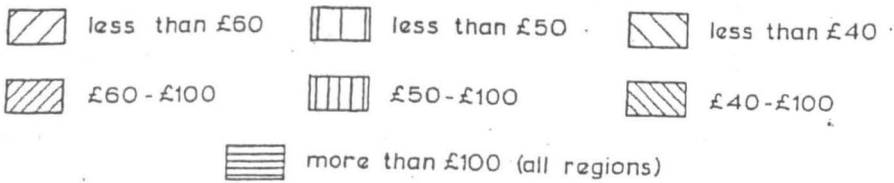


Chart 4.3: Values of Probate Inventories from Six English Regions, after Riley.

Cambridgeshire
1661-70Pendle
17th centuryLincolnshire
1669Cumbria
1661-90Essex
17th centuryFylde
1659-82

valuations, over £100, normally accounted for a proportion equivalent to or larger than the middle ranking valuation.

Chart 4.1 shows that Macclesfield's inventories largely conform to this national picture. The middle ranking valuations account for a slightly smaller proportion than the highest valuations. The lowest valuations account for a proportion slightly higher than that shown from Cambridgeshire, but not significantly so. Nevertheless, Macclesfield displayed a greater proportion of low level inventory valuations than shown by any of the other valuations. When comparing Charts 4.1 and 4.2, in order to gain an impression of change over time, the most noticeable feature is the regularity of the change. The middle ranking valuations remain fixed at 15 per cent while there was an 11 per cent increase in the higher valuations at the expense of the lower valuations. Initially, this would suggest that Macclesfield's population was becoming wealthier through the eradication of poverty. But, given that throughout this period Macclesfield was experiencing a massive population growth fuelled by an influx of the landless poor, this is unlikely to be a plausible answer. A more plausible answer could be connected with the declining numbers of inventories. Probate inventories were no longer being produced in the same quantities as they had been in the seventeenth century. If probate inventories were considered less important by the early-eighteenth century, then it is reasonable to assume that it would be the smaller estates which would cut out the expense of producing inventories first.

Chart 4.1 corresponds with Riley's statement that, 'nationally, society was becoming increasingly polarized between rich and poor', with a small (15 per cent) proportion of middle ranking valuations squeezed between the rich and the poor.

Macclesfield in the late-seventeenth century was polarized.⁴ But when Charts 4.1 and 4.2 are compared, it is difficult to see evidence that society was polarizing. In a polarizing society, one would expect to see an increase in the proportions of the higher and lower valuations at the expense of the middle ranked valuation, as people became richer or poorer. These Charts show the middle ranked valuation remained stable. The increased size of the higher valuations at the expense of the lower valuations in Chart 4.2 could be explained by something as simple as inflation increasing the overall values of inventories. However, this over simplified answer fails to take into account changes in Macclesfield's economy, with increased opportunities for both masters and the poor, or any changes in the usage of probate.

When compared with the national picture, as in Chart 4.3, both Charts showing Macclesfield copy the trends of the south and eastern pie charts: large proportions of low valuations and large valuations squeezing the middle ranking valuations. These contrast with the north-western pie charts which show a more equitable distribution of wealth.⁵ These characteristics could be explained by increasingly capitalistic trends associated with London polarizing wealth distribution. The south and east of England had long been associated with cash crop agricultural practices. Macclesfield's association with London in the supply of silk concentrated the raw materials for wealth production in the hands of those with the social standing and connections to gain supplies of silk on credit. Pendle, Cumbria and Fylde, on the other hand, were distinct agrarian regions distinct from London where the influences of capitalism would have been weaker. There, wealth distribution remained more even.

⁴ Riley, 'Wealth and Social Structure', p. 81. See p. 122 a fuller version of the quote.

4.3 Distribution of Inventories by Occupation

Charts 4.4 and 4.5 show the percentages of probate inventories belonging to different occupation or social descriptors. Eight categories were used, with a number of descriptors being grouped together based upon their similarity: agriculture (yeomen, husbandmen) as shown by vertical lines of varying thickness; female (wives, widows, spinsters) with diagonal lines; the social elite (gentlemen, aldermen) shown by grid squares. It is acknowledged that movement between one social or economic group and another can often be due to social or other non-economic factors. The proportion of inventories belonging to females, for example, was found to remain consistent at around 25 per cent, although there were fluctuations between proportions of wives, widows and spinsters, which were determined by marital rather than economic status.

If the data which is presented in Charts 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 is to be used as a gauge by which to measure changes in the overall wealth of a community, then direct comparisons can only be made between similar communities. Unfortunately, the urban nature of late-seventeenth century Macclesfield meant that, unlike in the previous section it is not possible to make direct comparisons with the findings of Riley on the Fylde or with Mary Brigg's findings on Pendle because of their rural characteristics.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 82; M. Brigg, 'The Forest of Pendle in the Seventeenth Century', *THSLC*, cxiii (1961), pp. 65 – 96, on pp. 90 – 1.

Chart 4.4: Occupations in Macclesfield from Inventories, 1660 – 1680.

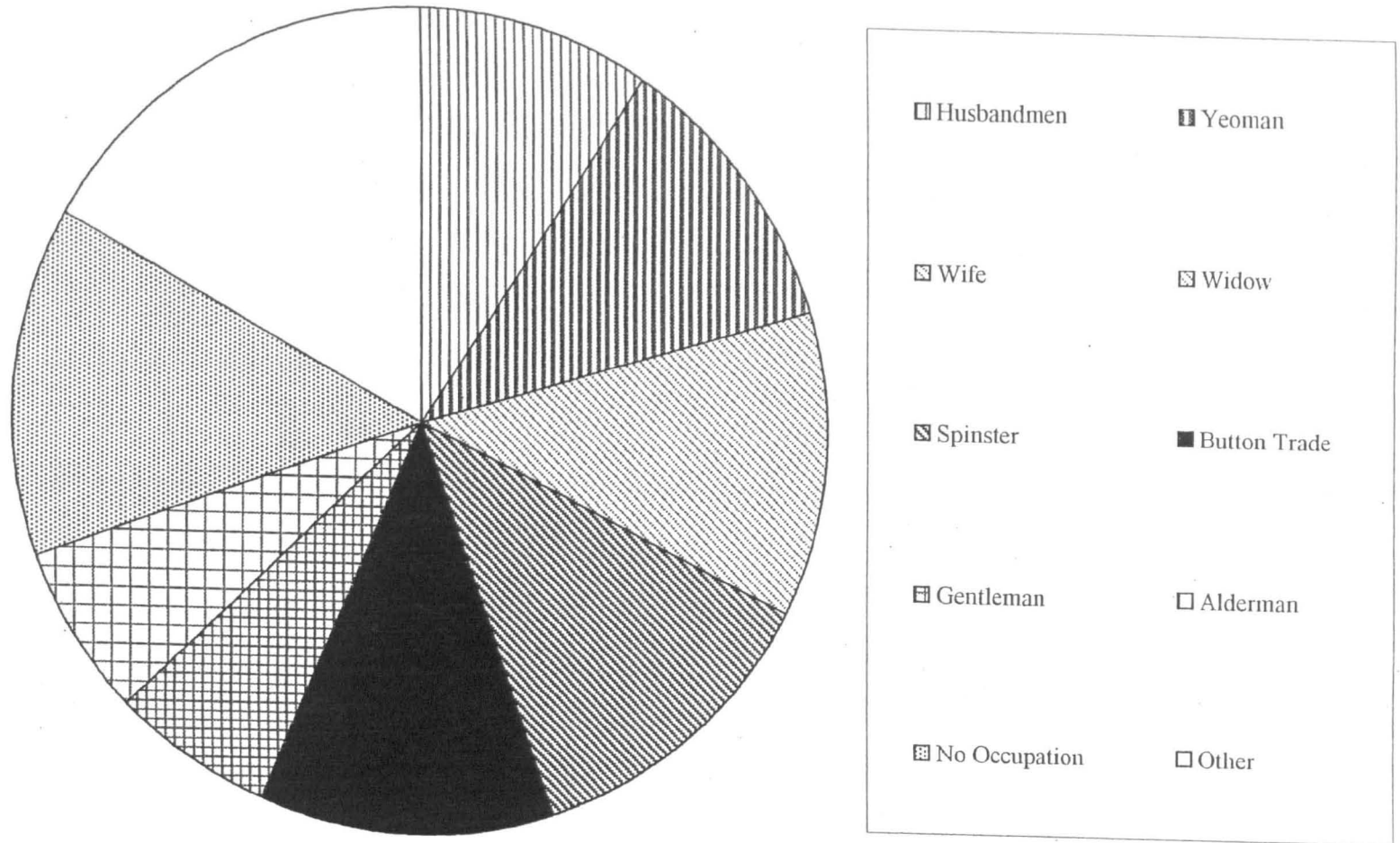
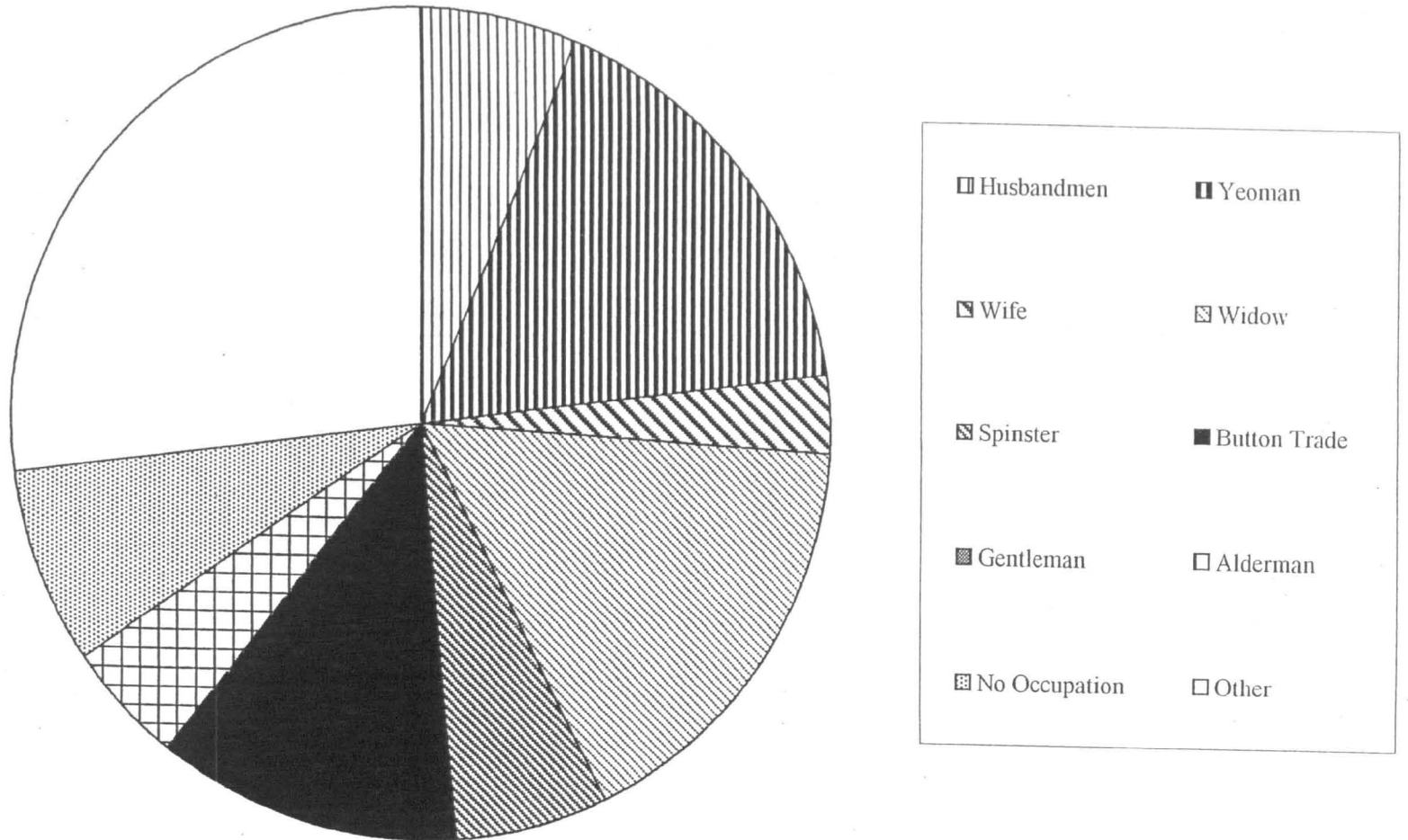


Chart 6.5: Occupations in Macclesfield from Inventories, 1720 – 1740.



The Agricultural share of inventories rose slightly from 20 per cent to 23 per cent, but overall maintained its position. The main change occurred in the relative proportions of yeomen to husbandmen. In the seventeenth century, husbandmen accounted for just below half of the agricultural inventories. In the eighteenth century, this had fallen to a quarter. However, as will be shown on page 137, below, the actual difference between yeomen and husbandmen was social not economic, based upon the evidence from the probate valuations. So, while agriculture as a whole maintained its share of probate files, the shift from husbandmen to yeoman reflects non-economic changes within the industry.

The proportion of Female inventories remained constant at a quarter (24 per cent to 26 per cent). In the seventeenth century, this was evenly distributed between widows and spinsters. This could indicate that the unmarried state was either preferable to marriage or forced upon many women by other factors. No inventories of wives were recorded. By the eighteenth century, the proportion of spinsters had halved and there was now a small, but significant, number of wives. The decline in the number of spinsters would suggest that marriage opportunities had improved (or perhaps the social pressures to marry had increased). Wrigley and Schofield argue that the percentage of the population never marrying peaked in the 1680s and then fell steadily until the 1750s and 1760s.⁶ Their figures for the period 1661 to 1681 show an average of 198 per 1000 of the population never married,⁷ but for the comparable period 1721 to 1741 this figure had fallen to 138 per 1000 of the population.⁸ How can the implications from Macclesfield's probate files conform to Wrigley and

⁶ E.A. Wrigley & R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541 – 1871* (London, 1981), pp. 257 – 65, esp. Table 7.28 and Fig. 7.15.

⁷ Figures between 1661 and 1681 at 5 year intervals give the following proportion per 1000 of the population never marrying: 188, 171, 181, 208 and 241, giving an average of 197.8 per 1000 of the population.

Schofield's national figures? The probate files do not show a change in the number of spinsters, rather a change in the number of spinsters leaving probate files. If there were fewer spinsters in the early-eighteenth century than in the late-sixteenth century, then it may have been that their parents were better able to provide them with the means for a suitable marriage. Wrigley and Schofield also suggest that economic difficulties in the seventeenth century were a contributory factor in the number of unmarried, and therefore the improving economic conditions in the eighteenth century would have encouraged more marriages. Similarly, this same economic upturn would have enabled parents to better provide for their daughters, either as a spinster or a dowry. The seventeenth century spinsters were probably under represented in the probate material as a number of the files suggest that they continued to live at home and owned just the clothes on their back. Although earlier than the period under review, the probate file of Elizabeth Andrew of Bakwell, spinster may highlight this state of affairs. Her inventory, from 1610, records 3s in the hands of her brother James, a husbandman from Dukinfield, near Stockport, Cheshire, and an old gown, also worth 3s. The appearance of wives in the eighteenth century is significant in suggesting that women were able to retain some control over their estates even after marriage. However, there were only two such cases, one from each decade, and they should not be taken as indicative of widespread changes.⁹

The Silk Industry's share remained constant at 12 per cent. This would indicate that despite changes in fashion which were adversely affecting the

⁸ Figures between 1741 and 1761 at 5 year intervals give the following proportion per 1000 of the population never marrying: 176, 147, 128, 131 and 112, giving an average of 138 per 1000 of the population.

⁹ Elizabeth Broadhurst, WS 1722; Felicia Smallwood, WS 1737.

profitability of the silk button industry, the importance of the silk button industry as a whole in producing inventories remained stable.¹⁰

The Social Elite saw its influence significantly diminished by the eighteenth century. Gentlemen disappeared completely while the Aldermen, although with a slightly diminished share, maintained their position. The continued presence of aldermen was to be expected, but the absence of gentlemen is strange. It is assumed that 'gentlemen' referred to landowners and is not being used as a social descriptor. It should be asked why gentlemen found it desirable to be associated with the towns in the first place. Political power is often cited as the reason for the gentry (and nobility) being interested in towns. This domination of the town was supposed to allow the control of parliamentary elections which would provide influence at a national political level. However, Macclesfield was not a parliamentary borough and so did not elect its own Members of Parliament.¹¹ If an individual achieved political domination of Macclesfield, that influence would have been limited to the county, and more specifically the borough and hundred where there were administrative and judicial functions to be performed. Gentlemen would have as much influence on the two county MPs from their country seats as from the towns. Social graces and gentility could be displayed in towns. But by the eighteenth century towns may not have had as exclusive a monopoly on gentility they had in the seventeenth century. In Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, neither the rustic Squire Weston nor the refined and educated Squire Allworthy found it necessary to reside in the towns in order to practise their juxtaposed gentility.¹² Squire Weston's love for hounds and hunting necessitated a

¹⁰ See p. 138 for the declining profitability of the silk button industry.

¹¹ See pp. 83 – 84 on the same issue from the perspective of royal interference in corporate government.

¹² The only chronological event from which to date the events of *Tom Jones* was the backdrop of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745/6. The ages of neither Tom Jones nor Miss Sophia Weston were given, but given early modern marriage practices, they would have been in their mid to late twenties when they

country seat while Squire Allworthy sought intellectual company by bringing the educated to his country seat. While it would be fair to say that the juxtaposition of Weston and Allworthy was created for satirical effect, nevertheless they would have represented stereotypical figures easily recognisable by Fielding's readership. Squire Weston could be easily metamorphosised into either John Bull or Colonel Blimp.

Other Trades increased their share from 17 per cent to 26 per cent which confirmed the expected trend, that economic diversification occurred in a town which was successfully developing economically. In effect, increased wealth encouraged economic diversification through specialisation (creating more occupations) and the provision of new products and services. Those classified as having No Occupation were almost halved. Unfortunately, without an economic or social descriptor it is not possible to comment further on the nature of this change.

Overall, do Charts 4.4 and 4.5 register continuity or change? Broadly speaking, there was continuity over the forty years between the two surveys. Agriculture, Females, the Silk Industry and Aldermen retained their seventeenth century position into the eighteenth century to within a few percentage points. The main change was the absence of the Gentlemen and the increased proportion of Other Trades. However, within these wider groupings are indicators of significant shifts. Within Agriculture there was a shift away from Husbandmen to Yeomen. For the Females, the shift was away from the unmarried towards widowhood. The absence of the Gentlemen could indicate that towns had lost their unique appeal to the social elite, which would go against national trend, or perhaps they just as happy to have probate register their place of abode as their country seat. The increased proportions of the Other Trades suggests the availability of more functions for the townspeople.

married, in 1745/6. The events and caricatures of *Tom Jones* would, therefore, be contemporary to the inventories of the period 1720 – 1740. See also P. Borsay, 'The Culture of Improvement', in P.

Overall, therefore, there was stability and continuity, but there were significant changes to how that continuity was being maintained.

Charts 4.1 and 4.2 showed an 11 per cent shift from the lowest valuation group (below £50) to the highest valuation group (above £100). Charts 4.4 and 4.5 showed variations in the occurrence of inventories by eight economic or social descriptors. This section aims to compare these fluctuations in probate valuations with the economic and social descriptors in order to determine where these fluctuations were occurring. The probate inventory valuations for each economic and social descriptor were collated to produce maximum, minimum and mean values. These were plotted onto a chart for each period, Charts 4.6 and 4.7. In all but one case, the minimum valuation was so small as not to register above the base line the exception being the eighteenth century aldermen at £63 13s.

There should be no reason for probate inventories to register a minimal value. After all, the purpose of probate was to account for real estates after a death. The main (and a major) criticism of probate (and wills) in providing an insight into early modern society is that the poor (i.e. those without significant quantities of real estate) did not participate in probate. Each of the eight groups for both periods should have been able to register inventories with valuations of above the absolute minimum. These trends would support a criticism of probate material, that it includes individuals who were economically inactive (i.e. 'retired') and whose estate only represented that which was necessary to maintain them in that state. The control of the actual economic wealth, it is argued, would have been passed onto an heir.¹³ It was decided not to use this minimal valuation because of the consistently low values.

Langford (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century, 1688 – 1815* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 182 – 210, on p. 197.

¹³ Riley, 'Wealth and Social Structure', p. 79.

The first two columns in each chart represent the Agricultural element, Yeomen and Husbandmen. In the seventeenth century there were clearly defined characteristics which separated these two occupations. The maximum inventory valuation of any husbandman was £43 14s while the mean valuation for yeomen was £70 5s. This shows that the wealthiest husbandmen were significantly poorer than the average yeomen were. By the eighteenth century, a significant change had occurred. The mean valuations of husbandmen inventories had increased by 467 per cent while that of the yeomen increased by only 259 per cent. This meant that the inventories of the wealthiest husbandmen (£206 3s) exceeded that of the mean inventories of the yeomen (£182 7s). What, therefore, determined whether a 'farmer' [sic] was a yeoman or a husbandman? From a purely economic perspective (even given the limitations on the inventories for the under representation of land), significant numbers of husbandmen could have joined the ranks of the yeomanry.

The mean inventory valuations of the Females did not vary significantly, increasing £4 12s to £80 19s in the eighteenth century. Significantly, almost all other mean valuations increased by at least double over the same period.¹⁴ Even more importantly, the maximum valuations fell significantly, from over £560 to below £400.¹⁵ Despite the impression given previously about the relative importance and strength of females in leaving inventories, it would appear that these women were losing any economic independence which they might have possessed a generation or so earlier.

In the seventeenth century, the Silk Industry provided the highest maximum valuations and the third highest mean valuations. With the exception of the

¹⁴ Exceptions being the Gentlemen for whom there are no figures for the 18th century, and the No Occupation category which declined. As has been stated previously, without further economic data, it is not possible to comment about this category.

Gentlemen, the maximum inventory valuation of the Silk Industry was 2 ½ times greater than that of its nearest rival, the Aldermen. (It should be remembered that successful chapmen in the silk industry were wealthy enough to title themselves gentlemen and also serve on the aldermanic bench.) For the mean valuations, however, the Silk Industry is placed third behind the Aldermen and Gentlemen. Although it was possible to become immensely rich from the Silk Industry, this was not to be so for all of those leaving inventories. Even so, there is a gap of almost £100 between the mean valuations for the Silk Industry and the next nearest valuation. By the eighteenth century the Silk Industry slipped into second place for both sets of valuations. The absence of figures for the Gentlemen in the eighteenth century means that these rankings could be artificially inflated. The most significant challenge to the Silk Industry's dominance came from the Other Trades. The maximum valuation of the Other Trades had, by the eighteenth century, significantly overshadowed the position held by the Silk Industry and the Gentlemen in the sixteenth century. By the eighteenth century, the maximum valuation of the Silk Industry had fallen 16 per cent, a fall which was equivalent to that experienced by the Female inventories. The silk button industry was possibly no longer the profitable business it had once been due to changes in fashion. Despite this decline of the maximum valuation, the mean valuation actually rose in the eighteenth century showing that the silk button industry was still a profitable occupation even if the opportunity to make great profits no longer existed. In chapter 6 I will show that by the eighteenth century the chapmen required more capital than their predecessors did in the seventeenth century. This trend is shown by the increase in the mean value in Chart 4.7.

¹⁵ The same provisos of as expressed for the mean valuations are equally valid for the maximum valuations.

The Aldermen maintained a respectable, though never dominant, position across all sets of data. The most significant change was the nine-fold increase in the minimum valuation figure by the eighteenth century. The maximum valuation increased by half while the mean valuation doubled. The increase in the minimum valuation would be most significant if it could be proved to that there was an increasingly oligarchic council dominated by those who could afford the cost of office holding.¹⁶ I do not believe that this can be proven for Macclesfield and yet there is no other explanation for this trend for aldermen to possess greater levels of wealth in these minimum valuations.

In the seventeenth century, Other Trades occupied a relatively insignificant position in Macclesfield's economic structure. The maximum valuation was ranked seventh, above only the Husbandmen. The mean valuation was ranked fifth (£88 12s), with a gap of almost £100 separating them from the Silk Industry (£181 12s). By the eighteenth century, these rankings had been reversed. The mean valuation of the Other Trades was now ranked third and the maximum valuation first, almost £900 greater than the Silk Industry. The mean valuation had increased by 260 per cent while the maximum valuation had increased by a staggering 475 per cent. No other category saw so much increase in value for both sets of data. The opportunity for economic growth in this later period seemed to belong not to the staple industry, silk, but to the diversification which followed economic growth.

For those recorded as No Occupation, there was a major decline in the maximum valuation, from £589 10s to £32 13s. The mean valuation also saw a significant decline. Again, however, it must be stated that without more detailed

¹⁶ P. Clark, 'The Civic Leaders in Gloucester, 1580 - 1800', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of the English Provincial Town* (London, 1984), pp. 311 - 45, on p. 314.

information about their economic background it is difficult to draw further conclusions.

Gentlemen did not provide any inventories for the eighteenth century which makes assessment impossible. For the seventeenth century, however, they occupy the positions which one would expect of the gentry: highest mean valuation and a mean valuation only £30 (2 per cent) behind the *nouveaux riche* of the silk industry.

4.4 Conclusion

The introduction to this section presented two questions. Was there evidence of increased economic diversification and was society becoming polarized between the wealthy and the poor? The answer to the first question is that there was an increased importance in economic diversification. This is shown by the increased proportion occupied by Other Trades between Charts 4.4 and 4.5. However, in the seventeenth century, twenty-three occupations were recorded,¹⁷ which fell to thirteen occupations by the eighteenth century.¹⁸ There is obviously a contradiction between these two findings. How can Other Trades increase in importance and yet show a reduction in the number of trades when an increase in the number of trades was expected. For the answer to this, we need to look at the probate material itself. The decline in the number of Other Trades from twenty-three to thirteen represents a reduction of 44 per cent, which is almost the same percentage fall as for the overall reduction in inventories. This would indicate that despite increasing population and/or wealth in Macclesfield, the economic specialisation associated with urban growth was going unrecorded due to changes in probate patterns causing the inventory to fall out

¹⁷ There were: shearmen, apothecary, butcher, baker, mercer, bonesetter, schoolmaster, saddler, tailor, tradesmen, carpenter, blacksmith, iron monger, glover, skinner, practitioner, webster, glazier, nailor, stoneminer, miner and clark.

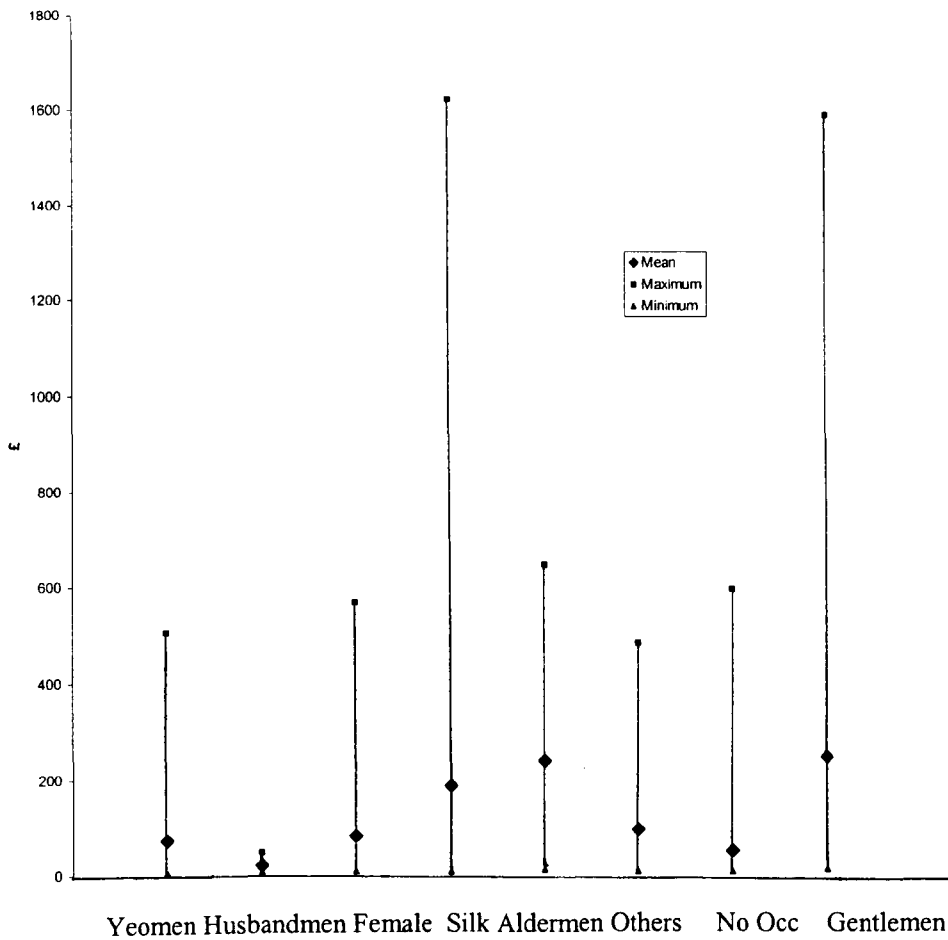
of use. With fewer people leaving probate files it is inevitable that there would be fewer occupations recorded, yet the evidence available clearly shows that those recorded occupations were economically more successful by the eighteenth century.

Increasing polarisation presents a more difficult question. Both Charts 4.1 and 4.2 suggest that society was indeed polarized, but there is no indication that society was continuing to polarize. Indeed, Chart 4.2 suggests that, if the trends exhibited continued, Macclesfield would de-polarize as the poor people with inventories below £50 decreased in number while the richer, those with probate inventory values above £100 increased. However, Charts 4.6 and 4.7 show significant shifts within some of the social and economic categories. This is particularly evident from the stability or decline of the values for the Females and Silk Industry. When the influx of poor into Macclesfield over the same period, whose poverty excluded them from the need for probate, is also taken into account, it must be concluded that society was not only polarizing, but also subject to constant shifts in the relative affluence of different categories.

Agricultural occupations maintained their importance within the community, but with noticeable shifts from husbandman to yeoman. Charts 4.6 and 4.7 show that by the eighteenth century, any economic distinction between the two had largely disappeared. The reduction in numbers of husbandmen would suggest that it was an

¹⁸ These were: colliers, slaters, bakers, blacksmiths, mercers, cordwainer/shoemakers, mason, tanner, Chandler, joiner, surgeon, grocer and innkeeper.

Chart 4.6: Variations in Inventory Values, 1660 – 1680

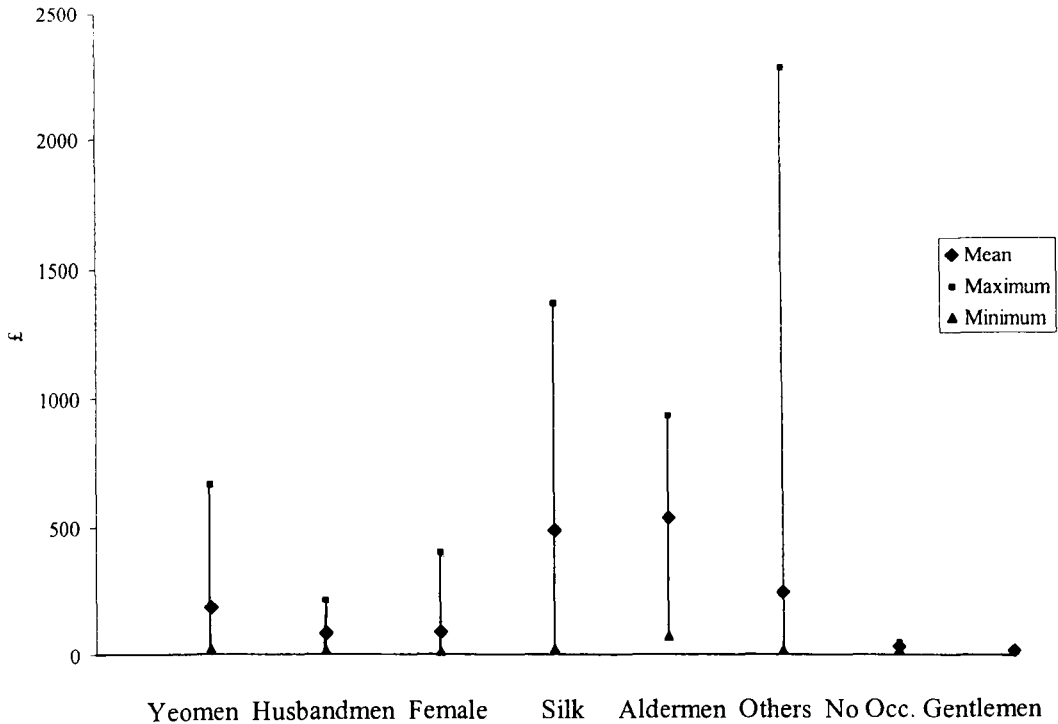


archaic term associated with lower social standing which was being dropped in favour of yeomen. Perhaps 'farmer' would be a more appropriate term.

The Female inventories show that there was a significant decline in their economic standing, despite maintaining their share of the inventories. Any benefits resulting from the appearance of wives by the eighteenth century in terms of improving their rights to control their estate was cancelled out by the marked decline in the value of these estates.

The Silk Industry had maintained its share of the inventories, but showed the effects of the decline in the silk button industry by *circa* 1730 with the decline in the upper values derived from this trade. The demand for silk continued and would, by

Chart 4.7: Variations in Inventory Values, 1720 – 1740.



the middle of the eighteenth century, resume in the form of woven silk. Despite these economic changes, it is clear that the demands for silk continued and maintained a degree of prosperity, but at reduced levels.

The Aldermanic bench maintained their share of the inventories and, uniquely, displayed increases in the minimum valuations. Their continued presence is to be expected given the social kudos associated with the position. Elsewhere, it has been claimed that entry to the urban governing elite was becoming increasingly restrictive due to the cost of holding these positions. There has been no evidence from other sources to suggest that this has been happening in Macclesfield, although these findings suggest that it may indeed have been happening. The absence of the Gentlemen by the eighteenth century suggests social changes which meant that there

was no longer any social kudos associated with the towns which could not be gained from their country seats. The greatest advancement was, as stated above, for the Other Trades.

Overall, therefore, while wealth was increasing, it was not increasing uniformly with stagnation and decline within certain social and economic categories. The opportunities for advancement were, however, increasing and were no longer limited to the silk button industry.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the decline in the use of inventories by the early-eighteenth century might limit the validity of these results. Despite this, there were a number of significant changes, and also significant similarities, identified within the data series which can not be disregarded.

4.5 The Yeomen

While writing on the Forest of Pendle in the seventeenth century, M. Brigg described 'yeoman' as a title which 'was one of social rather than financial status'.²⁰ More recently, D. Riley, writing about the same period, found 'such flexibility of terminology is also seen in other sources from the Fylde'.²¹ The purpose of this section is to assess the nature of the yeomanry in Macclesfield both in terms of what it was to be a yeoman, based upon Charts 4.6 and 4.7 because of the overlap with husbandmen, and also how this compared with a 'national' impression of the yeomanry.

The yeomanry had emerged in the later Middle Ages as a class of substantial tenant farmers associated with hard work, thrift, business acumen and a military role within English society. Chaucer's 'Yeman' accompanied his squire/knight in a

¹⁹ Land ownership for the gentry would have remained a significant source of wealth, but has to be excluded due to the absence of data for the eighteenth century.

²⁰ Brigg, 'Pendle', p. 74.

²¹ Riley, 'Wealth and social structure', p. 84.

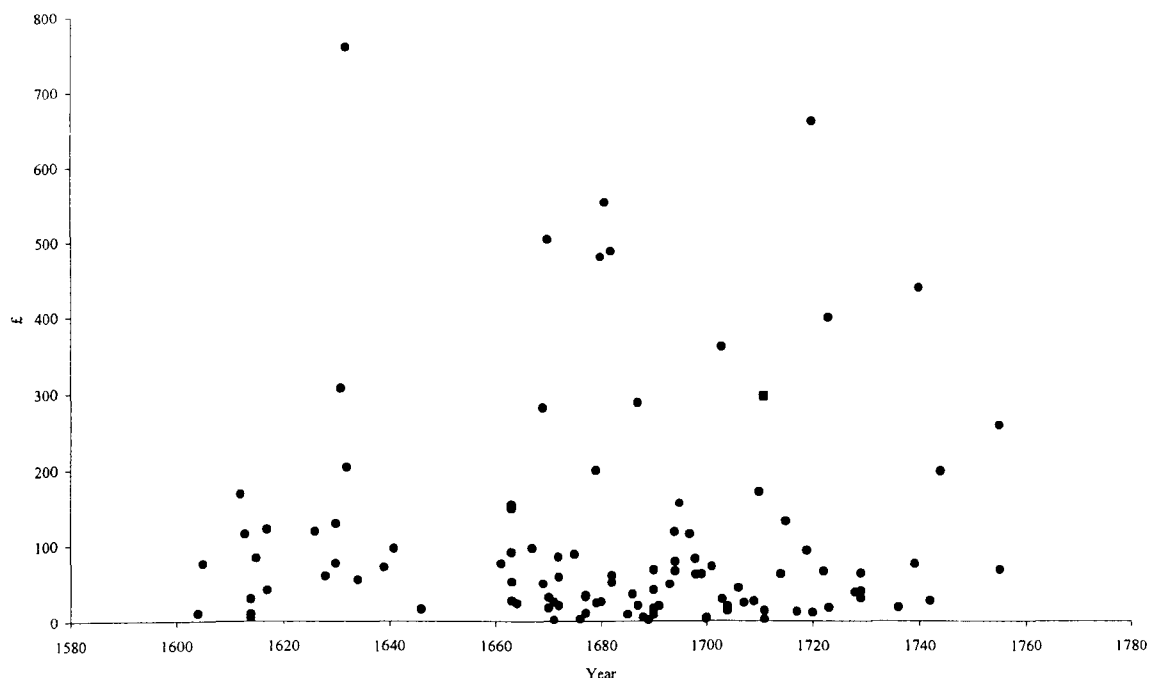
military capacity and was an accomplished archer.²² Richard II valued the prowess of the Cheshire archers and instigated a Cheshire archer guard.²³ This military role had largely vanished by the early modern period, but was maintained through the traditions of the yeomanry cavalry regiments of the British army, the lineage of which extend back to the eighteenth century. Although they have lost their horses, the yeomanry continues in the modern army in a variety of roles, such as 80th (Cheshire (Earl of Chester's) Yeomanry) Signals Squadron (Volunteers), part of the Territorial Army. The role of the substantial farmer had also changed by 1600. In the Middle Ages, this had normally been defined as the 40 shilling freeholder. By 1600, inflation had made the 40 shilling criteria irrelevant while, in a region like Macclesfield, much of the land was copyhold. Nevertheless, the yeomen persisted.

Wealth was the basic criterion for the yeoman. The 40-shilling freeholder criterion implied the yeoman leased lands with a rentable value of 40 shillings *per annum*. This in itself is not an indicator of actual income for the yeoman and his family. The probate inventories list moveable goods at a specific point in a yeoman's life cycle (death), which do not measure income during his lifetime. The inventories did not normally list details of real estate, which was the traditional criteria of a yeoman. Some indication of lands held could be taken from the wills where estates were bequeathed, charges placed upon estates for the maintenance of dependants or, for copyhold estates, surrendered in accordance with the customs and traditions of the manor and forest of Macclesfield. Again, this information does not indicate actual income.

²² G. Chaucer, *General Prologue*, lines 101 – 117.

²³ J. Gillespie, 'Richard II's Cheshire Archers', *THSLC*, cxxv (1974), pp. 1 – 39. One of the marginalia used to describe the archers was 'yeoman of the livery of the crown', p. 7.

Chart 4.8: Yeomen Inventory Valuations, 1660 – 1755



Lorna Weatherill calculated a ‘national’ mean wealth for yeomen from inventories at between £162 and £165 for the years 1660 – 1750.²⁴ Chart 4.8 plots the inventory wealth of over 100 yeomen inventories between 1600 and 1755.²⁵ The ‘Macclesfield’ mean valuation was £107 9s for the whole period, falling to £102 8s for the years studied by Weatherill. This accounts for just 63 per cent of the national average. Table 4.9, below, compares the distribution, of yeomen’s wealth in three areas of England. Even though the study of Macclesfield covered a longer period than

²⁴ L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660 – 1750* (London, 1988), pp. 212, 213. See also L. Weatherill, ‘The Meaning of Consumer Behaviour in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century England’, pp. 206 – 28 in J. Brewer & R. Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1994); J. de Vries, ‘Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe’ in Brewer & Porter (eds), *Consumption*, pp. 85 – 132, on p. 101; L. Weatherill, ‘Consumer Behaviour, Textiles and Dress in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries’, *Textile History*, xxii (2) (1991), pp. 297 – 310; S. Nenadic, ‘Middle-Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1720 – 1840’, *P&P*, cxlv (1994).

²⁵ 108/103 inventories were used. An inventory for Charles Yarwood, yeoman and chapman, WS 1697, has been ignored as his inventory valuation, in excess of £9000, was atypical of all yeomen, including those who traded in buttons. Yarwood will be discussed separately.

that for either Essex or the Vale of Gloucester, it was the latter which produced the most yeomen.

Table 4.9: Yeomen Wealth in Macclesfield, mid-Essex and Vale of Gloucester²⁶

	Macclesfield 1600 - 1755	Essex 1638 - 1723	Gloucestershire c. 1600 - 1700
£1000+	1	1	1
£500 - £1000	4	2	11
£250 - £500	10	13	55
£100 - £250	16	17	138
Below £100	73	15	157
Total	104	48	362

Table 4.9 illustrates the low mean valuations for yeomen's inventories in Macclesfield: 70 per cent of examples were below £100. For Gloucestershire, this figure was 43 per cent while for Essex this figure was just 31 per cent. For those in excess of £250, Essex leads with a third of examples, while both Macclesfield and Gloucestershire were significantly lower, 14 per cent and 18 per cent respectively.

These figures suggest that the term 'yeoman' was used in relation to local conditions. The high number of low inventory valuations for Macclesfield would suggest that it was easier to achieve that status there than elsewhere. However, this must have reflected prevailing local conditions: the increased opportunity to create wealth would raise the acceptance standards of achieving yeoman status. Essex yeomen could reap the benefits of the London market while Gloucestershire was another lowland farming region. Macclesfield may have sat on the edge of the Cheshire plain, but much of its agricultural land was the poor quality uplands of the Peak District. Men with lower income would become yeomen in Macclesfield than in the other two counties. As Brigg stated, 'yeomanry' was a social rather than financial statement.

4.6 Dual Occupation: Agriculture and Industry

A number of the yeomen's inventories include evidence of dual occupation or by-employment. Chart 4.10 shows the breakdown of the contents of yeomen's wills and inventories by decade. In most decades, there is evidence of a small number of yeomen involved in dual occupation or by-employment, or showing no evidence of agricultural activities. These yeomen were most common between the 1680s and 1710s, which coincides with the key years of the silk button industry. A percentage-stacked chart, Chart 4.11, shows the relative importance of yeomen with non-agrarian interests. It shows that these were significant in most decades. By removing those yeomen for whom no discernible information was available, in Chart 4.12, the yeomen and husbandmen with just agricultural concerns are shown to be the dominant proportion, producing at least two thirds of the inventories in each decade.

Those inventories showed involvement in the silk button industry are shown in Table 4.13. This list also included those where involvement in the silk button industry is suspected, usually a phrase such as 'Goods in the Shop' or 'Merchandise Goods' without specifying the nature of the goods.²⁷ The yeomen in Table 4.13 can be split into three groups which, conveniently, are also in three chronological groups. First are those yeomen with a primary interest in agriculture and a limited interest in the silk button industry. In the second group, agriculture has taken a secondary position to the silk button industry. Finally, there is a third group with a small involvement in agriculture and the silk button industry.

²⁶ After Riley, 'Wealth and Social Structure' and Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*.

²⁷ For example, Francis Brandreth, WS 1631, listed shop goods and cash worth over £150, but was described as a yeoman and a mercer, so has been excluded from this list.

Chart 4.10: Summary of Yeomen's Inventory Contents.

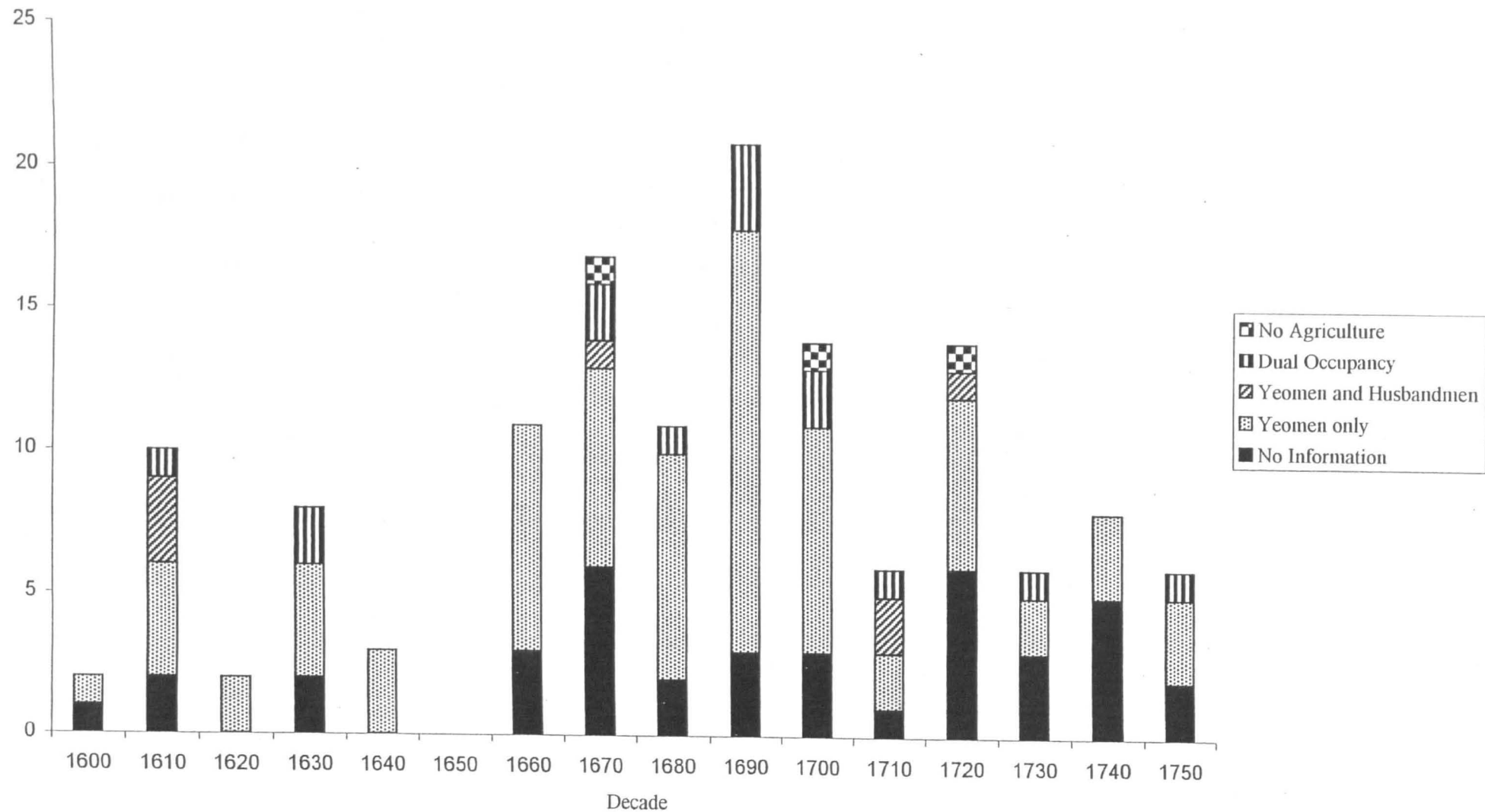


Chart 4.11: Summary of Yeomen's Inventory Contents, by Percentages.

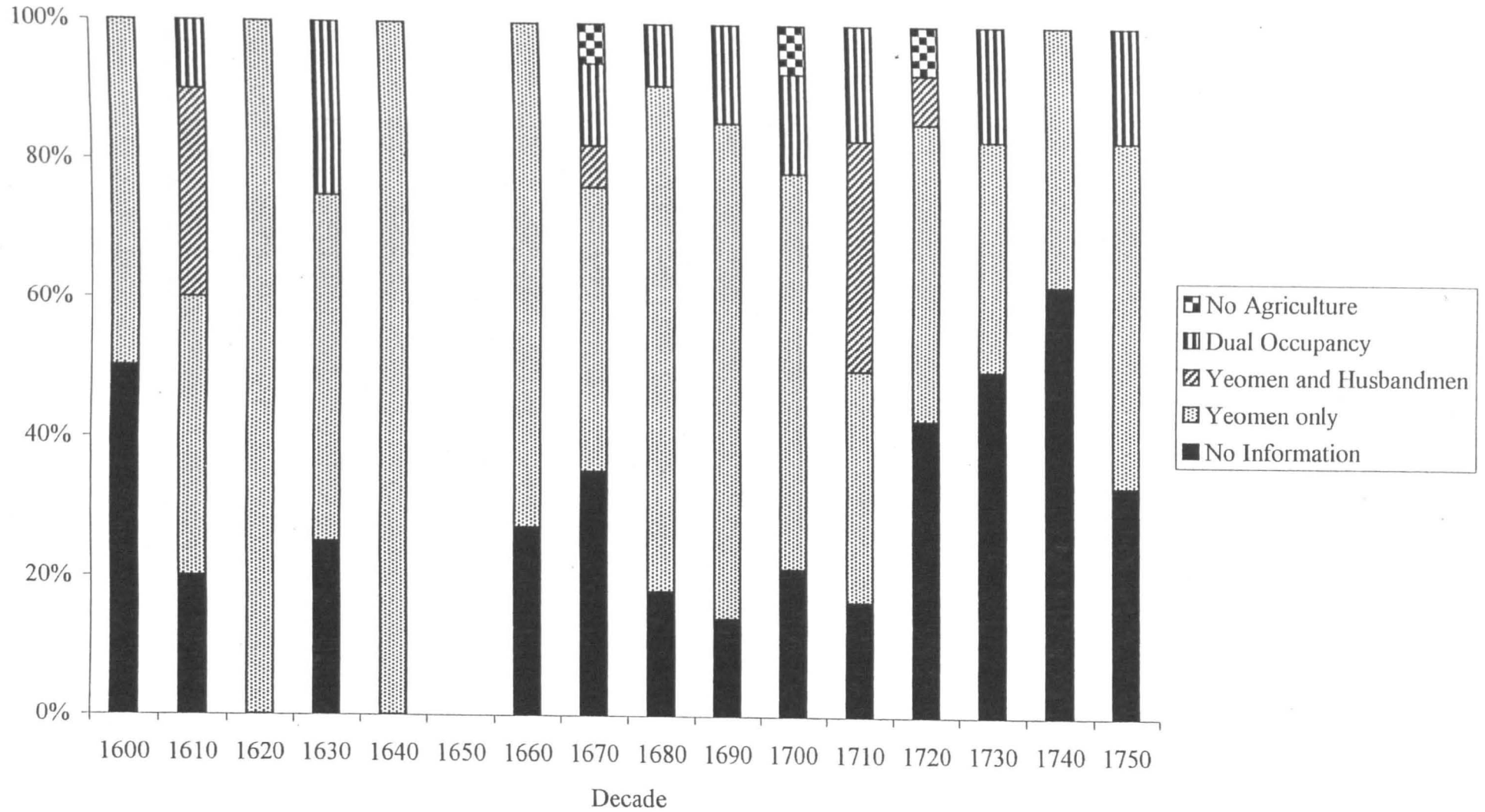


Chart 4.12: Summary of Yeomen's Inventory and Will Contents, excluding No Information.

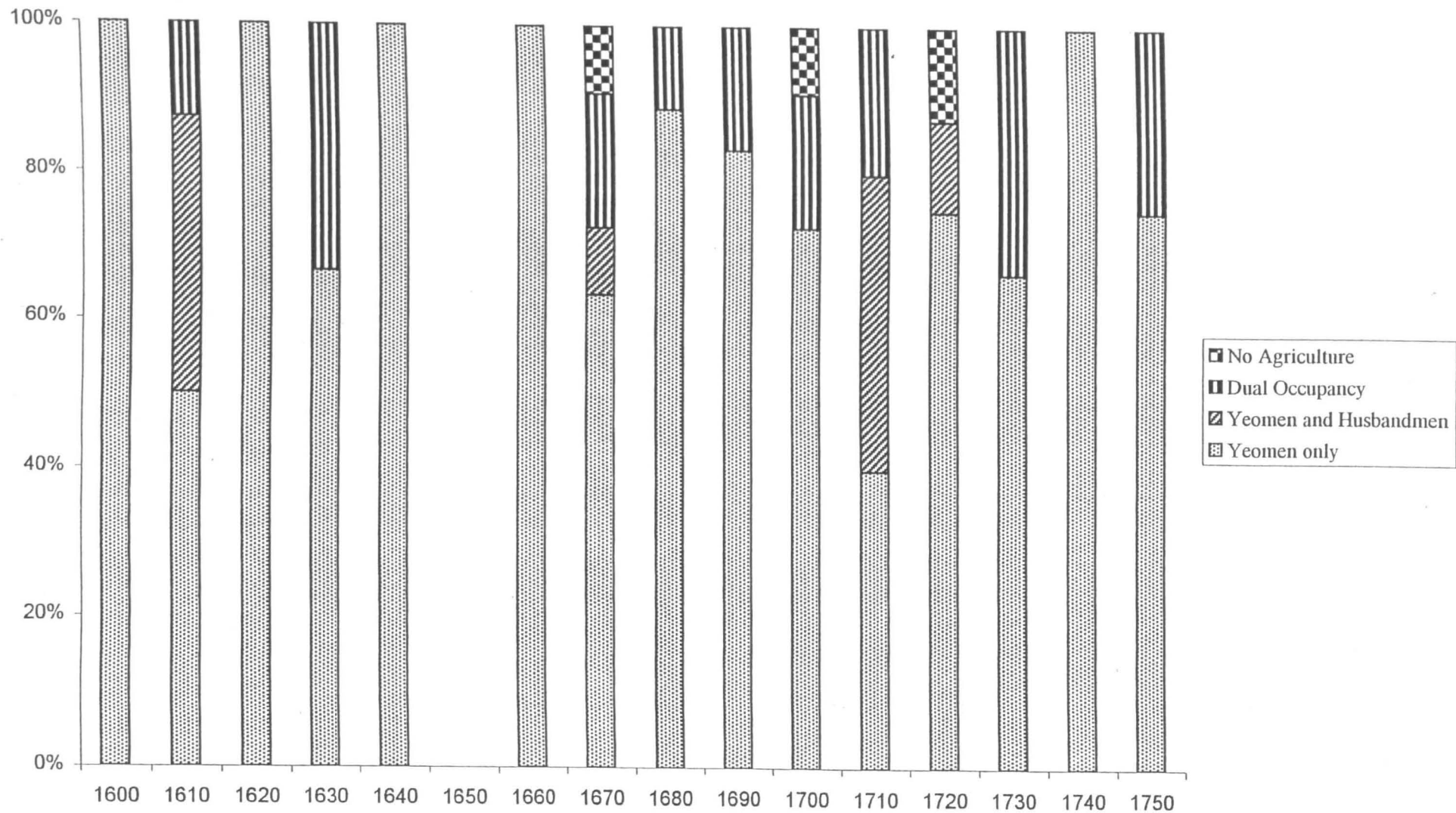


Table 4.13: Dual Occupancy: Yeomen with Interests in the Silk Button Industry

Name	Year Will Proved	Agricultural Value	Agricultural % of Inventory	Button Industry Value	Button Trade % of Inventory	Inventory Valuation
John Sidebotham	1613	£3 14s 8d	3%	£1 5s 6d	1%	£115 13s 2d
Leonard Lowe	1626	£42 10s	35.5%	£3 16s 8d	3%	£119 10s 10d
John Whittakers	1673	£9	10%	£44 4s 6d	49.8%	£88 12s 10d
Samuel Houghton	1679	£4	2%	£93 15s 4d	47%	£198 16s 10d
James Barber	1682	£16 11s 8d	3.4%	£151 7s 8d	31%	£487 4s
Thomas Bostock	1697	£6	7.7%	10s	0.4%	£115 17s 8d
William Blagg	1710	£9	5%	£2	1%	£171 13s 6d

The first group of yeomen occurs before the Interregnum and shows that more capital was invested in agriculture rather than the silk button industry. This is particularly evident with Leonard Lowe with over a third of his inventory value being accounted for by agriculture but only 3 per cent in the silk button industry. Sidebotham's inventory simply states 'In buttons' but Lowe's inventory lists thread buttons, Spanish silk buttons, 'more buttons' and thread indicating that he was one of those putting out work and so was central to the developing trade. The second group of three yeomen from the 1670s and early-1680s shows a predominance of the silk button industry over agriculture. The silk button industry accounted for between a third and a half of their inventories while agriculture accounted for below 10 per cent, although it should be noted that in cash terms these yeomen had a cash investment in agriculture not dissimilar to any yeomen in Table 4.13. These yeomen were predominantly chapmen of the silk button industry, but their retention of or investment in agriculture shows that their status as yeoman was deserved. The third group shows a small commitment to agriculture and also a small commitment to the

but what he failed to note is that the yeomen were integral to the production of these new industrial products.²⁹

As stated at the beginning of this section, land tenure was the basis of the yeoman's wealth, but this has proved to be impractical to convert into any measurable quantity. It has also been impossible to identify purely Macclesfield yeomen, with lands being held in Macclesfield Park and Forest, Rainow, Henbury, Sutton, Broken Cross, Hurdesfield and Gawsworth, and sometimes many of these locations. Occasionally individual tenements were named but not with sufficient regularity to enable further investigation, even if these tenements could have been identified. Similarly, a limited number of inventories list the value of the remaining lease on a tenement, but again with insufficient regularity to enable further investigation. Therefore, this section will concentrate on those agricultural goods which were listed in inventories in order to determine the nature of yeomen's agriculture around Macclesfield.

There were huge variations in the size of herds and flocks. Richard Lane possessed a large herd of twelve head of cattle worth £16.³⁰ This herd also illustrated the variety which could be found amongst a herd: four cows, four twinters, two calves and two strikes. These show that yeomen were rearing their own stock, although it was possible to buy cattle in Macclesfield.³¹ Sheep were also common, but became less so as the period progressed. Their relative cheapness allowed larger flocks to develop: Francis Jackson possessed a flock of 80 worth £16 10s alongside cattle.³² By the 1630s, Philip Orme kept just twenty-seven sheep worth £6 and by the end of the

²⁹ C. Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603 – 1714*, (2nd edn., OUP, 1980), p. 17.

³⁰ WS 1690.

³¹ See p. 339 for the horse fair.

³² WS 1605.

century Ralph Pickering was keeping just eleven sheep worth £1.³³ Swine were kept in limited numbers, usually one or two, as with Francis Jackson who kept two worth 26s 8d or the one kept by John Shrigley (appraised with six calves at £10 12s).³⁴ Poultry are rarely recorded, but at least one yeomen kept a significant flock of various birds: John Broadhurst kept seven geese, ten capons, two cocks and fourteen hens worth 18s 10d.³⁵

The main problem with determining quantities of grain is that it is not normally possible to identify whether the grain was grown on the farm or bought in. Only when an estate was appraised while there was grain growing was the grain recorded as such and arable farming identified. The limitation with this is that an estate appraised outside the growing season, could not be identified as arable. The estate of Francis Sherd, for example, was appraised while corn was growing worth £1 5s, and that of Jonathan Bardsley showed rye worth £1 6s 8d growing.³⁶ Yeomen can be reckoned to practice arable farming. The presence of grain 'threshed and unthreshed' can be used to indicate arable farming through post-harvest procedures. Philips Orme's inventory showed that corn worth £12 was undergoing this procedure.³⁷ Threshing would also have been a seasonal occupation, and subject to the same limitations as grain growing in the field, and it does extend the period of the year when arable farming could be identified.

In 1690, Ralph Orme's appraisors noted that his eighteen sheep, worth £2 5s, were 'new shorn'.³⁸ Another entry noted two stone of wool appraised at 10s 6d. Wool was the primary produce of sheep. Although Orme's inventory noted seven lambs

³³ WS 1634; WS 1698.

³⁴ WS 1605; WS 1695.

³⁵ WS 1612.

³⁶ WS 1703; WS 1675.

³⁷ WS 1634.

³⁸ WS 1690.

alongside the sheep, there is no evidence of lamb alongside beef or bacon (see below). Orme's appraisors also noted that he possessed 'broken wool' (possibly carded wool) and wool at the spinners worth a further 6s 8d. In Orme's house was a little spinning wheel (1s). There is also a damaged entry beginning 'websters' which could indicate a weaving frame.

Ralph Orme's household suggest that sheep were bred for their wool, shorn on the farm and their wool carded and spun under his control, either in the house or by out workers. Finally, a limited amount of weaving might also have been undertaken. There is limited evidence of a significant woollen weaving industry in Macclesfield although much wool was sold at the fairs.³⁹ This might explain why James Shepley's inventory showed wool without him possessing sheep.⁴⁰ Wool, like grain, is seasonal which makes identifying wool production erratic. This situation is exacerbated with the decreasing size of flocks as time progressed.

Most inventories did not record foodstuffs. It must be assumed that in an 'urban' environment, relatively small quantities of food would be held and appraisors would consider that these belonged to the surviving members of the household. Exceptions to this tended to be alcoholic beverages, or the hops to brew them.⁴¹ Conversely, it can be assumed that when an agriculture-orientated inventory recorded large quantities of a limited selection of foodstuffs, they were for market. As such they could be treated as an asset, like livestock, as with the 93 lb. of cheese belonging to Robert Harper or William Bostock's 1 ½ gallons of butter.⁴²

The yeomen's inventories do offer a suggestion of local produce. George Lowe possessed beef brawn and suit worth £2 and another 10s of butter and

³⁹ See p. 298 for Shearman and p. 106 for the market.

⁴⁰ WS 1720.

⁴¹ James Lomas, yeoman, possessed 'hops for ale', WS 1690.

⁴² WS 1691; WS 1646.

'grease'.⁴³ Robert Harper's cheese, above, was valued at 1 ½ d per lb. At this price, William Booth's cheese worth £2 10s could have weighed 400 lb. while the £4 worth of cheese belonging to James Brough could have weighed 640 lb.⁴⁴

Meat was also sometimes recorded, but again in significant quantities. Leonard Lowe possessed two fitches of bacon worth £1. George Taylor possessed bacon and 'grease' worth another £1 while William Armfield owned beef worth 5s.⁴⁵ Again, the quantities involved give the impression that these were produce for sale at market. However, there were restrictions enforced in the market upon when meat could be slaughtered. These meats may have been preserved for the household's consumption. Lamb and mutton have not been found.

4.7 Conclusion

Macclesfield's yeomen were appraised with below average wealth compared with Weatherill's national figures. This can be explained by the presence of poor agricultural land of the uplands of the Peak District. Despite this, the yeomen evidently supplied Macclesfield with grain, meat and dairy products.

Yeomen prospered economically, living up to their reputation for astute business acumen but taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the silk button industry. It is less easy to determine whether their numbers grew or declined due to inconsistencies with the sources used. Given the essentially social nature of the term, such calculations would be flawed. After all, what distinguished a poor yeoman from a rich husbandman by the eighteenth century?

⁴³ WS 1630.

⁴⁴ WS 1723; WS 1750.

4.8 General Conclusion

In terms of wealth creation and change relative to other social and economic groupings, and against time, Macclesfield can best be described as undergoing constant change. Although Gail Malmgreen's title 'Silk Town' could be applied for the period before 1740, this chapter has shown that the position of silk was not unassailable. Indeed, the yeomen were deindustrialising to concentrate on food production for the growing population. At the same time, the chapmen were losing their supremacy to the 'other trades' which would suggest a move away from a single industrial base to a diverse service-based economy. It would be wrong to see Macclesfield's economy deindustrialising to a service-based economy as in modern Britain, rather that the economic base was diversifying into service industries. This would have provided the town with a wider industrial and commercial base which would have helped to insulate the town against depression, although the prosperity of these new industries would have ultimately relied upon the economic prosperity of the silk button industry (this would parallel the corporation's financial difficulties identified in the 1740s).⁴⁵ Just as the chapmen made their wealth with the new economic opportunities, so too were the 'other trades' forty years later.

Change is also evident between spinsters, wives and widows, and is shown by the absence of gentlemen in the eighteenth century which reflects social changes. The overlap in probate inventory valuations between yeomen and husbandmen is equally a social phenomenon, and unrelated to economic position or financial resources. So, while this chapter aimed to examine patterns and changes in wealth, many perceived wealth-related changes were, in fact, due to social factors. It just so happened that the sources used to examine these changes were wealth-related, but inadvertently

⁴⁵ WS 1626; WS 1669; WS 1663.

⁴⁶ See pp. 114 – 5.

identified social changes. This shows the importance of not relying on just one interpretation of sources as, in the case of the female's probate, the initial reading of emancipation is destroyed by evidence of declining financial independence as identified through smaller inventory valuations. Overall, therefore, this chapter has shown wealth increasing, remaining stable (although in effect a decrease if inflation is taken into account) and absolute decline, and that social changes which cannot be explained in economic or financial terms impacted on how this wealth is presented in probate.

Chapter 5: Social Structure

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I aim to assess a selection of non-financial sources to determine aspects of Macclesfield which do not carry a monetary value. Starting with an assessment of consumerism, a selection of consumer goods will be examined to determine change over time, comparisons with other parts of England and to draw conclusions about why such changes may exist. After consumerism, a subject which has been linked with the expansion of commercial activity, inns, will be examined to determine their impact on consumerism within Macclesfield. In order to succeed, commercial activity requires a market which can be served by an expanding population. Population estimates have been made in chapter 1. Here I will examine demographic change through the parish registers. By identifying changes over time and also seasonality, it should be possible to determine what sort of town Macclesfield was socially, either agrarian or industrial. Finally, through linking together the Hearth Tax Returns and the probate files, I aim to assess the changing ownership of the larger properties in Macclesfield to see whether this reflects other known trends within the town.

5.2 Consumerism

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries contemporaries observed an unprecedented change in consumer behaviour in England. The diarist Samuel Pepys encapsulated this phenomenon in 1663 when he was obliged to dress according to his new-found position:

I hope I shall not now need to lay out more money a great while, I having laid out in clothes for myself and wife...these two months...above 110 *l*. But I hope

I shall with more comfort labour to get more, and with a better successe then when, for want of clothes, I was forced to sneak like a beggar.¹

This desire to purchase material comforts was not new. It is a basic human instinct. Yet in the space of a few generations, produce which had previously been the 'privileged possessions of the rich' found their way into the possessions of the lower orders: 'the labouring classes found cash to spare for consumer goods in 1700 that had no place in their budgets in 1550'. Indeed, Paul Langford went as far as to write that 'a history of luxury and attitudes to luxury would come very close to being a history of the eighteenth century'.²

To understand these changes it is necessary to assess three changes without which consumerism, as it developed would have taken on a different form. Firstly, consumerism required the availability of goods to be purchased, secondly the consumer needed the means by which to purchase those goods and thirdly was the dissemination of an awareness of the goods (marketing). Yet ability to purchase does not equate to a willingness to purchase, which 'depends on a shift in tastes'. Colin Campbell described three conditions under which these changes in tastes could occur. Firstly, consumption for own satisfaction, for example drinking tea, coffee and chocolate are satisfying in their own right without social emulation, Secondly, imitating without necessarily emulating, for example imitating the consumption patterns of social superiors without pretensions of social emulation. Thirdly, emulation occupies many different forms, so the maid who wears her mistress's

¹ Pepys, iv, 358 quoted in B. Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660 - 1800* (Oxford, 1991), p. 14. See also P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660 - 1730* London, 1989), p. 288 for more of Pepys' clothing purchases.

² N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, 1982), p. 1; J. Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988), p. 175; P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727 - 1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 3.

passed down dress may wish to boost her self-esteem, emulate her superiors, or simply wish to wear a pretty dress.³

Towards the end of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries, Joan Thirsk identified a change in attitudes from the abstract ideal of the 'commonweal' into the 'project' or 'projector' whereby, with industry and ingenuity, a projector could become rich. Indirectly, through creating employment and dispersing money throughout society, the project could further the commonweal.⁴ Initially these projects were aimed at providing military supplies or import replacement, as in 1543 when Henry VIII invited the French gunfounder Peter Bawd and the Dutch gunsmith Peter van Collen to make armaments. Four years later there were fifty ironworks scattered across the Weald. Yet armaments was not their only product and they established a reputation for more domestic produce: a century later if you wanted to set up a shop in Barbados you were urged to Sussex where iron pots were 'very cheap and [be] sent to London in carts at time of the year when ways are dry and hard'.⁵

It would be wrong to see Henry VIII as the founder of the Weald iron industry, but through state sponsorship the industry was given an impetus for a specific (military) purpose, and as a by-product began to produce consumer goods. Similar developments can be seen for industries like glass and paper, while refugees from the Continent were instrumental in establishing the Spitalfields silk industry and the New Draperies in East Anglia. However, it should be noted that there was normally a pre-existing industry in place before these changes took place, as I will show on pages

³ C. Campbell, 'Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-Action Approach', in J. Brewer & R. Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993), pp. 40 – 57, on pp. 40 – 1; J. de Vries, 'Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe', in Brewer & Porter, *ibid.*, pp. 85 – 132, on p. 117; L. Weatherill, 'Consumer Behaviour, Textiles and Dress in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Textile History*, xxii (2) (1991), pp. 297 – 310, on pp. 306 – 7 for emulation in dress.

⁴ Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, pp. 1 – 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24 – 5.

215 to 216 with the London silk industry. Finally, overseas trade brought new produce to England, most noticeably tea, coffee, sugar, tobacco and Indian textiles. Throughout this period, a general decline in the price of 'luxury' goods in real terms made them affordable to a wider share of the market, which could only serve to increase consumption. The price Maryland and Virginia tobacco, for example, fell to 1d. per pound by 1663 (although in 1685 the excise duty was five times the purchase price in the colonies), so there could have been few in England who could not afford to buy a few ounces and with legal imports in the 1680s at over 36 million pounds *per annum*, there was several pounds per adult imported annually.⁶

So, throughout the period, there was an increase in industrial and commercial activity which widened the selection of goods which were made in or imported into England. This in itself does not account for an increase in consumerism because consumerism cannot exist without the ability to purchase. Two changes were occurring which increased consumer purchasing power. Firstly, there was an overall increase in the standard of living through improved salaries, or through utilization of under-utilized household labour, for example in slack agricultural periods which offer 'low opportunity cost' (cheap) labour due to a lack of competition for that labour. This has been seen as part of a Europe-wide re-orientation of resources to improve efficiency, as Jan de Vries observed in northern Netherlands.⁷ Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, there was a move towards a wage-earning society which gave the employee money which was readily exchangeable for consumer goods. This process was hampered by a lack of availability of coinage, especially in small denominations, and made worse by the recoinage of 1696 which undervalued British silver coinage

⁶ P.G.E. Clemens, 'The Rise of Liverpool', *ECHR*, xxix (1976), pp. 211 – 221, on pp. 212 – 3, 214; R.C. Nash, 'The English and Scottish Tobacco Trades in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Legal and Illegal Trade', *ECHR*, xxxv (1982), pp. 354 – 371, on p. 355.

⁷ De Vries, 'Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods', pp. 99, 110, 117; J. de Vries, *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age* (London, 1974), pp. 120, 136 – 7, 152 – 3, 153 – 5, 173.

on the international market.⁸ Daniel Defoe made the contrast between the rural, agricultural family reliant upon the salary of the father, 12 shillings, and that of a family in a textile district. In the latter, the salary of the father was matched by that of the remainder of the family, thus ‘they all feed better, are cloth’d warmer, and do not so easily fall into Misery and Distress’.⁹ This is not to say that women and children did not work in the agricultural family, rather that in the textile family, they were paid in money rather than in subsistence: ‘the Father gets the Food...Mother gets them Clothes’.¹⁰ De Vries observed a different pattern of rural life, with the appearance of a specialised farming class in the Netherlands, although only in areas which developed non-agricultural occupations. This permitted agricultural specialisation to be practised and, with imported Polish grain to meet domestic demand, Dutch farmers could concentrate on crops which offered better returns. Granger and Elliott argued that by 1750 there was an integrated grain market in England by 1750, which would allow similar agricultural specialisation to occur in England.¹¹

Defoe’s last quote highlights the final requirement of consumerism, that of a demand for a produce coupled with affordability. Affordability may come about through either increased disposable income or through a lowering of the cost so that an item becomes affordable. It is the breakdown of the barrier between desire and affordability which is critical. This was certainly not a new phenomenon. The Sumptuary Laws of the later Middle Ages attempted to delineate social groups by their fashion and in 1711 Jonathan Swift argued that a sumptuary law would be required for ‘the immediate suppression of bare-fac’d Luxury, the spreading

⁸ McKendrick *et al.*, *Birth of Consumer Society*, pp. 206 – 7.

⁹ D. Defoe, *A Plan of English Commerce* (1728, repr. 1927), p. 69 quoted in Lemire, *Fashion’s Favourite*, p. 52.

¹⁰ Defoe, *English Commerce*, p. 69 quoted in *ibid.*, p. 52.

¹¹ De Vries, *Dutch Rural Economy*, pp. 127, 173, 239; C.W.J. Granger & C.M. Elliott, ‘A Fresh Look at the Wheat Price and Markets in the Eighteenth Century’, *EcHR*, xx (1967), pp. 257 – 63.

Contagion of which is the greatest Corrupter of Publick Manners and the greatest Extinguisher of the *Public Spirit*.¹² Not all saw consumerism as an evil: for Dr Johnson 'you cannot spend in luxury without doing good to the poor.'¹³ Yet regardless of the moral argument, consumerism and luxury were a characteristic of the period: *Moll Flanders* talked of the artisan's wives who 'lived like a tradesman but spent like a lord' or Henry Fielding writing in 1750 about 'an infinite number of lower people aspire to the pleasures of the fashionable'.¹⁴

So where does Macclesfield fit into this consumer revolution? The silk button industry was clearly a luxurious extravagance. Buttons could be made far cheaper from other materials, as indeed they would be in the eighteenth century. Yet despite the cost of silk and mohair, the cost for a suit of 'Sunday Best' was not that exorbitant and could easily fit into the £110 spent by Samuel Pepys on himself and his wife.¹⁵ Equally importantly, the industry provided work for the townspeople and beyond. Some were undoubtedly full time silk twisters, such as Jonas Hall and James Andrew but equally there was work to be 'put out' to the poor agricultural families as described by Daniel Defoe.¹⁶ This extra income undoubtedly served to provide them with a few material comforts with which to improve their life, but also to add in some small way to the consumer revolution.

¹² Jonathan Swift, *Prose Works*, ed. H. Davis (Oxford, 1951), VII, p. 95 quoted in McKendrick *et al.*, *Birth of Consumer Society*, p. 19.

¹³ Dr Johnson quoted in 'Dr Johnson and the Business World' in P. Mattias, *The Transformation of England* (1980), p. 302, quoted in McKendrick *et al.*, *Birth of Consumer Society*, p. 25.

¹⁴ Quoted in McKendrick *et al.*, *Birth of Consumer Society*, pp. 47, 54.

¹⁵ See p. 254 for an estimate.

¹⁶ Jonas Hall, twister, WS 1726, estate proved at £460; James Andrew, alderman, WS 1698, estate proved £1046 2s 6d.

5.3 Comparisons between Macclesfield and the ‘national’ picture.

In *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain*, Lorna Weatherill wrote about ‘consumption and consumer behaviour in the early modern period’.¹⁷ She chose seventeen consumer goods from eight regions plus the London Orphan’s Court for the mid-year for six decades between 1675 and 1725.¹⁸ Two of these regions, north-west England (in effect south Lancashire) and the north-west Midlands lay either side of Macclesfield’s position in east Cheshire. From this research, she was able to draw conclusions about changes in consumer behaviour over time and also between different English regions.

The purpose of this section is to produce results from Macclesfield which can be compared with comparable findings from Weatherill’s research. To achieve this a search of the probate inventories was undertaken for evidence of a selection of the consumer goods used by Weatherill: pewter, pewter dishes, pewter plate, books, clocks, looking glasses and window curtains. In order to provide a sufficiently large sample of material which would be statistically sound, it was necessary to use all of the findings from each decade rather than just those from the mid-decade year as Weatherill does. This produced information from 256 inventories. Over half of Weatherill’s regions had used 390 inventories, although her sample for Hampshire, with just 260 samples, is similar to that from Macclesfield.¹⁹

¹⁷ L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660 – 1760* (London, 1988), p. 1. See also L. Weatherill, ‘The Meaning of Consumer Behaviour in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth century England’, pp. 206 – 28 in Brewer & Porter, *Consumption*; de Vries, ‘Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods’ in Brewer & Porter, *Consumption*, pp. 85 – 132, on p. 101; Weatherill, ‘Consumer Behaviour’, 297 – 310; S. Nenadic, ‘Middle-Rank Consumers and Domestic Culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow 1720 – 1840’, *P&P*, cxlv (1994).

¹⁸ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour* pp. 45, 46; Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44, Table 3.1.

Table 5.1: Frequency of Ownership of Seven Consumer Goods from Macclesfield Probate Inventories, 1600 – 1729

	Number of Inventories	Pewter %			Books %	Clocks %	Looking Glasses %	Curtains %
		All	Dishes	Plates				
1670s	63	92	12	1.5	25	1.5	17	11
1680s	60	85	6	0	38	0	33	23
1690s	52	81	13	11	30	5	34	23
1700s	30	76	20	10	20	1.5	33	33
1710s	24	87	29	20	16	0	41	25
1720s	27	81	37	37	18	7	48	11
Total	256	85	16	9	27	2	32	20

Table 5.1, above, shows the breakdown of the number of inventories used, by decade, and the percentages of those inventories containing specific consumer goods. This can be compared with Table 5.2, below, which has edited the findings from Weatherill.

Table 5.2: Frequencies of Ownership of Selected Household Goods in a Sample of Inventories from England, 1675 – 1725, after Weatherill²⁰

	Number of Inventories	Pewter %			Books %	Clocks %	Looking Glasses %	Window Curtains %
		All	Dishes	Plates				
1675	520	94	39	9	18	9	22	7
1685	520	93	46	18	18	9	28	10
1695	497	93	44	21	18	14	31	11
1705	520	93	47	34	19	20	36	12
1715	455	95	56	42	21	33	44	19
1725	390	91	55	45	22	34	40	21
All	2902	93	48	27	19	19	33	13

Pewter was recorded in an average of 85 per cent of Macclesfield inventories. There was a decline from a peak of 92 per cent in the 1670s and a noticeable dip in the 1700s to 76 per cent. Overall, there is a recorded presence of pewter in at least four out of five households throughout the period. This consistently high level of recording, often of individual pieces, shows the value which was placed upon

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26, Table 2.1.

pewter.²¹ Given the high degree of detail in some inventories, it is unlikely that pewter was missed. It may be that pewter suffered from competition from other materials, for example Burslam ware from nearby Stoke-on-Trent. Burslam ware appears in Macclesfield as early as 1617 and appears more consistently from the 1690s.²²

Pewter dishes and plates were included by Weatherill to identify new fashions in eating associated with plates.²³ They were not always identified by appraisors, and could simply be covered under 'pewter'. Again, the Macclesfield figures show under representation when compared with the national figures. Both dishes and plates for both Macclesfield and national figures show marked increases in their representation over time. The percentage growth is greatest for the Macclesfield figures. Dishes in Macclesfield grow from one in eight household to one in three households, an increase in over 300 per cent, while the national figures show an increase of just 140 per cent. The growth for plates was even more significant, from insignificant figures before the 1690s to one in three households by the 1720s, an increase of 2500 per cent. The national figures rose by just 500 per cent. There could have been changes in the way inventories were appraised. As dishes and plates were best recorded at a time when inventories were falling out of use, this is unlikely. Certainly, the much greater increase in plates supports Weatherill's assumptions about changes in eating practices and table layouts.

Books were recorded in between 1:4 and 1:3 Macclesfield households in seventeenth century, before declining to below 1:5 in the eighteenth century. This suggests a decline in the importance of reading at home. Weatherill's figures show book ownership fluctuates around 1:5 throughout the whole period (between 18 and 22 per cent). In the 1680s, book ownership in Macclesfield was twice that of the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 205. See Earle, *The Making of the Middle Class*, pp. 297 – 8 for pewter in London.

²² Ralph Blagg, no occupation, WS 1617; Henry Delves, chapman, WS 1690.

²³ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, p. 206.

national average (38 per cent in Macclesfield for 18 per cent for England). The decline in the proportion of Macclesfield households recording books declined in the eighteenth century, but only to the level established by Weatherill as the national average, 1:5. Although Weatherill's statement that titles were rarely recorded is correct, when they were recorded they were normally Bibles or other religious texts.²⁴ This may be indicative of changing religious practices in Macclesfield in the early-eighteenth century. As the religious life of the town is not covered by this dissertation it is not possible to comment here about any possible implications.

Clock ownership in Macclesfield remained at a low level until the 1720s when there was a marked increase to 7 per cent, still below the national figures for 1675 and 1685. By 1725, the national figure was for 1:3 households to have a clock. As an uncommon and expensive item it is unlikely that they would be missed by the appraisors.²⁵ Why Macclesfield's townspeople should consider clocks to be so unnecessary compared with their countrymen is perplexing, unless most people lived and worked within earshot of the chapel and its peel of bells.

Ownership of looking glasses in Macclesfield rose from 1:6 in the 1670s to 1:3 by the end of the seventeenth century and almost 1:2 by the end of the period. This trend largely follows the national trend identified by Weatherill: from 1:5 in 1675 to 1:3 by the end of the century and almost 1:2 by the end of the period. If any product reflected (quite literally) the impact of consumerism, especially for personal appearances, it is the looking glass. For a town like Macclesfield, whose staple industry was a luxury product, it is not surprising that Macclesfield followed this national trend.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

²⁵ The clock of Robert Barlow, gentleman, WS 1690, was appraised at 5s.

Window curtains rose from 1:10 households in the 1670s to 1:3 by the 1700s, only to decline to 1:10 again by the 1720s. This trend was not reflected in the national picture, which did not rise significantly above 1:5, even by 1725. It would be wrong to argue that window curtains were going out of fashion in early-eighteenth century Macclesfield, especially as modern evidence shows window curtains (or an equivalent) in every household nationally. Rather the decline could be explained by the increased popularity of window curtains, to a point at which they were so common that they were no longer recorded. They had become part of the fixtures and fittings expected of the house, just like the doors and windows which were never recorded.

Overall, it is difficult to make a general comparison between Macclesfield and the 'national' picture. For certain goods, such as all of the pewter and clocks, Macclesfield was below the national average, although for the more specific categories of pewter plates and dishes increased their presence at a rate significantly above the national average. In other goods, looking glasses and books in the eighteenth century, Macclesfield followed the national trend. Finally, Macclesfield exceeded the national average for window curtains and book ownership in the seventeenth century. Why Macclesfield's townspeople should value seventeenth century religious texts and window curtains so much but apparently disregard timekeeping is unknown.

E.P. Thompson argued that by the end of the sixteenth century most parishes possessed a clock and that from the 1680s for about a century, English clock- and watch-making surpassed continental manufacturers. Macclesfield did have watchmakers at the beginning of the eighteenth century but it is less clear whether All Saint's church possessed a clock. A reconstruction of the thirteenth century All

Saint's does not include a clock but the rebuilt church (in 1740) now possesses a clock.²⁶

However, in a mixed industrial-agrarian community as Macclesfield, as is shown in this chapter by the effects of the agrarian year upon baptism and marriage seasonality patterns, it is doubtful whether there was a requirement for time-keeping. Thompson give the example of a late-eighteenth century Pennine small farmer/weaver who wove nine yards on a rainy unsuitable for out-doors work, but this output was reduced to two yards by the agricultural demands. For Macclesfield, button production is substituted for weaving. The 'working week' was subject to the annual cycles as well as the weather. For Thompson, there was a 'characteristic irregularity of labour patterns before the coming of large-scale machine-powered industry' so the length of the working day was lengthened or shortened according to tasks to be performed. In Macclesfield for this period there is no 'large-scale machine-powered industry' and so no need to impose a work discipline upon workers to maximise the efficient use of factory space and time.²⁷

There may be another explanation based upon Colin Campbell's arguments for the social change behind consumerism, which is that in Macclesfield clock-ownership never developed because the social imperatives to imitate and emulate were absent. Why this social imperative should be absent is unclear, perhaps a relatively compact town did not need to rely upon time keeping to arrange social and commercial functions, and what co-ordination it required could be supplied by the church bells.²⁸

²⁶ E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), pp. 361, 363; Davies, *Macclesfield*, plates between pp. 302 – 3, 312 – 3; see pp. 291 – 2 for Macclesfield's watchmakers.

²⁷ Thompson, *Customs in Common*, pp. 371 – 2, 385.

²⁸ C. Campbell, 'Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-Action Approach', in J. Brewer & R. Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993), pp. 40 – 57, on pp. 40 – 1.

5.3.2 Regional Comparisons

Table 5.3, below, places the figures for Macclesfield from Table 5.1, above, alongside the eight regions studied by Weatherill. As Macclesfield was close to of the regions studied by Weatherill, it was hoped that regional trends could be identified. Weatherill emphasised the impact of London on fashions and pointed out that the return trade of, for example, Newcastle coal to London, made London fashions and goods readily accessible to those living in the north-east.²⁹

Table 5.3: Comparison of Occurrence of Certain Consumer Goods in Macclesfield with other English Regions, 1670 – 1729

	No of Inventories	Pewter %			Books %	Clocks %	Looking Glasses %	Window Curtains %
		All	Dishes	Plates				
Macclesfield	256	85	16	9	27	2	32	20
London area	367	91	59	53	30	29	74	40
North-east England	325	95	77	37	10	15	44	14
East Kent	390	95	59	39	26	36	47	19
Cambridge shire	390	93	72	33	12	14	27	9
North-west England	390	92	17	11	20	33	31	8
Hampshire	260	97	50	20	24	7	19	7
North-West Midlands	390	94	42	21	15	7	14	3
Cumbria	390	88	11	4	17	7	6	1

Pewter's under representation is again seen against all of the regions, with the possible exception of Cumbria. Weatherill explains Cumbria's relative under performance in all categories by the poverty of the region, with an agricultural system based upon mixed subsistence farming of smallholdings.³⁰ This description could hardly apply to Macclesfield.

²⁹ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 51 – 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 58 – 9.

The under representation continues for pewter dishes and plates, but this time it is similar to Weatherill's figures for Cumbria and north-west England. Weatherill considered that 'some goods seem to have been badly listed in' Cumbria and the north-west.³¹ These three areas belonged to two dioceses, Chester and Carlisle, so any diocesan influence can be ruled out. This suggests a regional trend across much of the north-west of England, although it is difficult to find any reason for this trend, especially given that this region contained the pre-eminent pewter-producing town north of the Trent, Wigan.³²

Despite the decline identified in the percentage of inventories containing books, Macclesfield had the second highest proportion of inventories containing books. Only London had a higher proportion, and east Kent was the nearest competition to Macclesfield. Clock ownership in Macclesfield was the lowest proportion of the nine regions. While Macclesfield had a significantly lower proportion than Hampshire, north-west Midlands and Cumbria, these regions show that Macclesfield was not untypical

Looking glasses were most common in London, with three-quarters of inventories containing them. In the provinces, the proportion of inventories with looking glasses was all below 50 per cent. Macclesfield is ranked third amongst the provinces and only one percentage point above the remainder of the north west of England. For window curtains, London again was the lead area with 40 per cent of inventories recording them. Of the provincial areas, Macclesfield was the lead area, and was one percentage point ahead of east Kent which was supposed to have been

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44; Table 3.1.

³² J. Hatcher & T.C. Barker, *A History of British Pewter* (London, 1974), pp. 125 – 6, which argues that by the late-seventeenth century, Wigan was the second most important pewter producing centre after London. Also see, C.B. Philips, 'Town and Country: Economic Change in Kendal c. 1550 – 1700', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of the English Provincial Town* (London, 1984), pp. 99 – 132 for Kendal's pewterers.

closely attuned to London fashions.³³ Macclesfield was also significantly ahead of north-west England, north-west Midlands and Cumbria.

What does this information tell us about Macclesfield?³⁴ As with the chronological data given above, Macclesfield varied between prominence (books), average ranking (looking glasses) and under performance, as with pewter and clocks. This picture is further complicated by evidence suggesting regional differences, as with the pewter dishes and plates. The dominance of London over early modern English life can again be detected in such categories as books, looking glasses and window curtains. Macclesfield did have well established commercial links to London, as has been shown through the silk button industry. In this respect, Macclesfield mirrored the north east of England and east Kent. But, unlike the last two examples, Macclesfield would not have benefited from a return trade of empty ships and wagons to help spread London fashions. Through the purchase of this select group of consumer goods, it has been shown that a provincial town like Macclesfield can display a great deal of the sophistication of London.

5.3.3 Pewter

Due to Macclesfield's strange attitude towards pewter, especially given the prominence of Wigan in pewter production, values of pewter were extracted from the inventories. It was not uncommon for a single entry to list either weight of pewter in pounds and a value of pennies per pound or a total valuation from which the price per pound can be calculated. The estate of Robert Bancroft, innkeeper, for example, was

³³ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 52 – 3.

³⁴ Nenadic shows a different pattern of accumulation for Edinburgh and Glasgow from Weatherill's 'national picture', so there should be no reason that Macclesfield should be the same as any other British town, Nenadic, 'Middle-rank Consumers', p. 125.

appraised with 141 lb. at 8d/lb. worth £4 14s.³⁵ Appraisors also showed that there could be different values of pewter in the same estate. Julius Stockley, gentleman, possessed 40lb. of pewter worth 8d/lb. and another 17lb. worth 6d/lb.³⁶ It is generally accepted that appraisors gave an accurate market value (i.e. second hand) of the goods they were appraising. Chart 5.4 shows the distribution of pewter valuations from the inventories used during this section. In the late-seventeenth century, prices varied between 10d/lb. and 6d/lb. These fell to 8d/lb. and 5 ½ d/lb. respectively by the early-eighteenth century. This represented a fall of 20 per cent in the value of ‘the best sort’ and 9 per cent in the value of ‘the worst sort.’

Pewter undoubtedly became a common household item from the late-sixteenth century. William Harrison, writing about his village in north west Essex in 1577 – 78 noted the replacement of woodenware with pewter or silver. Hatcher and Barker observed that during ‘the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries pewter permeated much further down the social scale’ and supported this with two late-sixteenth century inventories from Banbury, Oxfordshire, which contained pewter, despite being valued at just £1. Despite this, they entitled chapter 6 ‘Decline of Pewter’ and began it in 1700.³⁷

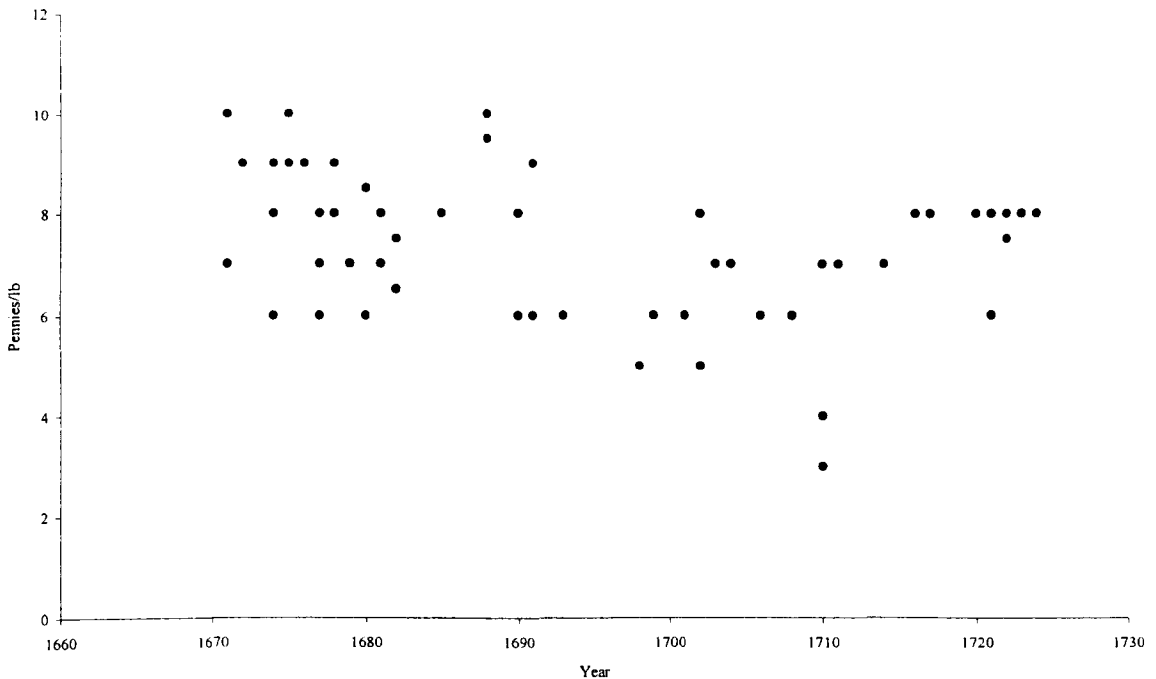
In the seventeenth century, the recommended price for London pewter rose from between 9d/lb. and 10½d/lb. (depending on quality) in 1615 to between 12d/lb. and 14d/lb. in 1674. Yet by the 1690s the price of pewter had fallen significantly. Prices peaked during the Thirty Years War, which disrupted tin production on the continent. By the 1690s, peace, Dutch imports of tin from Malaya and competition

³⁵ WS 1723.

³⁶ WS 1677.

³⁷ Hatcher & Barker, *British Pewter*, pp. 84, 88, 97 – 8.

Charts 5.4: Pewter Values from Macclesfield Probate Inventories, 1670 – 1725.



from other materials resulted in the price of pewter falling 30 per cent. This long term decline in the price of pewter is shown in Chart 5.4.³⁸ The prices recorded in Chart 5.4 would have represented the second-hand retail or part-exchange value of the pewter, at between 66 per cent and 75 per cent of the new retail value.³⁹

5.3 Inns

Three surveys of Macclesfield inns survive from the late-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century. Or, to be more precise, they were surveys of bed and stabling in inns in a particular town or area. Without a list of the names or numbers of inns surveyed it is impossible to connect this information with any of the innkeepers identified previously. It should be possible, however, to chart the growth of beds and stabling in Macclesfield and to use that to chart a general growth of Macclesfield as a commercial centre

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90, n. 1.

The three surveys are dated from 1686, *circa* 1715 and 1756.⁴⁰ All are to be found in the War Office Miscellanea at the Public Record Office. The timing of all three surveys are coincidental with political upheaval and warfare which explains the interest bedding and stabling. The purpose of the surveys was to provide information for the billeting of troops (hence the War Office's involvement) during their movement about the country, not for calculating excise on beer. Macclesfield Mayor's Accounts for 1713 – 4 shows expenditure on billeting dragoons, soldiers and passengers 'by order' totalling 4s 2d so the town was being used for this purpose.⁴¹ Despite this military purpose, some of the actual surveys were carried out by Excise officers. In the 1756 survey, Cheshire is divided into the Excise divisions and out rides, and mentions 'H Wilson', the collector of excise of Knutsford District, into which Macclesfield fell.⁴² However, individuals less familiar with the region evidently carried out the 1686 survey: Stockport is missing from the Cheshire survey.⁴³

The 1686 survey coincides with the political insecurity of James II. Some of the returns list the bedding and stabling by county but that for Cheshire is by town. Macclesfield possessed sixty-eight beds and stabling for 178, giving a ratio of 1:2.5. The second survey has been dated to about 1715 by Dr Chris Lewis and was probably executed by Excise personnel as the county boundaries are not correct. The returns for Macclesfield are given as 60 spare beds and 145 standing for horses, giving a ratio of 1:2.4.

⁴⁰ WO 30/48 f. 24v; WO 30/49 f. 23; WO 30/50 f. 5. A. Everitt, 'The English Urban Inn' in A. Everitt (ed.), *Perspectives in English Urban History* (London, 1973), pp. 91 – 137, on p. 94 discusses the 1686 and 1756 surveys; see P. Clark, *The English Ale House: A Social History, 1200 – 1830* (London, 1983), p. 45 for the 1686 survey.

⁴¹ CCRO LBM 2703/66.

⁴² WO 30/49 f. 24.

⁴³ The Stockport survey may have been covered in Lancashire alongside Manchester. I thank Dr Chris Lewis for this and other observations made here.

The final survey, from 1756, was clearly carried out by Excise personnel. The Macclesfield Division contained three Out Rides:

Table 5.5: Bedding and Stabling of Macclesfield Division, 1756

	Number of Beds	Stable Room for Horse
Macclesfield	55	143
1 OR	35	62
2 OR	22	58
3 OR	18	17
Total	130	280

These figures give a ratio of 1:2.6 within the town and 1:2.15. The first figure confirms the 1686 ratio, with the second figure suggesting that there was less stabling to bedding in the outlying villages.

Strangely, these figures suggest that there was a declining number of both bedding and stabling available in Macclesfield, although the decline was proportional with about one bed to stabling for two and a half horses. Yet this finding clearly contradicts Dr Alan Everitt's assertion that there was a 'remarkable expansion of innkeeping between Queen Elizabeth's reign and George III's'.⁴⁴ Perhaps the explanation comes from the different systems apparently used for compiling the surveys. That of 1686 may have been carried out by military officers less familiar with the geography of the county rather than excise officers working to a predetermined route. More importantly, there is a likely to be a difference between the geographic parameters of each survey. The 1686 survey is the most detailed and contains separate entries for villages and, in Chester, individual streets. In the case of Macclesfield, both Broken Cross and, slightly further a field, Prestbury, have their

⁴⁴ Everitt, 'English Urban Inn', p. 94.

own, smaller entries. It is more difficult to identify where these smaller settlements in the later surveys, but if they were included in a wider Macclesfield area, one would expect the number of beds and stabling to increase. The only conclusion which can be drawn is that as a centre for innkeeping, Macclesfield was declining.

5.4 Demographic Change in Macclesfield: the evidence of the parish registers

Before the advent of national census in 1801 and civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in 1837, the only continuous source available to assess the demographic behaviour were the parish registers. From 1538, parish registers were required by law to register the baptism, marriage and burial of every inhabitant in the parish. As a source of documentation established nationally by law with a limited but fixed number of requirements for some three centuries, the parish registers represent a vast source of consistent demographic information. To the statutory requirements could be added further information like place of birth, occupation and names of parents depending upon individual clergymen. However, there are limitations with the system. Earlier registers may not have survived, or be illegible, or may not have been kept through the failure of individual clergymen. The registers recorded baptisms and burials, not births and deaths, and so could miss those vital events when death took place before baptism or burial took place away from the parish of residence. Registers are best able to show the life cycle when an individual resided in one parish for their entire life, but migration was very much a feature of early modern life.⁴⁵ Finally, and most importantly as the early modern period progressed, non-registration during the Commonwealth and by non-conformists, Jews and Catholics (whose registers, if kept at all, have a poorer survivability) meant that an increasing proportion of the

⁴⁵ See P. Clark, 'Migration in England during the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *P&P*, lxxxiii (1979), pp. 57 – 90.

community was excluded from the parish registers. Nevertheless, parish registers remain the most important source of demographic information for the early modern period by allowing comparisons to be made over time and against other localities.

The only surviving parish register from Macclesfield is that of the Anglican chapel of St Michael's, although throughout the period covered by this dissertation it was dedicated to All Saints'.⁴⁶ No registers have survived for the dissenting chapels known to have existed in Macclesfield at this time nor for the catholic community. Anglican registers survive from 1572 until after 1740.⁴⁷ Prior to the suspension of parish registers during the Commonwealth period, the quality of the registers are generally poor and illegible. Quality and legibility improved after 1660. From 1699 registration of marriages resumed, probably due to the Marriage Act of 1695.⁴⁸ In June 1685 a new register was begun and from that date until after 1740, the quality of the registration became both consistent and legible. This register was chosen for the commencing of the baptism and burial survey due to the quality of the information available, and because they also allow comparisons to be drawn with the marriage registration when it resumed fourteen years later. Chart 5.6 shows the combined findings of baptisms, marriages and burials by year.

⁴⁶ CCRO MF 69-1/2. Also a transcription of the marriages for 1699 to 1754 exists as MACC PAR. The *Macclesfield Parish Magazine*, No 87 (November, 1893) also printed the registers for 1572 to 1620, and can be accessed as MF 69/1.

⁴⁷ 1740 was chose for the end date for baptisms and burials to coincide with the end of the dissertation. 1754 was chosen for the end date for the marriages as they ceased to be carried out in Macclesfield due to Hargreave's Act of that year.

⁴⁸ 7 & 8 Wm. 3, c. 35.

Chart 5.6: Summary of Burials, Baptism and Marriages from Macclesfield All Saints' Registers, 1685 - 1754.

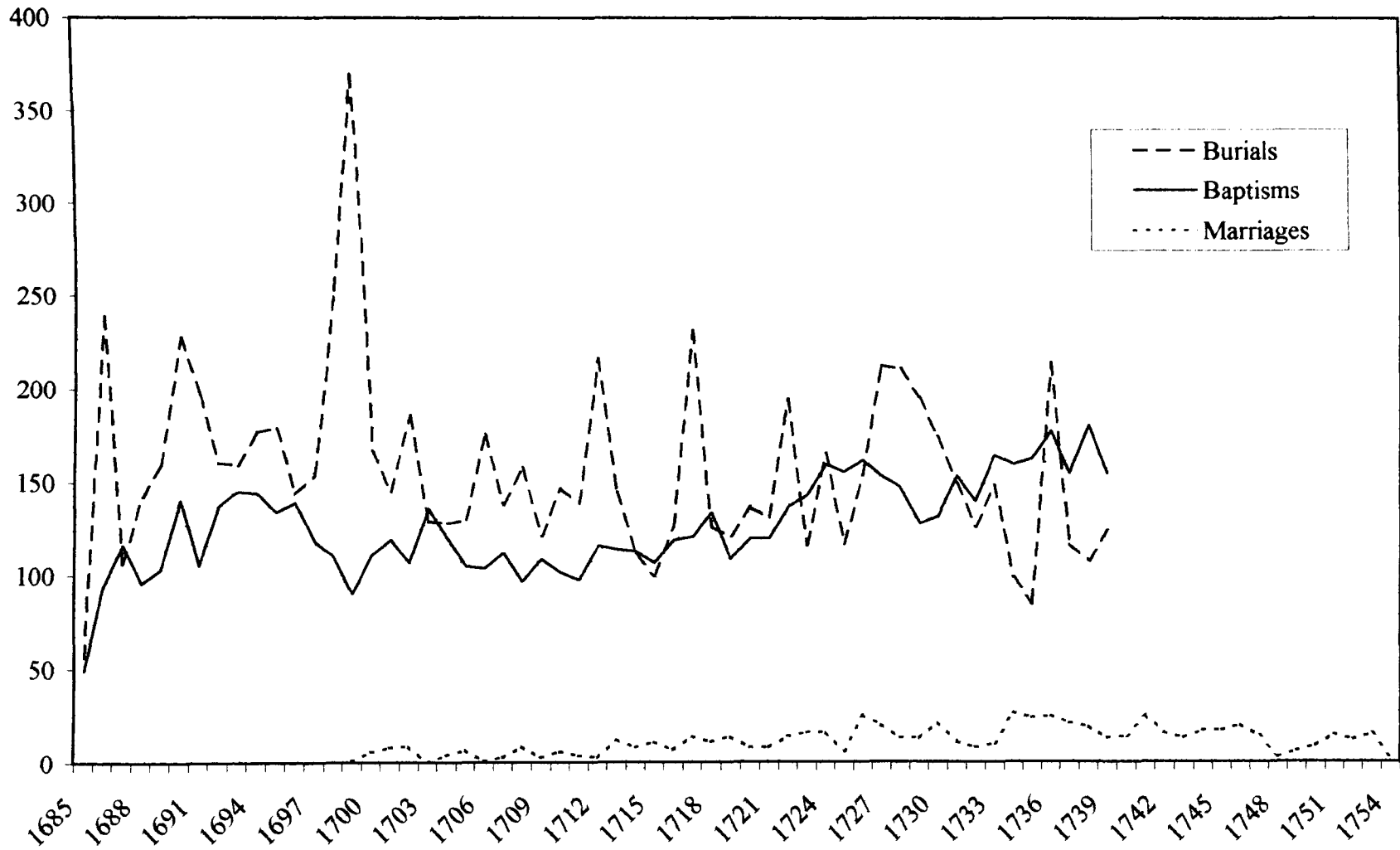
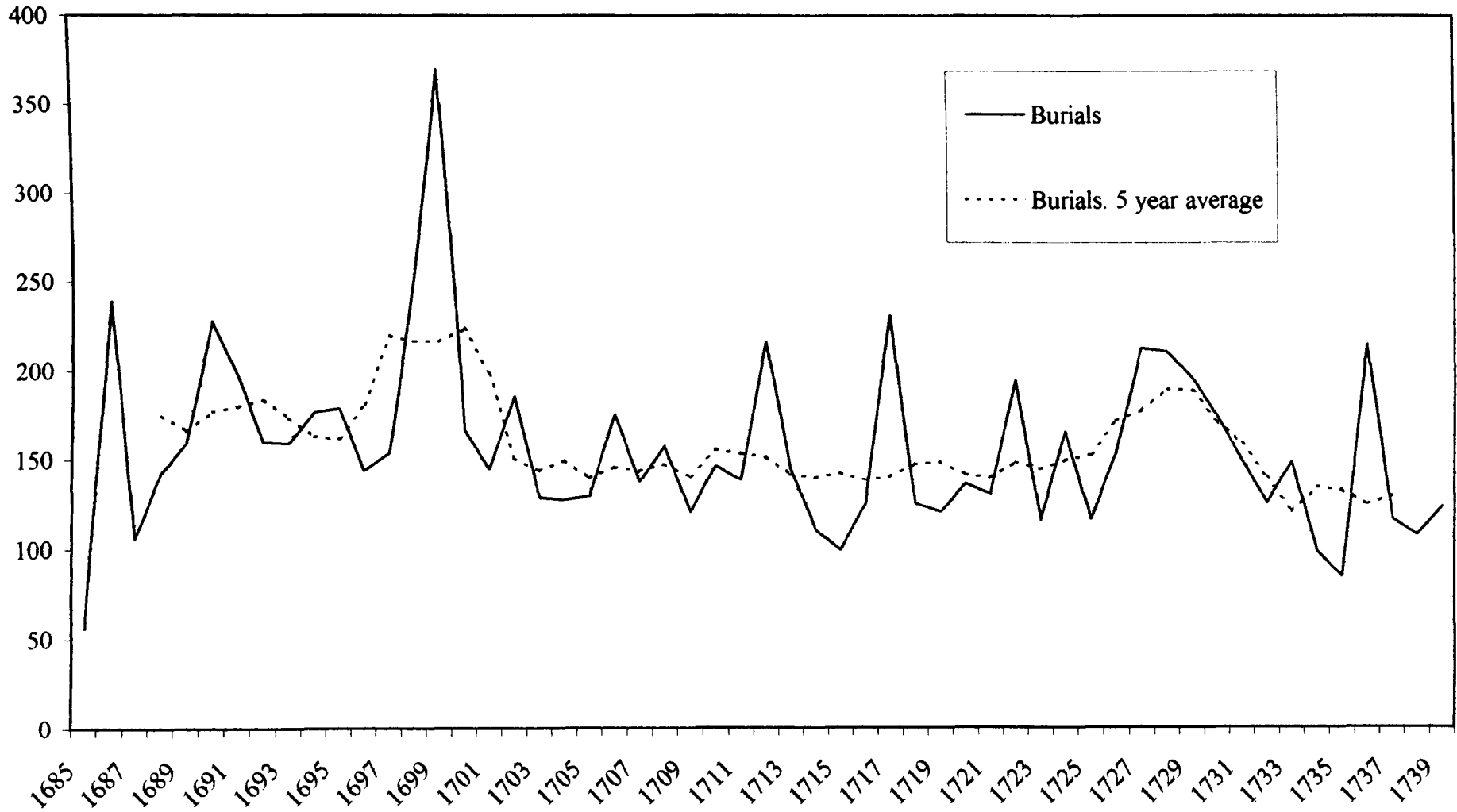


Chart 5.7: Burials from Macclesfield All Saint's Register, 1685 - 1740



5.4.1 Baptisms

Baptisms listed the names of the infants and that of their fathers unless the child was illegitimate in which case both parents were normally named.⁴⁹ No further biographical details were recorded. Chart 5.7 shows the baptisms per year from the parish register. There were between 90 and 180 baptisms each year with two peak periods, one in the late-1680s/early-1690s and a second in the 1720s and 1730s. The first peak is difficult to explain in any terms other than a high fertility rate. The 1690s were a period of warfare in Europe, high taxation, financial dislocation due to re-coinage and there were five bad harvests during the decade.⁵⁰ Furthermore, with the registration of marriages (see Chart 5.10, below) only recommencing in 1699, it is not possible to draw conclusions from the obvious link between marriage and first birth. The peak in baptisms began to end in 1696 and reached a nadir in 1699, which coincided with a local mortality crisis over the winter of 1698/9.⁵¹ Although the baptism rate had improved by 1700, the five-year average shows continuing depressed baptismal levels.

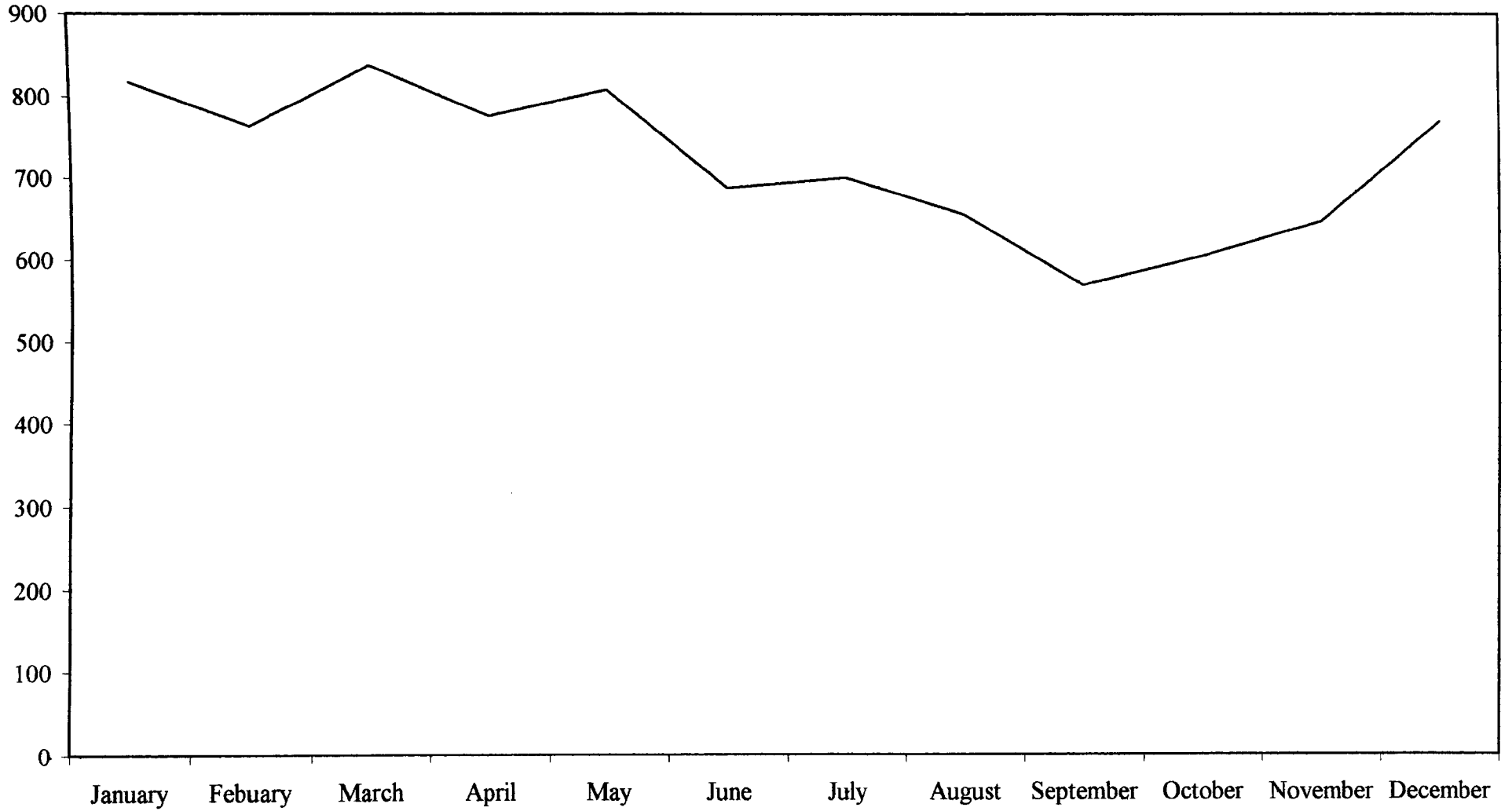
The second peak occurred during the 1720s and 1730s following fifteen years of steady growth. There was a marked increase in baptisms in the 1720s and 1730s, although there was a short-term depression in baptisms. An increase in marriages from 1726 did not coincide with the increase in baptisms. As is argued below, in part this increase in marriages was due to the mortality crisis of the late-1720s leading to remarriages. Delays in producing off spring to be baptised caused by a period of grief, courtship, marriage and gestation would all serve to lower the baptism rate. This peak

⁴⁹ For example, on 19 February 1693/4 'Maria filia Simon Baker & Maria Armfield de Macclesfield' was baptised.

⁵⁰ J. Hoppitt, *Land of Liberty? England, 1689 – 1712* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 66, 82, 83, 126 – 7.

⁵¹ See Chart 5.14.

Chart 5.8: Seasonality of Burials from Macclesfield All Saint's Registers, 1685 - 1740



also conforms to Wrigley and Schofield's assertion that a peak in national baptism levels in the 1640s was not repeated until the 1730s.⁵²

Chart 5.8 shows the seasonality of baptisms by month. It is assumed that births and baptisms took place in the same month. The delay between birth and baptism is a significant, but unquantifiable, statistical variable which became of greater significance throughout the eighteenth century: 'About 1700, the estimation of the shortfall became less straight forward and less precise because the burial of unbaptised children increasingly went unrecorded.'⁵³ As the delay between birth and baptism increased, so did the likelihood that the child would die unbaptised.⁵⁴ To determine the correlation between births, baptisms and unbaptised infant mortality would require a family reconstruction project beyond the scope of the current research but, as will be shown below, there are significant seasonal variations from which firm conclusions can be drawn.

The seasonality of baptisms identifies a fifty per cent increase between the August deficit (407) and the March peak (615). This high degree of seasonality suggests a 'seasonality of conception' based upon economic considerations.⁵⁵ The drop in baptisms for August would suggest that there was a deliberate attempt to reduce the number of births or heavy pregnancies during the harvest period when labour was most in demand. This in turn would indicate a high degree of contraception (by whatever method) in November to avoid August births. Similar trends have been identified in London, that most urban of English communities. This

⁵² See Chart 5.9 and pp. 190 – 1, for the explanation for this peak in marriages.

⁵³ E.A. Wrigley & R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541 – 1871* (London, 1981), p. 99.

⁵⁴ Fortunately, the burial register for Macclesfield for this period suggests that unbaptised children received the rites of a christian burial: burials of stillborn children were entered into the register for the 1660s at least, so there is no reason that unbaptised infants would not receive the same treatment, e.g. on 16 October 1662, the stillborn child of Francis Ouldfield of Hurdesfield.

⁵⁵ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, p. 291.

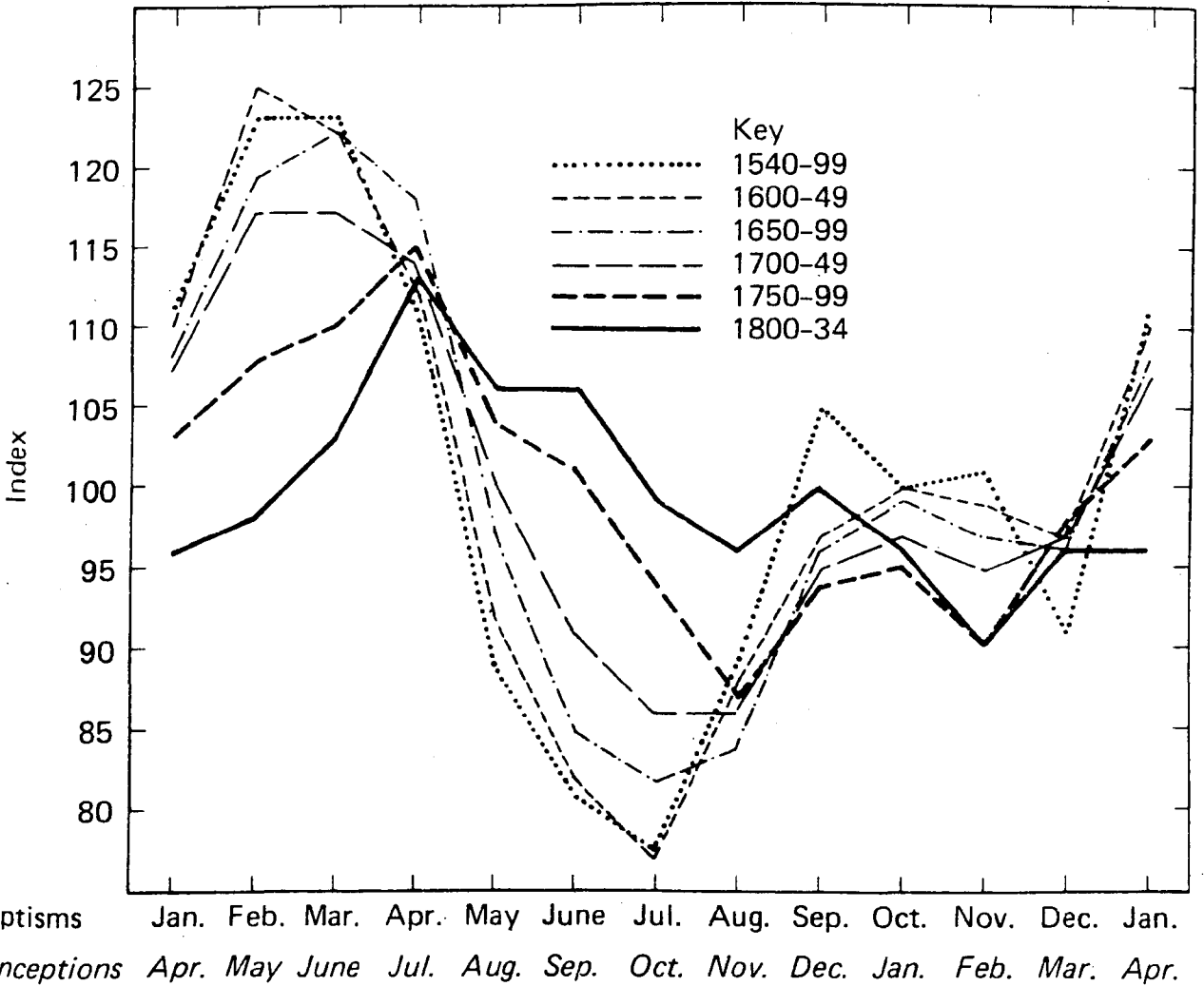
casts doubt upon the agrarian rationale for these fluctuations in births, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there was a deliberate attempt to avoid births/heavy pregnancies during the harvest period.

The seasonality identified in Macclesfield also conforms to the national picture painted by Wrigley and Schofield. They found an 'apogee' in March and a 'nadir' in July.⁵⁶ The data trends for 1650 – 99 and 1700 – 49 shown in their Figure 8.1 (reproduced here as Chart 5.9) show swings between the 'nadir' and 'apogee' in the magnitude of fifty per cent. Wrigley and Schofield's nadir occurred in July, a month earlier than in Macclesfield. A closer examination of their Figure 8.1 shows that this July nadir was most prominent for the periods 1540 – 99 and 1600 – 49. For the periods comparable to the Macclesfield data, 1650 – 99 and 1700 – 49, this nadir is significantly shallower and actually falls in August, and in later periods is more sharply identifiable as in August. Nationally, therefore, there was a shift in the nadir of births/baptisms throughout the early modern period from July to August, and this August position is clearly identifiable in the Macclesfield register.

There are also strong correlations between marriage peaks, as shown in Charts 5.6 and 5.10, and baptisms. The March peak in births/baptisms occurred nine months after the June peak in marriages. One argument which has been levelled against the reliability of such data is that of pre-nuptial pregnancy which would reduce the time delay between marriage and birth/baptism to less than nine months. Yet in this particular case, there is a clear and significant correlation between marriage and birth/baptism peaks in early-eighteenth century Macclesfield and indicates a conception in the first month of marriage and baptism in the month of birth rather than either pre-nuptial pregnancy and delayed baptisms.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 286, 288.

Chart 5.9: Seasonality of Baptisms from Wrigley and Schofield.



Baptisms
Conceptions

Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June Jul. Aug. Sep. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan.
Apr. May June Jul. Aug. Sep. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr.

5.4.2 Marriages

Marriages were recorded continuously between 1699 and 1754. The start date may have been a delayed reaction to the Marriage Act of 1695. The end of the series conforms to Hargreave's Act, which required marriages to be performed in parish churches. Macclesfield was not a parish until 1835.⁵⁷ They have been transcribed by Pauline M. Litton and are available as *St Michael, Macclesfield Transcription and Index, 1699 – 1754*.⁵⁸ This version also includes corrections from the Bishop's Transcripts after 1722. After 1724 a number of marriages performed at Sutton and Gawsworth chapels were included in the register. No separate registers exist for these chapels. As there was apparently an unidentifiable connection between Macclesfield, Sutton and Gawsworth, these marriages have been included in the results.⁵⁹ Chart 5.10 plots the number of marriages per year.

Let us assume for the moment that the register accurately reflects the number of marriages performed in All Saints' and that lax registration is not an issue. The pattern which one would expect to find would show an overall increase in the number of marriages in line with the population increase as a larger population generated more marriages.⁶⁰ Chart 5.10 shows an overall increase between 1699 and the mid-1730s before declining until the end of marriages in 1754. The most obvious explanation to this overall decline in marriages against the background of an

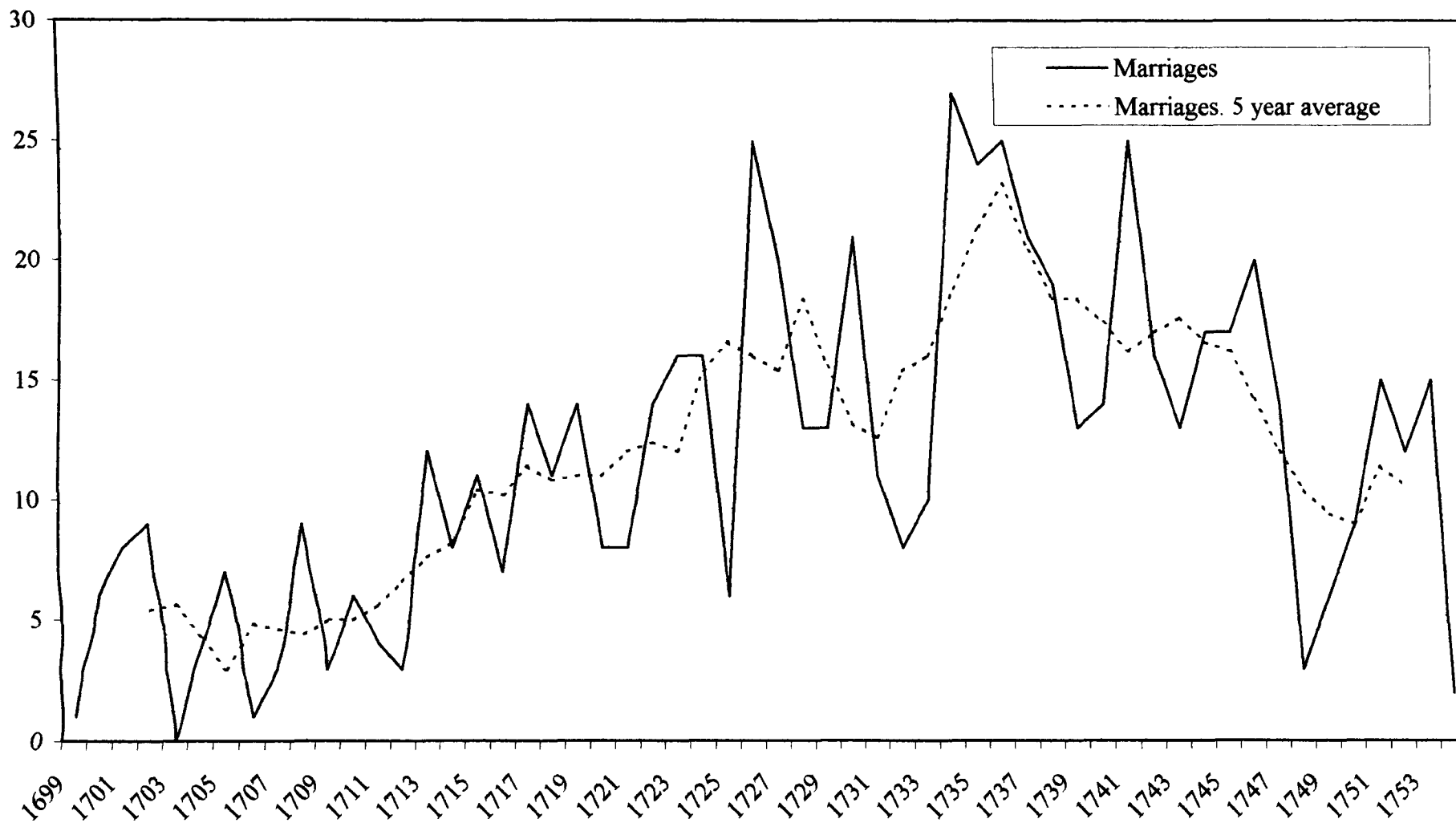
⁵⁷ C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), p. 310; Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?*, p. 62.

⁵⁸ This is a typescript available at CCRO.

⁵⁹ The reason for this connection may have been due to their close proximity: Sutton is 2 miles from Macclesfield, Gawsworth about 3 miles. Macclesfield, although not a parish, did have a supervisory role over outlying chapels. See pp. 2, 24.

⁶⁰ An extreme example of population growth for this period is Liverpool, whose population rose 2603% between 1664 and 1778 according to J. Stobart, 'An Eighteenth-Century Revolution? Investigating Urban Growth in North-West England, 1664 – 1801', *Urban History*, xxiii (1996), pp. 26 – 47, on p. 40; for marriages, see J. Langton & P. Laxton, 'Parish Registers and Urban Structure: The Example of Late Eighteenth Century Liverpool', *UHY* (1978), pp. 74 – 84 on fig. 1, p. 77 and F. Lewis, *The Demographic and Occupational Structure of Liverpool: A Study of the Parish Registers, 1660 – 1750* (unpublished University of Liverpool Ph.D., 1993), p. 179, fig. 6.3.

Chart 5.10: Marriages from Macclesfield All Saints', Sutton and Gawsworth Chapelries Register, 1699 - 1754



increasing population would be due to competition from other place of worship. There were no other Anglican places of worship in Macclesfield during this period, but there were non-conformist chapels. Following the Act of Toleration (1689), a chapel was opened on Back Lane in 1690 and a Quaker Meeting House was built in 1705.⁶¹ The opening of these institutions did not coincide with a decline in marriages at All Saints' and without their own marriage registers it is impossible to determine whether there was an increase in non-conformist marriages at the expense of Anglican marriages. This leads us to consider the quality of the registration itself. The absence of marriage registration before 1699 and in 1703 raises question about the reliability of the registration, but without further information it is not possible to determine the extent, if at all, of under-registration.

Wrigley and Schofield have calculated crude marriage rates which show that a nadir was reached in 1671 followed by a steady rise until 1726, dipping briefly and then continuing to rise to a peak in 1771. Wrigley and Schofield see a 'hump' in the marriage rates between 1721 and 1741 resulting from remarriages following the mortality crisis of the late-1720s.⁶² The Macclesfield data mirrors these trends. 1725 recorded the second lowest number of marriages (six) after 1712 (three) until Hargreave's Act. The years before 1712 were a period of low levels of marriages, with no year exceeding nine marriages. The period 1726 to 1741 saw nine of the ten years when the number of marriages exceeded twenty per year which correlates with Wrigley and Schofield theory of a high level of remarriages.⁶³ By removing the marriages of these nine peak years between 1726 and 1741, the average number of marriages *per annum* was just 10.⁶⁴ Given that in the years before 1712 there were no

⁶¹ Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 322 – 5; 1 W&M, c. 18.

⁶² Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, fig. 10.10, pp. 258, n. 101, 420, 427 – 8.

⁶³ 1746 was the final year when the number of marriages exceeded 20.

⁶⁴ Of 657 marriages in 55 years, 469 fell in the 46 non-peak years averaging 10.19 *per annum*.

years which reached this average level, the marriage rate for the later years can be expected to be slightly above 10 *per annum*. Therefore, by removing the 'hump' of remarriages resulting from the high mortality rate of the late-1720s, the decline in the number of marriages from the mid-1730s can be explained by demographic trends rather than change in religious practices in Macclesfield.

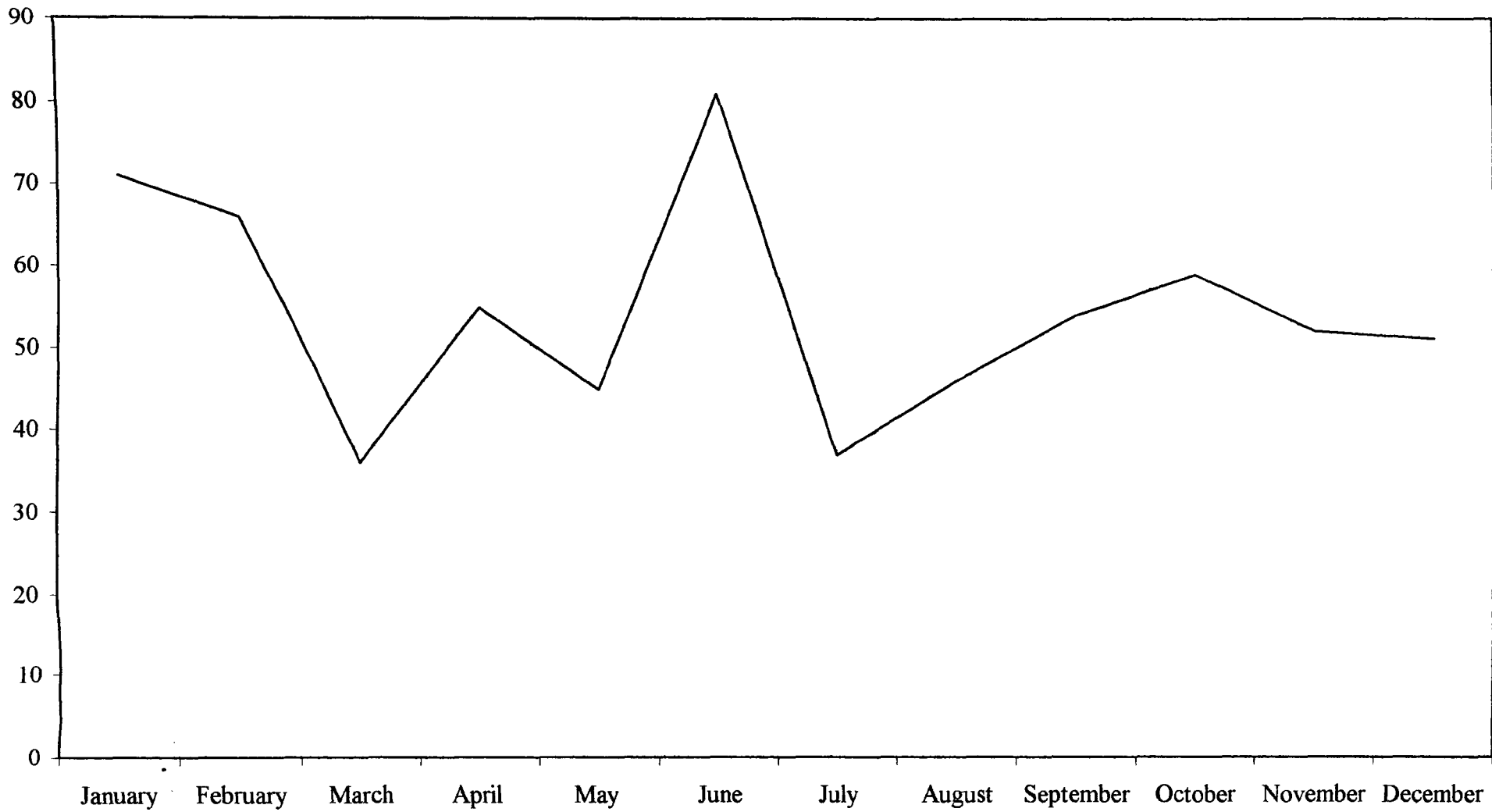
It has been argued that in agrarian societies, the demands of the agricultural year dictated when marriages took place. Peaks in marriages occurred in April and May, and again in October and November. The first peak followed lambing and calving, and may also have reflected residual catholic prohibitions on marriage during Lent. The second peak followed harvest. Lambing, calving and harvest offered plentiful work and wages with which to begin married life, the slack periods of under-employment which followed provided the time for the communal celebrations accompanying marriage.⁶⁵

Chart 5.11 shows the seasonality of marriages in Macclesfield. There is a significant dip in marriages for March for the lambing and calving. With Macclesfield's position at the edges of the Peak District and the pastoral Cheshire Plain and with its leather industry, lambing and calving were clearly important agricultural activities. Marriage rates slowly increased throughout April and May to peak in June. The second dip occurs in July for the harvest with marriage rates increasing to the second peak in October.

Overall, Macclesfield's marriage seasonality reflects the national picture although major peaks in June and January need explanation. Both occur in slack periods of the agricultural cycle. June marriages before the intensive harvest period may reflect the prospect of good wages rather than marrying in the autumn on the back of those

⁶⁵ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 292, 298 – 305.

Chart 5.11: Seasonality of Marriages from Macclesfield All Saints', 1685 - 1740.



wages. Despite the focus on proto-industrial activities, early eighteenth century Macclesfield was still deeply attached to the agrarian world.

5.4.3 Burials

Chart 5.12 shows the burials as recorded in the parish register for All Saint's, Macclesfield, between 1685 and 1740. For the period as a whole, the average number of burials *per annum* was 160. By focusing on the five-year average and ignoring the two periods of high mortality which will be discussed below, the overall trend is one of declining burial rates. From the late-1680s and throughout most of the 1690s, the trendline fluctuates around 175 burials *per annum*. For the 1700s through to the early 1720s, this trendline is around 150 *per annum*, but by the 1730s the burial rate is around 125 *per annum*. Given consistency amongst all other factors, this would indicate a declining mortality rate in 'normal' years. However, all the other factors did not remain constant: the town's population rose⁶⁶, other places of worship opened and there remained the 'leakage' of deaths through the movement of bodies to another parish for burial. Yet overall, if Anglican burials can be taken as indicative of mortality rates, then mortality rates were falling in 'normal' years from the late-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century.

The five-year average trendline on Chart 5.12 identifies two periods of mortality crisis: the late-1690s and the late-1720s. Wrigley and Schofield determined 'National crisis months' as being those 'with a death rate at least 25 per cent above trend'.⁶⁷ Chart 5.12 charts the burial rates by year rather than by month, but using the same criteria, with an average burial rate of 160, then crisis years can be identified as those years with in excess of 200 burials. Nine such years occurred, with 1722 (195

⁶⁶ See Chart 1.8.

⁶⁷ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, Table 8.13, pp. 338 – 9.

burials) and 1729 (196 burials) narrowly missing this 200 burials criteria.⁶⁸ With the exception of the first decade of the eighteenth century, these mortality crisis years were cyclical in nature and occurred about once every five years.⁶⁹

The two key mortality crises occurred over the winter of 1698/9 and in the late-1720s. This second crisis is relatively well documented as a nationally recognised crisis: the population of England may have fallen 4 per cent between 1728 and 1731 due to high mortality coupled with low fertility levels.⁷⁰ The mortality crisis over the winter of 1698/9 is more perplexing as there is no nationally recognised crisis in the late-1690s nor do any other studies of burial rates within the north-west identify a similar crisis in those years.⁷¹ Chart 5.14 plots the monthly burials for 1698 and 1699 and plots them against the monthly averages for Macclesfield for the whole period. There were an above average number of burials in all months, except for May 1698 and July 1699. Beginning in September 1698 until July 1699 there was a massive increase in burials, peaking in January 1699 with fifty-eight burials, a four fold increase compared with the January average of fifteen. For the year beginning August 1698 to July 1699, there were 409 burials, an increase of 250 per cent.

In explaining this mortality crisis, Wrigley and Schofield provide a partial answer. They note that between 1692/3 and 1699/00, the high price of consumables lead drove down the real wage index between eight and twenty-two per cent below trend. The years 1697/8 and 1698/9 were the tenth and thirteenth most extreme below trend years between 1541 and 1870: the late-1690s were difficult years culminating in two extreme years, of which the later coincided with, and therefore probably had an

⁶⁸ They are 1686, 1690, 1698 1699, 1712, 1717, 1727, 1728 and 1736.

⁶⁹ I acknowledge Dr. Lieutenant Colonel R. Wojtyk, RCAF, for pointing out this trend to me.

⁷⁰ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 310 – 1 and n. 59.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Table 8.13, pp. 338 - 9; Langton & Laxton, 'Parish Registers and Urban Structure', pp. 74 – 84, on fig. 1, p. 77 and Lewis, *The Demographic and Occupational Structure of Liverpool*, p. 179, fig. 6.3; W.G. Howson, 'Plague, Poverty and Population in Parts of North-West England, 1580 – 1720', *THSLC*, cxii (1962), pp. 29 – 55.

Chart 5.12: Burials from Macclesfield All Saint's Register, 1685 - 1740.

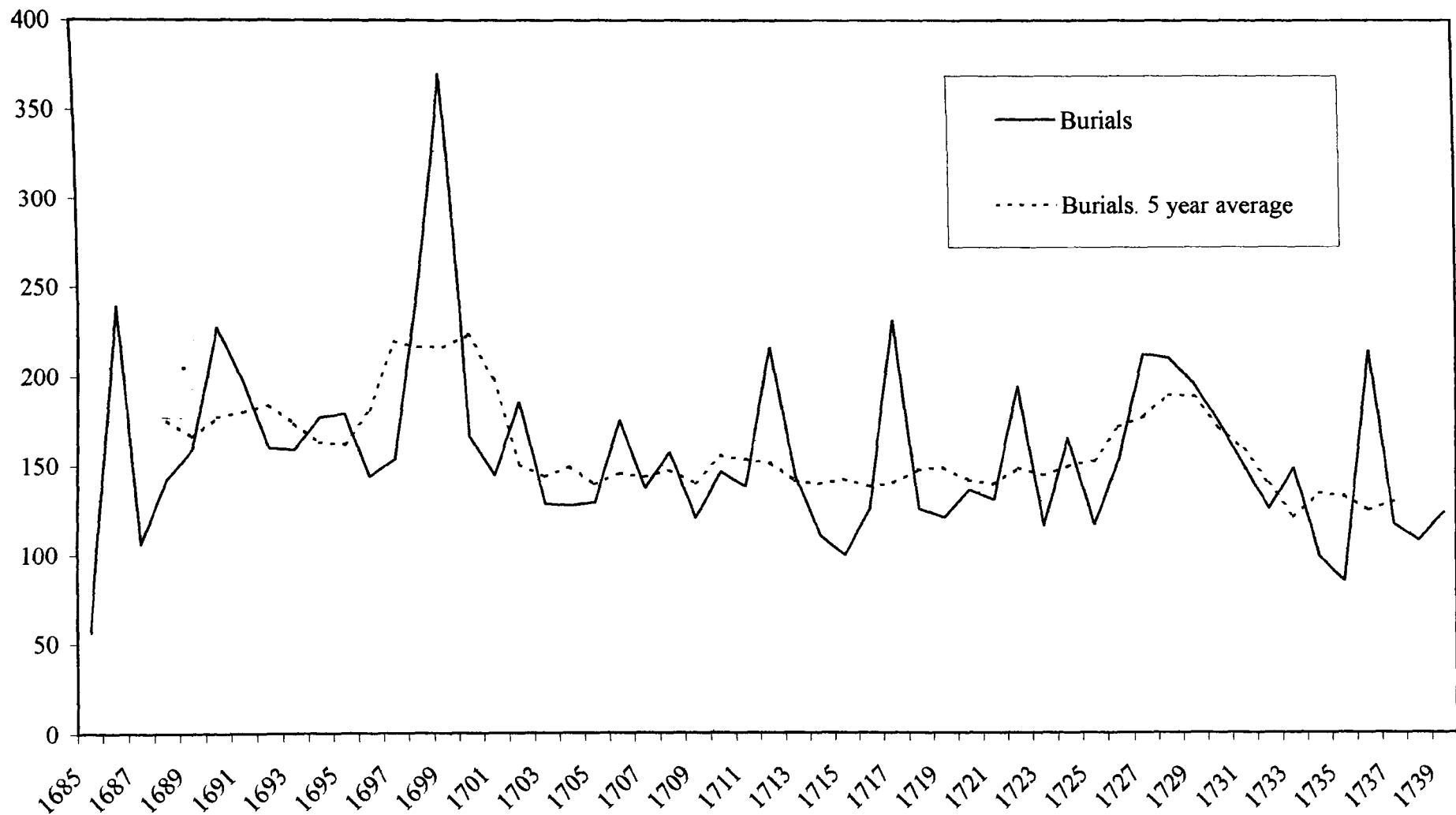


Chart 5.13: Seasonality of Burials from Macclesfield All Saint's Registers, 1685 - 1740.

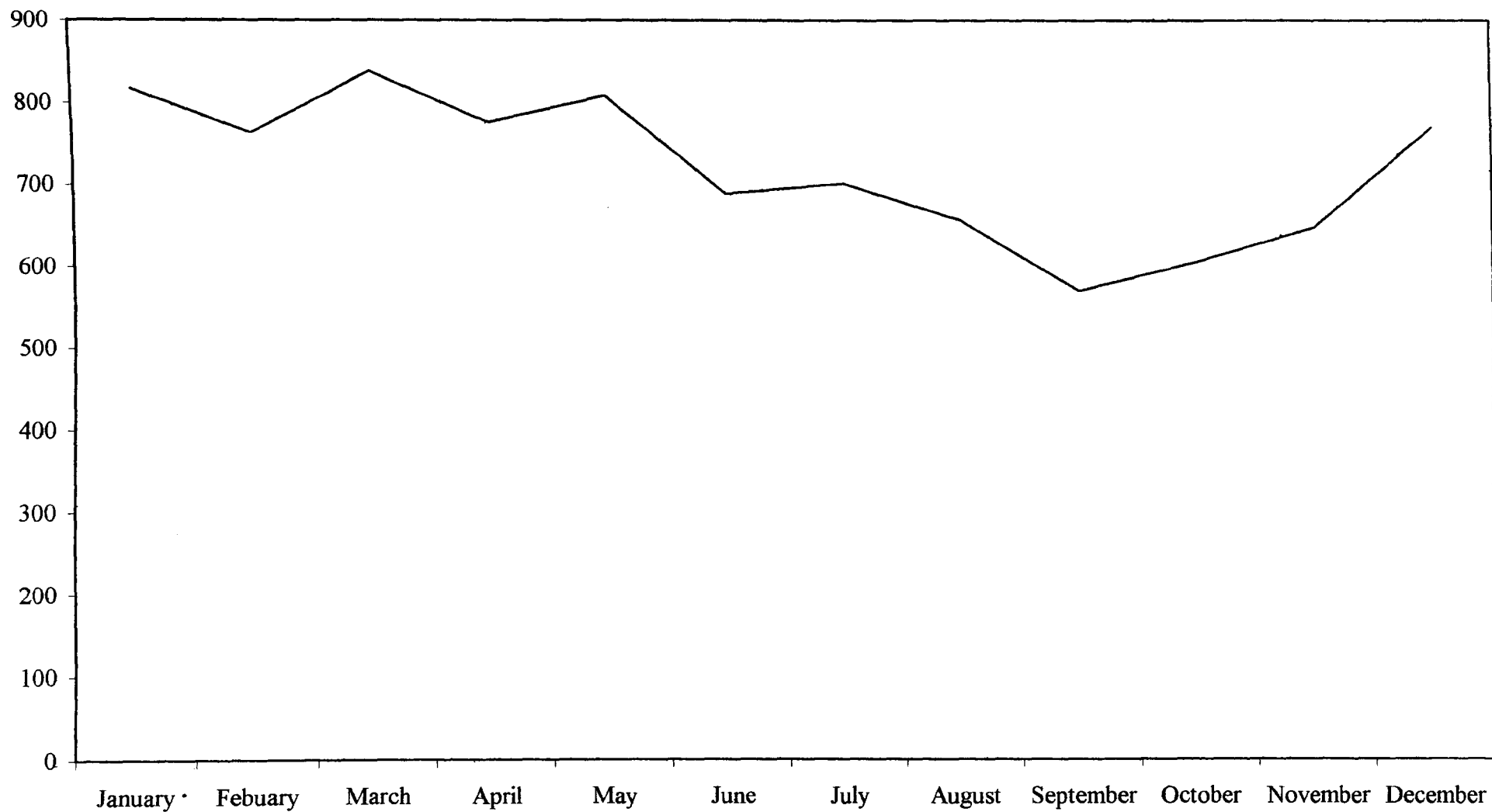
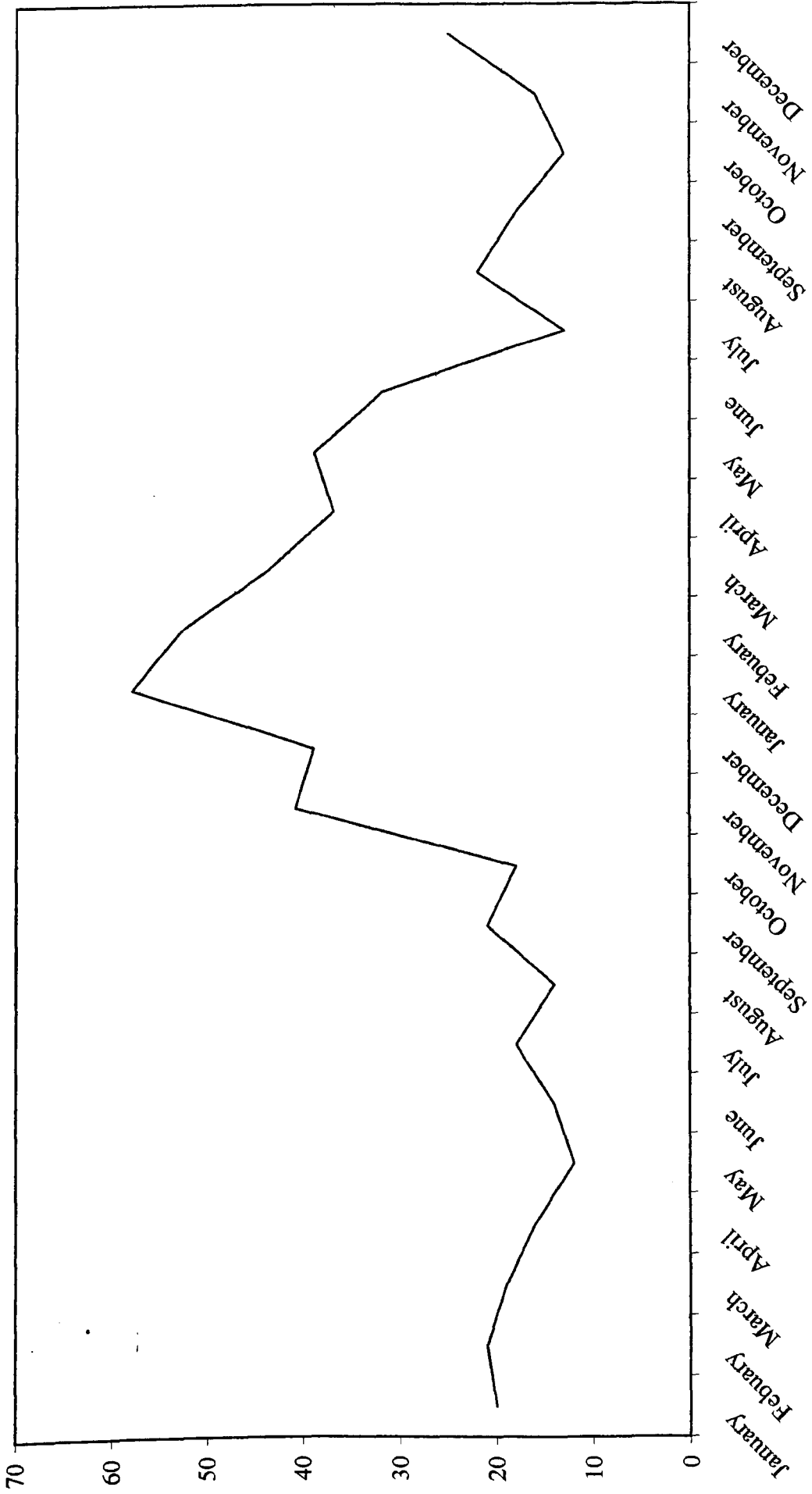


Chart 5.14: Monthly Burials during the Mortality Crisis of 1698/9.



impact upon increased mortality in Macclesfield 1698/9. However, despite these adverse economic conditions, Wrigley and Schofield found no significant changes in the death rates: 'Yet the annual death rate in England in the 1690s was remarkably unresponsive, never raising more than 6 per cent above trend (1965/6), and actually falling below trend in three years, including those of the lowest real wages in 1697/8 and 1698/9. Even the more volatile monthly death rate only rose significantly above average in November and December 1693 (by 26 and 22 per cent).' Martin Dawson, however, notes that in Scotland there was serious famine in 1687/9, which highlights the conditions being experienced at the time. Although famine is the presumed killer in this case, it is by no means certain and the wider issue of quantitative analysis of disease remains uncertain.⁷²

Clearly, the Macclesfield experience was significantly different from the national experience. The Corporation Minute Book shows no attempts to deal with food shortages, although in 1698 the corporation did order the construction of a workhouse for 'such poore psons as are now idle and refuse to work' and authorise £20 for poor relief.⁷³ This inactivity during the mortality crisis conforms with R.B. Outhwaite's observations that there was little government concern about food shortages in the 1690s, in contrast with shortages during the mid-1590s.⁷⁴ This would suggest that despite the obvious connection between food shortages and increased mortality rates, whatever struck Macclesfield's population over the winter of 1698/9 was unlikely to have been a direct result of the high commodity prices, although

⁷² Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, p. 341 and n. 101; M. Dawson, 'The Wealth of the Nation', in P. Langford (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century, 1688 – 1815* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 141 – 80, on p. 143; W. Luckin, 'Death and Survival in the City: Approaches to the History of Disease', *UHY* (1980), pp. 53 – 62; J. Landers & A. Mouzas, 'Burial Seasonality and Causes of Death in London, 1670 – 1819', *Population Studies*, xlii (1988), pp. 59 – 83, on p. 59.

⁷³ CCRO LBM 1/1, 20 October 1698; 15 December 1698.

⁷⁴ R.B. Outhwaite, 'Food Crisis in Early Modern England: Patterns of Public Response', in M.W. Flinn (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Economics Conference* (Edinburgh, 1978), pp. 367 – 74.

undoubtedly that had some effect on the mortality rates by weakening the population. Exactly what killed the inhabitants will remain a mystery in the absence of any indication from the compiler of the parish register.⁷⁵

Chart 5.13 plots the seasonality of burials in Macclesfield. From January through to May the burial rate fluctuated around 800 per month, but declined throughout the summer to below 600 in September before rising through the early winter towards 800 burials. The decline in burials throughout the summer months suggests that summer diseases like dysentery and typhus were less important than diseases aggravated by the winter cold, for example influenza and pneumonia, in determining mortality rates. Wrigley and Schofield findings show a peak in burials in March/April and a trough in burials in July.⁷⁶ The Macclesfield example only loosely follows this trend. There was no discernible peak of burials while the trough was delayed from August to September. Overall, in the absence of definitive pathological data from the parish register, it can be assumed that the benefits of urbanisation, such as the water works described in chapter 8, may have reduced the seasonal impact of diseases. Nothing could eliminate the impact of the cold.

5.4.4 Conclusion

Within the constraints of the parish register system between June 1685 and 1740/54 Macclesfield's proved to be a good, solid example. The registers were clear and legible. They did not contain additional information beyond what they were required to record, but equally there does not appear to have been omissions through lax registration except for the marriages before 1699. Overall, baptisms and marriages reflect nationally recognised trends and, despite the proto-industrial emphasis placed

⁷⁵ The parish register noted, for example, that an increased mortality in 1603 was due to plague. See pp. 31, 33.

⁷⁶ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, Fig. 8.2, p. 293.

upon early modern Macclesfield, appeared to have been largely agrarian in nature. As agriculture was the single largest employer in England until the 1871 census, we should not underestimate agriculture's impact upon society until well into the modern period.⁷⁷ Both reflected the needs of the agricultural year. Burials, however, showed a greater degree of stability with fluctuations following the change from winter to summer. The absence of a peak in burials may reflect the improvements offered by early modern urbanisation before the unsanitary conditions of the nineteenth century with the summer cholera outbreaks.⁷⁸

5.5 Hearth Tax Returns and Probate: following property ownership

The characteristics of these sources have been made in the Sources and Methodology chapter. Here I intend to use both of these sources to track changes in property ownership (probate) and property sizes through the number of hearths recorded. By concentrating on the larger properties, a relatively small sample should be identified from amongst those people most likely to leave probate files, the rich. Furthermore, under the 1664 Act 'No person...inhabiting any dwelling house (not being an alms house...)... in it more than two chimneys...shall be exempt from payment of the duties thereon imposed by colour of any exemption or pretext whatsoever.'⁷⁹ So, the larger properties were less likely to become exempt. However, repeated changes to legislation, suspected examples of tax evasion and changes in the methods of collection make direct comparison of individual Hearth Tax returns problematic.

⁷⁷ D. Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700 – 1870* (London, 1997), p. 57.

⁷⁸ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population History*, p. 655. Asiatic cholera first arrived in England in 1832.

⁷⁹ 16 Charles II, c. 3.

Two Hearth Tax returns from Macclesfield have survived: 1664 and 1673/4.⁸⁰ Both returns list householders and the number of hearths but neither return specifies where within the town a property was located. This makes it impossible to determine richer or poorer parts of the town, even if such social stratifications existed.⁸¹ Beyond these similarities, it became immediately obvious that they were compiled under different legislation which reduces the ability to make direct comparisons. The return for 1664 lists both chargeable and non-chargeable households, totalling 582. From this it is possible to determine the percentage of 'poor' households from those which were exempt from payment – 55 per cent. It was also possible to draw conclusions based upon Paul Slack's broad categorisation of poor (one or two hearths), 'modest' (three to five hearths) and 'comfortable' (over five hearths) for the entire town.⁸² The return for 1673/4 excludes non-chargeable households. The number of taxable households had increased, as had the number of households with more than five hearths. In 1664, only four households were taxed on more than five hearths, each having six hearths. By 1673/4, nine households were taxed for six hearths and there were taxes levied on seven hearths (three households), eight hearths (two) and even nine hearths (one). The 1673/4 Return actually contains three returns, Lady Day 1673, Michealmas 1673 and Lady Day 1674. This also allows us to see new houses being built or existing houses being extended and having more hearths added. Edward Wheelton, for example, was taxed on no hearths for 1673 but on one hearth for Lady Day, 1674. J. Harper built a larger property and was taxed on two hearths for Lady

⁸⁰ PRO E 179/86/145; E 179/86/155. A third return, for 1663, exists but is in an illegible condition, E 179/244/33.

⁸¹ G. Sjoberg, *The Pre-Industrial City* (New York, 1960), pp. 97 – 100, 118 – 23. However, Power has shown this not to be the case for London, M. Power, 'The Social Topography of Restoration London', in A.L. Beier & R. Finlay (eds), *London 1500 – 1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London, 1986), pp. 199 – 223, on pp. 200 – 1.

⁸² P. Slack, 'Great and Good Towns, 1540 – 1700', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. II: 1540 – 1840 (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 347 – 76, on p. 359.

Day, 1674 but on no hearths for 1673. James Higginbotham was taxed on two hearths throughout 1673 but on five hearths for Lady Day, 1674. For the calculations for 1673/4, the higher figures were used. Nobody was blocking up hearths to avoid paying the tax.

5.5.1 'Comfortable Properties in Late-Seventeenth Century Macclesfield'

By concentrating on the fifteen houses taxed at over five hearths in 1673/4 it should be possible to identify the comparable taxpayers from a decade earlier. Starting with the assumption that the wealth required to possess a property taxable at this level would produce a relatively small pool of householders, it should be possible to make connections. In the intervening decade death, property sale and marriage, especially of a property owning female, meant that a connection between properties could be lost. This would be especially true because without the location of a property it is not possible to confirm whether it is the same property in both Hearth Tax returns or the same householder in different properties. The existence of more properties which Slack would have described as 'comfortable' and properties displaying greater comfort (based upon more hearths being added) shows that there was also an influx of new, 'comfortable' householders by 1673/4. A further complication is added by the change in style of address between the two returns. In 1664, christian name (or initial letter) and surname were almost universal. In the 1673/4 return, especially amongst the 'comfortable' properties, Mr and Alderman are most common. This produces potential confusion when, in 1673/4, Samuel Rowe was taxed at six hearths and Alderman Rowe at seven hearths. Despite these potential difficulties, initial findings show links in over one third of cases.

In 1664, for example, Samuel Blacklach was taxed for a property with five hearths and in 1673/4, Alderman Blacklach was taxed on a property with six hearths.⁸³ The identification of the alderman's Christian name comes from the will of Lancelot Bostock, alderman, in 1672 which mentions Samuel Blacklach of Macclesfield, alderman. The same will also identifies another Macclesfield alderman, William Rowe. William Rowe was taxed on six hearths in 1664 and Alderman Rowe was taxed on seven hearths in 1673/4.⁸⁴ The Corporation Minute Book confirms that there was a Samuel Blacklach serving as a capital burgess between 1654 until October 1675 and a William Rowe served between 1662 and October 1675.⁸⁵

A more convoluted route was required to prove other connections. Two of the three 'comfortable' female householders in 1673/4 shared common surnames with 'comfortable' male householders from 1664 – Thomas and Elin Dean and Anthony and Amy Booth. Were these widows with a life interest in the property? Or even owning the property in their own right? Thomas Deane, alderman and chapman, left a probate file in 1671.⁸⁶ This would fit into the profile of a significant townsman in 1664 but dead before 1673. Unfortunately, only an inventory survived which gave no details of either a wife or property, but goods and debts worth over £600 showing a man of significant standing. In 1687, Ellin Dean, widow, left her own probate file.⁸⁷ Her will makes no mention of her former husband's christian name nor does it make provision for the disposal of the house. The will is primarily concerned with the disposal of household goods and her personal effects, like her best silk gown and a petticoat which were bequeathed to Priscilla Dean, wife of Brian Dean of Macclesfield, alderman. The presence of Brian Dean as somebody with a common

⁸³ Also spelt Blacklache.

⁸⁴ Lancelot Bostock, alderman, WS 1672.

⁸⁵ CCRO LBM 1/1.

⁸⁶ WS 1671.

⁸⁷ WS 1687.

Table 5.15: Connections between Property Holders in 1664 and 1673/4.

1664 Householder	1664 Hearths	1673/4 Householder	1673/4 Hearths
Samuel Blacklach	5	Alderman Blacklach	6
		Alderman Keyhurst	6
William Lunt	5	Alderman Lunt ⁸⁸	6
William Watson	5	John Watson ⁸⁹	6
		Samuel Rowe	6
		William Cash	6
		Margaret Higginbotham	6
Anthony Booth	5	Amy Booth	6
		Edward Stapleton	6
		William Stockport	7
William Rowe	6	Alderman Rowe	7
Thomas Dean	6	Elin Deane	7
		Mr Cukford	8
William Davies	3 and 1	Alderman Davies ⁹⁰	8
		Mr Broadhurst	9

surname and sufficient standing in the town to serve as alderman, like Thomas, suggests another family link. There was also an apprentice, Joseph Shaw. Together these details suggest that Ellen or Elin Dean was the wife of Thomas Dean, alderman and chapman, and had been given a life interest in a 'comfortable' family home with six hearths on Thomas' death in 1671. Ellen also seems to have carried on with her husband's trade, which could explain how she was able to afford to live in such a large property. The property may have had another hearth added by 1673/4, or perhaps the assessors were more scrupulous in their assessments. On her death in 1687, Ellen's interest in the property terminated and it descended to an unknown individual, probably specified in Thomas' lost will. This would also show that she had

⁸⁸ William Lunt, alderman, WS 1672.

⁸⁹ William Watson, WS 1672; John Watson, gentleman, WS 1695. The dates of their deaths show William would have been taxed in 1664 and John in 1673/4. William's will cites John as his son and heir.

⁹⁰ This connection is more difficult to prove. The will of a William Davie, yeoman, was appraised in 1680 (WS 1680), but the inventory shows only four rooms in the house which are unlikely to have required eight hearths. Another William Davie, innkeeper, had his will proved in 1702 (WS 1702) and his inventory showed nine rooms. Neither will mentioned the deceased as an alderman, but during the lapse in time between 1673/4 and 1702, the second William Davie may well have resigned from his civic duties. He is the most likely contender for Alderman Davies.

only a life interest in the property or until her children by Thomas came of age, as is specified in other wills of the period.⁹¹

The case of Anthony and Amy Booth is less convoluted and more revealing. Anthony Booth, gentleman, died in 1669, again confirming that he would have been assessed for the Hearth Tax in 1664 but not in 1673/4. In his will he left his messuage in Jordangate to his wife, Amy.⁹² An Amy Booth, widow, died in 1695.⁹³ Her will did not specify the fate of the messuage, but her inventory listed the value of property (unfortunately not the rooms, which would have listed 'fire irons' to identify hearths) in each of six rooms. The Booth's Jordangate property consisted of a 'dwelling house', parlour, buttery, two chambers and a brewhouse, each apparently with a hearth. As Slack would no doubt agree, very comfortable indeed.

Within this select group of 'comfortable' households in 1673/4 almost half have an identifiable link over the previous ten years. Even within this apparent stability there is major change. There was a significant increase in the number of 'comfortable' properties being taxed, and also the maximum number of hearths in a property rose significantly. Throughout the decade, Macclesfield was able to provide some of its inhabitants with improved economic conditions which can be seen through domestic improvement in the form of new hearths (although evasion in 1664 may account for some of this discrepancy) and also attracted immigrants with sufficient capital not only to invest in property, but also to invest in property which was larger than had been known a decade before, based upon the number of hearths.

⁹¹ The will of James Andrew, alderman, WS 1698 illustrates both of these conditions. His wife, Ann, received a life interest in lands in Didsbury, Lancashire, but the house in Chestergate was to be kept until a daughter, Mary, was 21 when the households goods were to be divided between four daughters, but Ann was to keep them for life or until she remarried.

⁹² WS 1669.

⁹³ WS 1695.

5.5.2 Poor Households in Macclesfield.

Table 5.16, below, places the Macclesfield Hearth Tax returns against the returns from a selection of other English provincial towns. The 1673/4 findings have been included for comparison, but as it does not show the non-chargeable households, its usefulness is limited. The returns imply that four new properties were being built between 1673 and 1674 based upon those properties taxed only for 1674. Assuming that this was an average figure and that four new properties were built each year since the 582 properties listed in 1664, it can be estimated that there were another forty properties built making a total of 622. This figure only represents an increase in householders amongst the chargeable households and is certainly an underestimation of the growth of houses.

In Table 5.15, Macclesfield has the highest level of properties with one or two hearths (Slack's 'poor') and the lowest levels of household with more than two hearths. Seventeen per cent more Macclesfield properties had only one or two hearths than the next nearest, Norwich, less than half the three to five hearths range seen in Norwich and only one ninth of the number of properties with over five hearths in Newcastle. Accounts of the Hearth Tax regularly contain comments about undervaluation, but the figure for Macclesfield show such a deviation from the nearest other figures that it is difficult to see how evasion on such a scale was possible. Unlike the percentage of households which were exempt from paying the Hearth Tax, which it can be argued is a subjective decision, there can be less variation in the number of hearths a property possessed. Map 2.6 shows that north and east Cheshire as a whole has low percentages of three or more hearths while Map 2.7 shows the same area with high levels of exemption through poverty, so Macclesfield reflects a regional pattern. There is a correlation between high percentages with one or two

hearths and high percentages of exempt households. Macclesfield, Norwich, Colchester and Hereford all had one or two hearths at 70 per cent or higher, and exemptions over 50 per cent.

Table 5.16: Housing and Status from the Hearth Taxes: English provincial towns.⁹⁴

Town	Percentage of Households with			Percentage of Households Exempt
	1 – 2 Hearths	3 – 5 Hearths	>5 Hearths	
Macclesfield 1664	93	6	0.7	55
Macclesfield 1673/4	73	22	4	NA
Norwich 1671	76	16	8	59
Bristol 1671	53	37	11	21
Newcastle 1665	76	18	6	41
Exeter 1672	70	19	11	40
York 1672	56	39	16	20
Chester 1664/5	67	22	11	40
Colchester 1674	72	21	7	53
Ipswich 1664	69	20	11	52
Ipswich 1674	54	29	17	38
Worcester 1678	70	24	7	33
Coventry 1666	68	23	8	41
Hull 1673	60	28	12	19
Gloucester 1664	54	31	15	29
Leicester 1670	70	23	7	27
Winchester 1665	59	27	14	29
Hereford 1664	73	20	7	50

Trying to explain why Macclesfield should have such low levels of households with more than two hearths and show such high levels of poverty based upon exemption is difficult without knowledge of the location of the exempt properties. Probate is of limited use. Within the restricted sample of the ‘comfortable’ households, the location of only one household was identified, that of Anthony and Amy Booth in Jordangate.⁹⁵ Even with probate there is no need to list the location of the property except to distinguish it from other property in the same will. Also, the inheritance of a property may be laid don in another will, for example granting the

⁹⁴ After Slack, ‘Great and Good Towns’, Table 11.2. See also N.J. Alldridge, ‘House and Household in Restoration Chester’, *UHY* (1983), pp. 39 – 52, Table 1 on p. 41 for Chester.

⁹⁵ See pp. 235 – 6.

wife a life interest in a property, so there is no need for the wife's will to specify the property's descent. Stella Davies has identified a poor street in early-seventeenth century Macclesfield during a plague in 1603. Fifty-six people died in Dog Lane compared with thirty-six from the remaining four streets.⁹⁶ Dog Lane alone could not have accounted for all of the 358 exempt properties in 1664. This high proportion of one or two hearth households exempt from taxation would suggest the presence of cottages built upon the Common to accommodate vagrants and the migrating poor.⁹⁷ David Levine's study of Shepshead identified rural poverty as a factor in the development of proto-industrialization, but that this failed to prevent Shepshead from remaining poverty-stricken when compared with agrarian-only communities in east Leicestershire.⁹⁸ The presence of a seemingly profitable proto-industry was no guarantee of eliminating poverty, but then a factor in proto-industrialization was the presence of subsistence rural labour which would be paid low wages for their unproductive time.

5.6 Conclusion

Macclesfield was a polarised society in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Whether or not it continued to polarise is difficult to determine satisfactorily due to the lack of consistent sources over a wide period of time used in this chapter, although the evidence from chapter 4 suggests that polarisation did continue. Nevertheless, the Hearth Tax returns give the impression of a society divided between the poor, where a uniquely high 55 per cent were exempt from

⁹⁶ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 72.

⁹⁷ This would support Sjoberg's assertion of the poorest living on the periphery.

⁹⁸ D. Levine, 'The Demographic Implications of Rural Industrialization: A Family Reconstruction Study of Shepshead, Leicestershire, 1600 – 1851', *Social History*, ii (May, 1976), pp. 179, 180.

payment, but at the other end of the scale there was a growing section of society which was increasing in wealth in terms of the number of hearths in their household.

This wealthier section of society would have been better represented in the probate material and therefore left an impression of the level of domestic comfort they had enjoyed. The impression given is a society which was not identical to any other known in England, but not significantly different from a 'national average'. If Macclesfield's probate files, and therefore households, were more likely to possess one consumer item than would be expected nationally, then it was less likely to possess another, and yet more goods matched the national average. What is left is the image of a town with a unique consumer image, but which is not significantly different from the national picture. At the opposite end of the scale, the poverty highlighted by the Hearth Tax exemptions may well have contributed to the mortality crisis identified in the late-1690s, but which appears nowhere else in England or Wales as that time. As such, Macclesfield conforms to the general national image for consumer goods, yet with its own unique combination of individual consumer goods, but at the same time displayed evidence of extreme poverty which would have been a contributory factor to the mortality crisis of the late-1690s, which appears to have been unprecedented in England and Wales.

As a town, the seasonality of the vital events suggests that despite the wealth created by silk and its associations with industrial processes, urban community still retained a distinctly agrarian characteristic. This questions the extent to which Macclesfield was just a silk town and to what extent the town was 'urban' in the modern sense.

Chapter 6: Chapmen and the Macclesfield Silk Industry.¹

6.1 Introduction

As has been noted in the Introduction and is shown at the beginning of chapter 8, many towns in early modern England were noted for a single dominant industry. Even today, Macclesfield is known as a 'silk town', referring to woven silk. Most histories of the silk industry in England begin with the arrival of French refugees to Spitalfields in London.² In the early modern period, Macclesfield was also known as a silk town, but this was the silk button trade. Wooden buttons were 'wrought' with silk or mohair thread to make intricate designs. The aim of this chapter is to assess the way in which this industry operated and changes within the industry over time. It is not possible to create a comparative survey of this industry in Macclesfield with other centres of production because, with the exception of production on a limited scale in Congleton and Leek, Macclesfield appears to have been the centre of silk button production in the country.³

In early modern England and Europe, the chapman was a middleman or a dealer in anything: petty chapmen or peddlers walked the roads of England to distribute small goods, often light cloths, books and small wares.⁴ These chapmen played an invaluable role in making accessible to the more isolated parts of England

¹ This chapter covers all of the occupational classifications which come under Silk, as discussed in chapter 2. Therefore, there is no need for these occupational classifications to be covered in chapter 7.

² For example, see N. Rothstein, 'Canterbury and London: The Silk Industry in the Late Seventeenth Century', *Textile History*, xx, (1) (Spring, 1989), pp. 33 – 48 and S. Chapman, 'Vanners in the English Silk Industry', *Textile History*, xxiii, (1) (Spring, 1992), pp. 71 – 86.

³ At the 2003 Annual Conference of the Economic History Conference, I was informed by Mr Henry French of the University of Exeter of the existence of thirteen probate files for silk button manufacturers from this period from Sherbourne, Dorset. He was unable to supply the details before this thesis was submitted.

⁴ M. Spufford, *The Great Reclotting of Rural England* (London, 1984), p. 33; *Oxford English Dictionary*, pp. 277 – 8; L. Fontaine, *History of Pedlars in Europe*, trans. V. Whittaker (Cambridge, 1996), p. 2. Jon Stobart has noted that the chapmen linked the town to 'international supplies and

the benefits of improvements in mercantile trade and industrial production. As will be shown in chapter 8, chapmen were also the professional horse dealers at Macclesfield's horse fair.⁵

Margaret Spufford noted both the high concentration and exceptional wealth of chapmen in Cheshire and, in particular, Macclesfield. Of 127 inventories of chapmen and chapwomen identified by her, seventeen were from Cheshire. This figure was second only to Lincolnshire (twenty-one). She identified a small group of wealthy chapmen in Cheshire, lead by one with the spectacular sum of £4022 plus in excess of £5000 in debts owing to him. Outside of this group, only one other chapman, from Lincoln, had wealth in excess of £275. The median wealth was £28 (excluding debts) while the estates of half of the chapmen were appraised at between £5 and £30. The largest single group, one fifth, was appraised at between £10 and £19.⁶

The reason for this high concentration and wealth of chapmen in Cheshire is that the chapman (and chapwoman) in Macclesfield were not all the itinerant peddler travelling salesmen. It was the chapmen who controlled the silk button industry. As with all early modern economic descriptors, it is not initially evident whether the person in question was a journeyman or the operator of a significant concern with resources measured in thousands of pounds.

As well as chapmen, thirteen other occupations associated which the button industry have been identified. These have been grouped together as follows:

- a. Chapmen/women, buttonman.

demands', J. Stobart, 'In Search of Causality: A Regional Approach to Urban Growth in Eighteenth Century England', *Geografiska Annaler*, vol. 82B, no. 3 (2000), pp. 149 – 164, on p. 159.

⁵ Spufford, *Great Reclathing*, pp. 87 – 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 35, 43.

- b. Silk throwster, throwster, silk twister, twister.⁷
- c. Dyer, thread dyer, button dyer.
- d. Button mould turner, mould thrower.
- e. Silkweaver.
- f. Gimptwister.
- g. Dealer in silk.

In total, these occupations account for 115 probate files, or 12 per cent of the whole corpus of material.

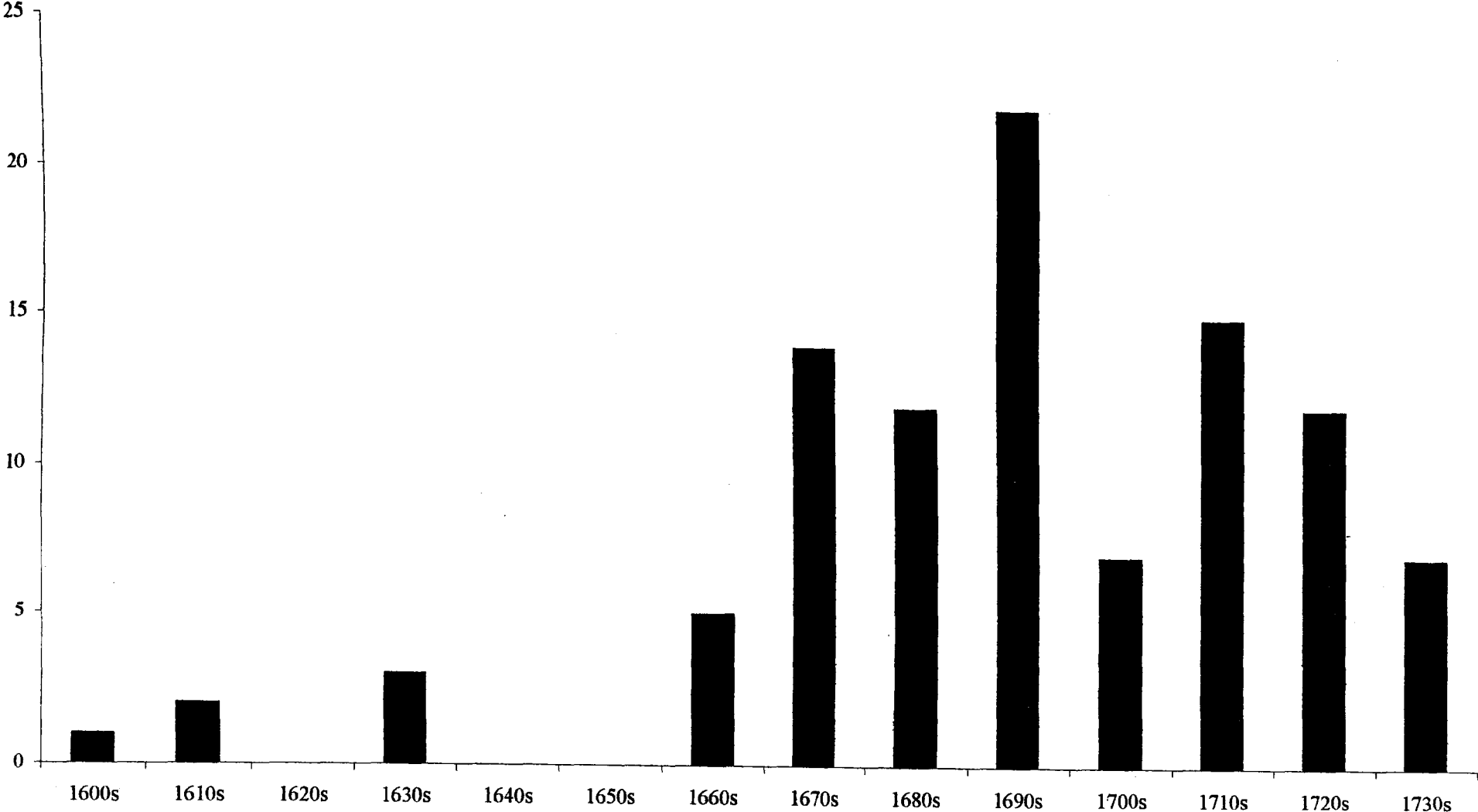
Chart 6.1 illustrates the chronological distribution of chapmen's probate material. The absence of material for the 1640s and 1650s is what one would expect to find as has been seen across the whole spread of the probate material used. The peak of wills proven in the 1690s would indicate the deaths of the generation that entered the button industry in response to the opportunities created by increased demand for consumer goods in Restoration England. A second peak in the 1710s may well represent sons or apprentices who followed their fathers or masters into the button industry. Unfortunately, it has so far been impossible to confirm such a link. Table 6.4 summarises all of the chapmen and others associated with the silk industry which have been identified from the probate files.

6.2 Chapmen and Petty Chapmen.

Margaret Spufford took the example of Amos Fowler of Macclesfield, chapman, to illustrate the chapman as a supplier of finished goods (in this case, buttons) to petty chapmen who sold them around the surrounding area. According to

⁷ For convenience, I shall use 'throwster' throughout for all of these occupations.

Chart 6.1: Macclesfield Probate Files from the Silk Button Industry, 1600 - 1740.



Spufford, Fowler's inventory showed a shop stock of thirteen bags of buttons, worth £3 11s 6d or the equivalent of 5s 6d per bag. In addition, there were 'buttons out to' six people worth £31, or some 113 bags. This was interpreted as goods being provided on a 'sale or return' basis, as operated by London chapbook publishers.⁸

However, Amos Fowler was not supplying petty chapmen. Rather he was supplying goods wholesale on a much larger scale. Of the six people who took Fowler's buttons, five were men identified as 'Mr'. The sixth person was Esther Taylor. One of these, 'Mr Jno Hough' was probably John Hough, junior, of Macclesfield, chapman, whose estate was appraised at £91 16s 3d.⁹ Although Hough called himself 'chapman', there is no evidence of the button trade in his will or inventory. Indeed his will was concerned with the raising of £1000 for his children from his estates in Macclesfield, Whitefield and Henbury. The only income identifiable from his inventory is from oats growing on the ground worth £6 10s. Although it is not possible to determine the exact value of Hough's estate, the fact that he could conceivably raise £1000 from his estates suggests that he is not one of Margaret Spufford's itinerant wandering petty chapmen.

Petty chapmen are also evident in the probate material. The estate of John Metcleare of Macclesfield, chapman, was appraised on 7 April 1663.¹⁰ From a total estate of £24 6s 8d, £21 were accounted for as trade goods: Manchester wares and some other small wares, fine linen cloth 'Sears' and bone lace, 'bunus' handkerchiefs and cross cloths. The median wealth of £28 identified by Spufford, above, and the evidence of light, easily transportable consumer goods like lace suggests that Metcleare was one of Margaret Spufford's petty chapmen. John Walker, whose estate

⁸ Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, p. 83; WS 1718.

⁹ WS 1724.

was appraised in the same year as Metcleare's, may have been another petty chapman, with an estate appraised at £7 6s 5d and goods concentrated on inkle and eighteen thimbles. Walker also possessed a nag, which Spufford sees as an essential step for the development of a chapman's career, enabling him to stay out longer with more goods.¹¹ The inventory of Thomas Barber's estate also showed that his trade goods were dominated by 'Manchester ware and Eamey', linen and boarding cloth.¹² However, chapmen associated with the button industry predominate.

6.3 Organisation of the Button Trade

Warrington has argued that there has been an English silk industry since the middle of the fourteenth century when, in 1363 (probably 37 Ed III, c. 6), it was enacted that no weaver or merchant could engage in more than one process but women could work as previously. This act does not specifically mention silk. As silk had to be imported into England, the English silk industry was placed at a natural disadvantage against the silk-producing nations, initially Italy but also France after the Seven Years War. Another fourteenth-century Act of Parliament protected English silk women who prepared silk for embroiders against the import of silk thread by Italians.¹³ There certainly was an English silk industry by the mid-fifteenth century when Henry VI banned the import of all wrought silk goods for five years to protect the English silkwomen.¹⁴

¹⁰ WI 1663.

¹¹ Spufford, *Great Reclathing*, pp. 45 – 6.

¹² WS 1669. Estate appraised at £83 14s with trade goods at £4 13s.

¹³ B.G. Warrington, *The Historical Geography of the Silk Industry in the Towns of Macclesfield, Congleton and Leek* (unpublished University of Liverpool B.A. dissertation, 1932), p. 35; K. Lacy, 'The Production of 'Narrow Ware' by Silkwomen in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century England', *Textile History*, xviii, (2) (Autumn, 1987), pp. 187 – 204.

¹⁴ 33 Hen. VI, c. 5. See also 19 Hen. VII, c. 18. Visit <http://www.et-tu.com/soper-lane/> for an interesting insight into the 15th century English silk industry.

Prior to the arrival of Flemish weavers in England in the sixteenth century the native silk industry was concentrated on twisting silk for hand sewing and embroidery and narrow weaving for ribbons. A community of Flemish weaving immigrants introduced broad weaving into England in the sixteenth century. A fellowship of throwsters was founded in London in 1562 and by 1621 there were said to be 'twelve foreign throwsters and hundreds of weavers' dealing with silk in east London. They were incorporated into a Company in 1629. This community received considerable impetus with the arrival of Huguenot refugees following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685).¹⁵ However, the industrial activities around Macclesfield were concerned with silk thread being applied to wooden button moulds, not broad weaving. The earliest reference to the button trade in Macclesfield comes from the Corporation accounts in 1574:

"Debt for buttony and for makying of Buttony to ye value of 15s 2d"¹⁶

A.F. Shapley notes that a number of writers, including James Corry, state that this date would suggest an earlier date for the introduction of silk manufacture to Macclesfield.¹⁷ Aikin describes the buttons as 'wrought buttons in silk, mohair, and twist....thy were once curiously wrought with a needle.'¹⁸ Warrington identified the earliest Macclesfield button maker in 1656 when he was married in Leek. However, the earliest chapman recorded in the Macclesfield probate material was Stephen Rowe

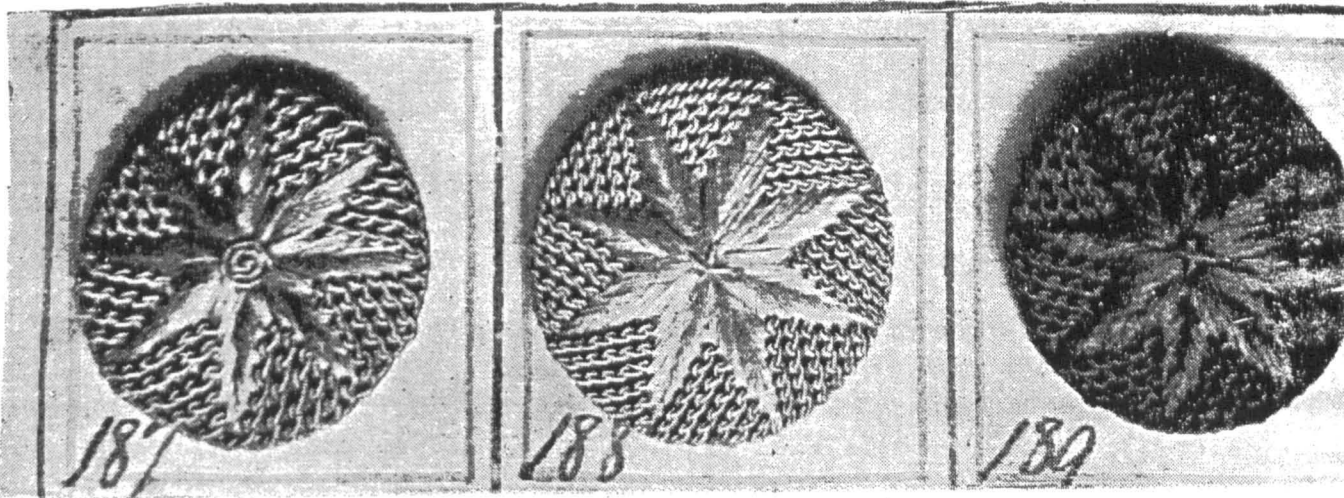
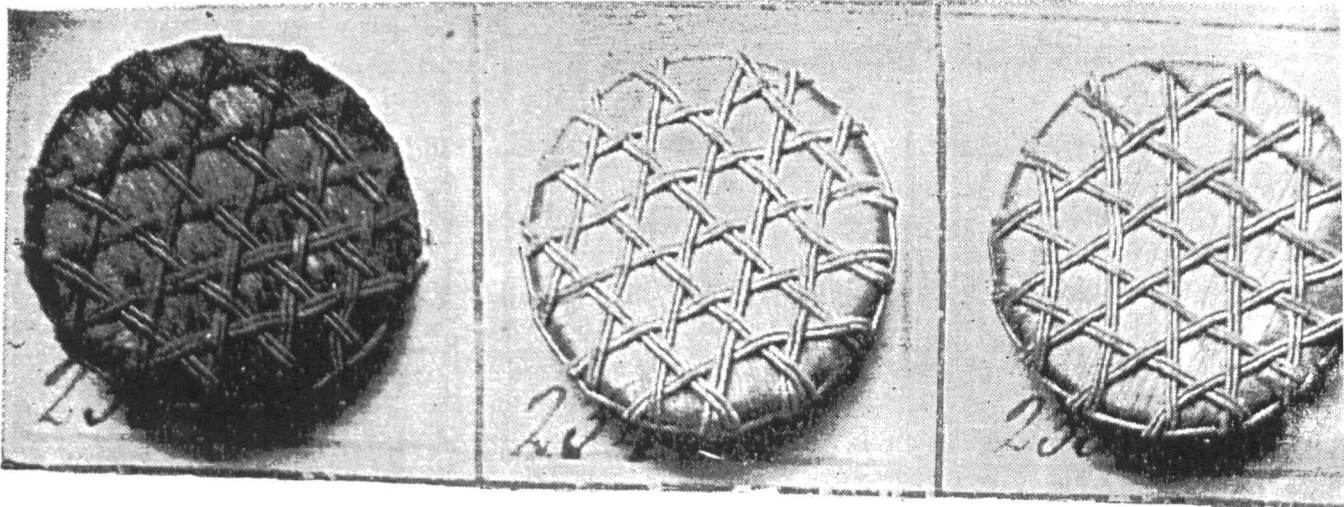
¹⁵ Warrington, *Historical Geography*, pp. 35 – 6; A.F. Shapley, *The Industrial Geography of Macclesfield* (unpublished University of Liverpool B.A. dissertation, 1968), p. 9; G.B. Hertz, 'The English Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century', *EHR*, xxiv (1909), pp. 710 – 727, on p. 710.

¹⁶ Quoted in Warrington, *Historical Geography*, p. 38; J.P. Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol. II, (London, 1880), p. 485.

¹⁷ Shapley, *Industrial Geography*, p. 11.

¹⁸ J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country Thirty or Forty Miles around Manchester* (London, 1795), p. 436; Warrington, *Historical Geography*, p. 38; Hertz, 'English Silk Industry', p. 711.

Plate 6.2: Examples of Macclesfield Silk Buttons.



whose will was proved in 1617, although Nicholas Blacklache was described as 'silkman' in 1606.¹⁹ The evidence cited here which predates the influx of Huguenots into the English silk industry shows that the Macclesfield button industry followed an earlier native industry going back to the middle ages when silk was prepared for embroidery.

The button industry was also to be found in Congleton. Warrington states that before the arrival of the button industry in Congleton there had been a point making industry. 'Congleton points' were laces tipped with metal for securing hose to upper garments and in lieu of buttons or hooks and eyes for front fastenings. Warrington specifically mentions that the laces were made of leather although it was not unknown for other materials to be used, including silk. If the development of the Congleton button trade was retarded by the pre-existence of a similar trade, as Warrington suggests, then the pre-existence of supply and distribution chains in the vicinity of Macclesfield may have acted as a stimulus for Macclesfield's button trade. This would be particularly significant if it could be proven that silk was involved in Congleton's point-making industry. That would explain why an industry based on silk developed so far from London. The original London road from Coventry to Warrington passed to the west of Congleton until the introduction of the turnpiked roads and the mail coach in 1762 when the main route was moved further east and closer to Macclesfield.²⁰ A supply of silk into Cheshire would have been more likely to find its way to Congleton in the earlier periods.²¹ The point does need to be made that there is no more substantial evidence with which to formulate a theory about why the silk button industry came to be focused on Macclesfield.

¹⁹ Nicholas Blacklache, WS 1606; Stephen Rowe, WS 1617.

²⁰ Warrington, *Historical Geography*, pp. 41, 45; see pp. 106 – 7 for silk points being distrained.

6.4 Supply, Control and Production of Silk

The English silk industry relied on imported raw materials which automatically placed the supply of silk to English manufacturers into the hands of merchants engaged in overseas trade or their associates. This could be contrasted with, for example, the woollen trade where the supply of the raw material was in the hands of the producers. This control of the supply of the silk, together with the high cost of the raw materials, led to the development of a control over the silk trade by a limited number of merchants, initially mercers. The concentration of the resources of the trade into a small number of hands may have contributed to the earlier industrialisation of the trade when compared with cotton and, in particular, wool.

All of the Mediterranean countries produced silk although it was Italy, where the silk industry had been established from the tenth century, which supplied most of England's requirements until overtaken by imports from China in the late-eighteenth century. Italian silk was used for the warp in weaving until the introduction of machinery in 1718, which replaced the Italian manufacturers. Previously, English throwsters had been unable to manufacture organzines or fine trams. Silk from Turkey and the Levant was of inferior quality but was the main silk to be used for light thrown silks, known as trams, which were produced by English throwsters. In 1715, 2500 bales of silk were imported from Turkey and the Levant, 1300 from Italy and 850 from India and the Far East.²²

Raw silk occurs in the form of cocoons and reeled silk: 100 lb. of cocoons produces 9 lb. of silk so the cocoons are rarely exported. Five or more cocoons are immersed in hot water and filaments of silk are unreeled. The natural gumminess of

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19 – 20, 37 – 8, 41.

the silk binds the threads together to produce a continuous yarn and it is in this form that the hanks reach the English merchants. Silk in this state is called 'strands'.²³

Silk is twisted, rather than spun as with cotton and wool, to produce a thread suitable for weaving.²⁴ The presence of twistors in the Macclesfield probate material shows that twisting was also required to prepare the silk for the button trade.²⁵ Throwing involves doubling, twisting, cleaning, a second doubling and a final twist, also known as spinning. There are three classes of thrown silk: singles, tram and organzine. Singles is a single strand of twisted silk consisting of several strands. Tram consists of two or three strands, which are not twisted before doubling and only lightly spun at the end. Organzine is a strong silk used for the warp in weaving where two twisted strands are spun in the contrary direction. Organzine requires a production process considerably more complicated than that for tram and so, according to Warrington, organzine was not produced in England before the invention of a suitable machine, in 1718, by John Lombe. Prior to that date, all organzine was imported into England from Italy.

Warrington describes the twisting process for the button trade: threads were fixed at one end and to a wheel at another, which was rotated at great speed. Two or three of these twists were then united and twisted in the opposite direction in a process resembling rope production.²⁶ Whether or not this constitutes tram or went under another name is not made clear from the probate files. Warrington has an unaccredited

²² For an introduction to the silk industry and sericulture, see S. Bush, *The Silk Industry* (Haverfordwest, 2000); Warrington, *Historical Geography*, pp. 28 – 9.

²³ The information on the preparation of silk comes from Warrington, pp. 32 – 3. It is primarily concerned with the processes for woven silk. See also Bush, *Silk Industry*, pp. 13 – 9.

²⁴ However, see n. 89 for circumstances when silk is spun.

²⁵ There earliest twistors recorded in the Macclesfield probate material were both in 1664: William Goodin, twister, WI 1664; the estate of Isabell Robothom, no occupation, WI 1664 was administered by John Robothom of Macclesfield, silk twister. However, in the inventory of Elizabeth Stapleton, widow, WI 1661, were two twisting wheels, one winding wheel, swifts and bobbins worth £4.

²⁶ Warrington, *Historical Geography*, p. 54.

quote describing 'hand-made buttons of three-cord silk mixed with mohair'.²⁷ The probate inventories and the quote by Aikin (see page 216, above) provide evidence of mohair being used in the button trade. The 'three-cord' description would suggest that tram was being used for the button trade. The import of tram from Persia and India was prohibited in 1700 to give protection to the native industry which would also suggest that it was tram being used in the button trade.²⁸ The words 'tram' and 'organzine' do not appear in any of the probate files.

A failed attempt to establish a throwing mill in Derby inspired John Lombe, who had been apprenticed there, to visit Italy and learn the secrets of throwing. On his return to England he set up a second factory in Derby in 1718 with his half-brother, Thomas Lombe, a London silk-merchant. Lombe's patent expired in 1732 and Charles Roe, from Castleton but brother of a curate of Macclesfield, established a twisting mill in Macclesfield in 1743 – 4. Thus the twisting aspect of the silk trade was industrialised almost 60 years before the spinning element of the cotton trade, in 1775.²⁹ Derby and Nottingham were the main centres of the silk stocking trade, which depended on imported Italian organzines.

The impact of Lombe's factory in Derby, just 40 miles from Macclesfield, on the local twisters will require further attention. The London-based Company of Twisters opposed Lombe's machine in 1718 and other manufacturers in Macclesfield, Stockport and Leek opposed any extension to Lombe's patent in 1732.³⁰ The presence

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁹ C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), pp. 113 – 4, 125; Warrington, *Historical Geography*, p. 46; Shapley, *Industrial Geography*, p. 9; Hertz 'English Silk Industry', pp. 719, 721. Most writers date the silk mill to 1756, but W.H. Chaloner, 'Charles Roe of Macclesfield: 1715 – 1781: An Eighteenth Century Industrialist', *TLCAS*, lxii (1951), pp. 133 – 156 successfully argued for a date of 1743 – 4, on pp. 136 – 7; J.B. Owen, *The Eighteenth Century, 1714 – 1815* (London, 1974), p. 135.

³⁰ Warrington, *Historical Geography*, pp. 34, 47. See 5 Geo. II, c. 8 for a Parliamentary recompense granted to Lombe.

of a twisting industry across east Cheshire despite the presence of Lombe's mill implies that Lombe was unable to satisfy demands from the whole English market or that different types of silks were required for different industrial processes. This would provide a market for other twisters although those who were without access to Lombe's technology could be expected to be working in depressed economic conditions.

6.5 'An Act to prevent the making or selling Buttons made of Cloth, Serge, Drugget or other Stuffs', 1718.

A number of writers have commented on attempts to artificially maintain the silk button industry through the above Act of Parliament, passed in 1718, by which buttons (and button-holes) were to be made of silk. There is some truth to this as the Act reduced excise duty on Turkish silk and mohair.³¹ Corry, for example, considered this act to be counterproductive: 'But this act was considered by the people arbitrary, and totally inconsistent with their constitutional liberties, it therefore soon excited popular odium, and was eventually injurious to the manufacture it was intended to protect'.³² However, this Act was just the last in a series of legislative measures covering twenty years. The Act of 1718 replaced an earlier 'ineffectual' Act of 1709, which had replaced another 'ineffectual' Act of 1698. The legislation was re-issued in 1778.³³ This earliest Act was entitled 'An Act to prevent the making or selling Buttons made of Cloth, Serge, Drugget or other Stuffs' but made no mention to

³¹ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 123, but see n. 33 below; P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727 – 1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 175; R. Davies, 'The Rise of Protection in England, 1689 – 1786', *ECHR*, xix (1966), pp. 306 – 317, on p. 311; 4 Geo. I, c. 7.

³² J. Corry, *The History of Macclesfield* (London, 1817), p. 56.

³³ 10 Will 3, c. 2; 8 Anne, c. 6. Similarly, in 1733 the silk industry attacked the Treasury for failing to enforce Acts of 2 W&M, c. 9 and 1 Anne, c. 27 which forbade the import of thrown silk from Italy and Sicily, Hertz, 'English Silk Industry', p. 714. Aikin, *Thirty or Forty Miles around Manchester*, p. 434.

Macclesfield or other centres of button production although it does note the large numbers of people employed in manufacturing silk and mohair. In fact, the preamble makes it clear that the Act was aimed at increasing the exports of woollen goods. This was to be achieved by importing more silk and mohair from Turkey 'and other Foreign Parts' which would then encourage them to import more woollen goods from England. Those Acts passed under Ann and George I cover the same points as in the Act of William III, but enlarge on it and note its failure. To determine the success or failure of these Acts would require a study of imports and exports between England and the silk and mohair producing countries, which is outside of the scope of this dissertation. Furthermore, the Act would have been competing with changes in fashion and the price of alternative buttons: the Sheffield metal button manufactures would have been in direct competition with the silk button manufactures. Although Hertz was writing about woven silk, for him 'the vagaries of English fashions were utterly uninfluenced by any patriotic preference'.³⁴ If the Acts were aimed at protecting the silk button industry, then they were first introduced at a time when there is no other evidence of decline, and almost a quarter of a century before Defoe wrote that Macclesfield was still noted for button manufacture.³⁵ If these Acts were aimed at the silk industry rather than woollen exports, then it could be argued that they were introduced to promote rather than protect the silk industries, although promotion could have turned to protection as the Acts were repeated. N.B. Harte notes that after 1604, legislation about styles of dress was more concerned with the balance of trade than controlling fashion as had been the case with the numerous Sumptuary Laws

³⁴ D. Hey, *Fiery Blades of Hallamshire: Sheffield and its Neighbours, 1660 – 1740* (Leicester, 1991), pp. 122 – 6; Hertz, 'English Silk Industry', p. 720.

³⁵ See Defoe's quote at the beginning of chapter 8.

since 1337. Again, this would suggest that the purpose of these laws for the wearing of silk buttons was not to protect the silk industry but to encourage woollen exports.³⁶

6.6 The Probate Evidence: Throwsters and Twisters.

There are probate files for thirteen twisters or throwsters, between 1664 and 1758. The files contain nine wills, seven probate inventories and four bonds of administration. It is expected that the earlier twisters and throwsters were employed for the button-making industry while those after 1740 would have been employed in Charles Roe's factory, which was built in 1743 – 4. The term 'throwster' only appears in probate files after 1725 while twisters are noted from the mid-sixteenth century.³⁷

The seven probate inventories give values of appraised goods from which it is possible to deduce the standard of living of the throwsters. Four of the throwsters were appraised at between £10 and £25, which could indicate the average wealth of a working throwster.³⁸ At the lower end of the scale, the inventory of William Goodin, twister, was appraised at only £1 14s.³⁹ Goodin's inventory shows no means of supporting himself or his wife, except for two hens, indicating that he may have been a journeyman.

The upper end of the appraised accounts shows evaluations which are in a totally different league to those previously mentioned: Jonas Hall's inventory was appraised at in excess of £460 while that of James Andrew was appraised at £1046 2s

³⁶ N.B. Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England' in D.C. Coleman & A.H. John (eds), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England* (London, 1976), pp. 132 – 165, esp. pp. 134, 149, 153; Corry, *Macclesfield*, p. 56; Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 123. However, Davies and Harte both mention an Act of 1720 for encouraging silk and mohair covered buttons. The only related Act of that year was 7 Geo. I, Stat. I, c. 13 which was concerned with the wearing of printed and striped textiles after 29 September, 1722. This Act does not mention buttons.

³⁷ William Goodin, twister, WI 1664; James Nickson of Macclesfield, throwster, received a bequest in the will of William Bagnall, gentleman, WS 1727.

³⁸ £12 10s 11d; £13 10s; £14 8s 5d; £25 6s 7d respectively.

6d.⁴⁰ Goods for dyeing and twisting worth over £100 and debts of various types worth over £750 can explain Andrew's wealth. An explanation for Hall's wealth is more difficult: there is no evidence of means to support his wife and five children except for three horses with a cart and packsaddles. These last items could suggest that Hall was engaged in a 'putting out' trade.

There are three bands of inventory valuations for the throwster. A low band around £1 may indicate a retired throwster or a journeyman working on wheels belonging to other throwsters. A middling band between £10 and £25 may indicate a prosperous self-employed throwster, possibly employing journeymen. Thirdly is the affluent throwster who controlled the supply of silk and who had sufficient capital to invest in other associated trades.

By the late-eighteenth century, twisting was taking place in garrets located in the loft space of several terraced houses.⁴¹ The seventeenth century inventory of Joseph Sherwin indicates that twisting took place in 'crofts' which were at the same location as their dwelling house, but a distinct building.⁴² Normally, parts of the dwelling house with a distinct function, for example a shop, were listed as part of the house. Sherwin possessed a silk wheel and two gimp wheels that would necessitate the construction of a separate building as a workshop for the wheels and any journeymen employed to operate them. Twenty-one years previously, the will of Julius Stockley, gentleman, showed he was in possession of several messuages in Macclesfield and a twisting alley, in the possession of Samuel Seddon.⁴³ As with Sherwin, above, the twisting alley appears to have been a distinct building of a long

³⁹ WI 1664. This is an under evaluation due to missing values and damage to the inventory. Even if this were taken into account, Goodin's inventory would still fall short of the £10 to £25 range.

⁴⁰ WS 1726; WS 1698.

⁴¹ See Plate 6.3.

⁴² WS 1698. One twisting croft and one dwelling house £8 13s.

narrow construction for silk twisting. Seddon appears in a number of late-seventeenth century wills in various capacities but unfortunately none specify his occupation. The evidence of twisting crofts/alleys apparently within the town suggests a relatively low population density to allow for them. The photograph in Plate 6.3 with garrets above housing testifies to the population pressure in an industrializing town.

The inventories of three other twisters show that they possessed their own wheels. In 1720, Thomas Smedhurst, twister, possessed five wheels, three engines and tools valued at £2.⁴⁴ The purpose of the engines is unclear, possibly winding gears. Edward Mottershead, twister, and Thomas Oldham, silktwister, possessed a single twisting wheel each.⁴⁵ Oldham's wheel was specifically called a silk wheel although there was no mention of silk in his inventory. Mottershead's inventory noted twelve mohairs but no silk. Mohair was an alternative to silk within the button trade. Both wheels included spindles and rices while Oldham's included bobbins to wind silk and mohair onto. Mottershead's wheel and equipment were valued at 4s and that of Oldham at 10s.

The other throwsters were probably either journeymen working in a croft like Joseph Sherwin, or on wheels belonging to other throwsters, possibly including one of Thomas Smedhurst's wheels. The inventory of John Barber, chapman, may illustrate the nature of this putting out process, although it should be noted that despite being a

⁴³ WS 1677.

⁴⁴ WS 1720.

⁴⁵ Edward Mottershead, WS 1727; Thomas Oldham, WS 1677.

Plate 6.3: Late-Eighteenth Century Twisting Garrets



'chapman' Barber was not working with silk or mohair, or producing buttons.⁴⁶ In his inventory, under 'Looms and work in them' are, for example, Charles Pott with one loom at £1 10s and 15 lb. lace yarn at 10d per lb. worth £2 2s 6d. The loom that Pott was working on was clearly the possession of Barber, as was the lace yarn. Eighteen craftsmen were listed in Barber's inventory, some with more than one loom. A substantial workshop would have been required which was not listed. This implies that these craftsmen were working from home on a loaned loom, sometimes two, which could have been worked by members of the family or a journeyman. In the same way, if a throwster was working on a loaned wheel and did not own the silk he was working, this would not appear in his inventory unless money was due for work done. Throwsters under this category would be under-represented in the probate files.

Edward Mottershead, as discussed above, was the only throwster to possess materials for working on his wheel, in this case eleven mohair wools.⁴⁷ The almost complete absence of either raw materials or finished goods in the possession of throwsters is peculiar, particularly when compared with chapmen. It suggests that throwsters, even those with their own wheel, were working raw materials which remained the property of the supplier, even when the throwster was not a journeyman.

Debts show that the craftsman was part of a supply chain. Just as throwsters did not necessarily possess raw materials and worked goods, they did not have many debts owing to them. James Andrew, alderman, was an exception.⁴⁸ He possessed over £100 worth of goods for dyeing and twisting thread. In addition, there were debts owing to him that accounted for almost 75 per cent of his appraised estate: book debts

⁴⁶ WC 1731 - 2.

⁴⁷ WS 1727.

⁴⁸ WS 1698.

worth £300, debts upon bond worth £200 and desperate debts valued at £251.⁴⁹ He clearly operated on a different economic scale to those operating Barber's looms. If the debts upon bond are considered to be 'sperate'⁵⁰ (and there is no indication that they were not) and an investment rather than a debt then the debts carried by Andrew can be reduced to some 50 per cent of his estate. Although this debt was large, it was by no means unique within the button trade: Edward Ridgeway's debts amounted to £375 7s 6d from an estate of £414 17s 8d, some 90 per cent.⁵¹

Thomas Oldham's debts were smaller in value, and the inventory named debtors; eight debtors owed £2 9s 3d between them (an average of 6s 2d each).⁵² Two of the debtors have been identified. William Hodgkinson may have been the Macclesfield chapman whose will had been proved two years previously and the 4s 10d debt might still have been owed by Hodgkinson's executors. As a chapman, Hodgkinson could have been purchasing twisted silk from Oldham. Margaret Higginbotham was another of Oldham's debtor's: at 9d she was the second smallest. She may have been the same as the widow of that name whose estate was appraised in 1685.⁵³ There is nothing in the probate file of this Margaret Higginbotham to connect her to the silk button industry or Thomas Oldham. This does not mean that she was not connected in some way, but suggests that caution is necessary when assuming that all debts are trade debts.

Although this study of the throwsters is based upon a small cohort of evidence, a considerable amount of information has been extracted. The most striking observation is the ale dominance of silk throwing compared with the traditionally

⁴⁹ Estate appraised at £1046 2s 6d.

⁵⁰ 'Sperate', good debts, the opposite of 'desperate'.

⁵¹ WS 1695.

⁵² Silktwister, WS 1677.

⁵³ WS 1685.

female dominance of wool spinning, and later cotton spinning. The only female to be mentioned in this section is Margaret Higginbotham and her 9d. debt which, assuming it was a throwing debt, was insignificant and only served to reinforce the male dominance. The explanation for this may come from the high cost of silk, compared to wool at least, and a desire by the chapmen to process the silk as quickly as possible to realise their profit. This would favour professional male throwsters rather than part-time females on the spinster model. Also, the various branches of the woollen industry developed from a traditional format based upon a division of labour within the family. Silk, being a new industry, provided the entrepreneur with a clean sheet from which to construct a more efficient system if it was required.

Throwing also moved out of the household in a move which precedes the separation on the domestic and industrial, although at this stage the twisting appears to have taken place in a separate building on the same plot of land as the domestic abode. Unfortunately, as probate was not obliged to list real estate, like twisting crofts, but did list movables like twisting wheels, it is difficult to determine the relationship between the two. Similarly, inventories like Thomas Smedhurst with five wheels and three engines do not make it clear where they were located. He may have been operating a workshop or proto-factory with seven or eight journeymen, as appears with Joseph Sherwin with three wheels and a twisting croft. Equally, though, the wheels could have been loaned to throwsters working from their own home for Smedhurst in a putting-out format which would have followed more traditional patterns.

The cost of twisting wheels may not have been excessive: John Sherwin's three wheels cost an average of 5s each, but they would have represented a considerable investment in moveable goods which explains why many of the twisters

identified through probate owned several wheels. What is less commonly recorded is the silk or mohair, although terms like 'silk wheel' indicates what the wheels were used for. The returns us to an earlier point, that the silk industry was controlled by a small number of chapmen. They paid throwsters to throw the silk rather than sold the silk, which would have enabled the chapmen to retain control over the silk. The throwsters themselves were throwsters themselves were either operating workshops and employing journeymen throwsters, or were putting out the silk to throwsters working on loaned wheel in their own home. The evidence is inconclusive, but in all likelihood both methods were practised side by side.

The evidence of agricultural activities practiced by throwsters is limited and can be explained by horses for transport and the means to feed and stable them, a cow for supplying the household and a plot of land in Lancashire held for its rentable value. This suggests an occupational group which was more focused on industrial activities than dividing it with agriculture. This concentration on processing expensive raw materials reinforces the earlier point that the chapmen required professional male throwsters rather than the traditional part-time spinsters.

6.7 Dyers

Dyeing silk was also undertaken in Macclesfield and the probate records provide details of this industry. Warrington cites three requirements for the trade processes: a water hardness of below 6 degrees without which soap is required which results in patchy dyeing; abundant water supply for washing and dyeing; and adequate means for the disposal of effluent. At Macclesfield the water is soft, having flowed through the surrounding millstone grits, with a hardness of 5. In Leek the water had a

hardness of between 3 and 4, which enabled the production of a 'Raven Black' dye, which Macclesfield dyers were unable to produce.⁵⁴

The probate material covers the period 1617 to 1760, which represents almost the whole chronological spread of Macclesfield's probate material. There are three inventories, three wills and a single bond of administration. Six probate files for craftsmen operating solely as dyers have been identified, although evidence for other dyeing activities have been located, for example James Andrew, alderman, who is discussed above.⁵⁵ Four of the dyers were specifically named as dyers in their probate files and a fifth as a thread dyer. The sixth, Edward Allen, has no recorded occupation, but with dyed cloth and 'dyeing stuff' in his inventory and no evidence of other means of employment, Allen has been assumed to be a dyer.⁵⁶ The inclusion of dyed cloth in Allen's inventory should be a reminder that although Macclesfield focused on silk-based industries, this would not have led automatically to the complete exclusion of other textiles.

The three probate inventories display widely disparate evaluations between £5 and over £100 which prevents any meaningful comparisons from being drawn.⁵⁷ Daniel Mainwaring's inventory lists no dyeing equipment while that of Edward Allen is limited to less than £3 worth of goods and cloth, mentioned above. Peter Downes' inventory, which is one of the earliest from Macclesfield, was appraised at £112 18s 2d. Almost half of this was made up from ready cash with smaller quantities being accounted for by dyeing, debts and lands. Such a large proportion of ready money is particularly unusual. A more usual situation would have been if a similar value had

⁵⁴ Warrington, *Historical Geography*, pp. 57 – 9.

⁵⁵ WS 1698. See pp. 225, 228 – 9.

⁵⁶ WI 1693.

⁵⁷ WI 1693, Daniel Mainwaring, £5 1s 6d; WS 1677, Edward Allen, £43 3s 3d; WS 1617, Peter Downes, £112 18s 2d.

been accounted for in either ongoing work, crops growing or debts owing. The ready cash may have resulted from the completion of industrial or agricultural work or the collection of his debts

The wills of Peter Downes and Thomas Gandy mention 'leades vessles and worklooms' and 'dyeing pans, tools etc.' when they were bequeathed.⁵⁸ There are no indicators of which chemical solutions were used or whether labour was employed. In Gandy's will is mentioned the dwelling house, dye house, stove house and garden. The four properties are all mentioned together which could indicate that they were co-located, but three distinct buildings.

Peter Downes' will makes it clear that he was working in partnership when he bequeathed to Dorothy Duckesell 'my partners daughter his part of the house'. As Downes was working in partnership the whole concern would operate at a significant scale of production. Downes' brother, Thomas, also had a partner, Frederick Dukesell, but it is unclear whether this was an unconnected partnership or a tripartite partnership between the Downes brothers and Dukesell. The only record of debts is £4 8s in 'money that is owinge to' Peter Downes but there is no indication as to what the nature of the debt was or who owed it.

The main example of dual occupation is James Andrew, alderman, who combined twisting with dyeing, as mentioned above.⁵⁹ As with the throwsters, cattle were the main evidence of agricultural activity: Edward Allen had a single cow and Peter Downes had two kine.⁶⁰ Downes also occupied a 'ferme in Lathome ground' and another 'ferme' in the dwelling house appraised at over £7. Again, as with the throwsters, although there is evidence of some agricultural activity, it was limited to

⁵⁸ WS 1617; WS 1760.

⁵⁹ See pp. 228 – 9.

small scale activities, probably to supply the family with fresh milk, or holding land as an investment rather than direct farming.

6.8 Button mould turners

In 1686, a Dr. Plot in Leek described 'the poor-people (who employ themselves here much in the making of buttons) of a black colour (especially made of oak)'.⁶¹ There are probate files for two people involved in the production of wooden button moulds onto which the thread was later added: Nathaniel Ward, 'mouldthrower' and John Harper, 'buttonmouldturner'.⁶² Both files contain a will and inventory. Ward granted his house to his wife for life and then to his three daughters. In addition to his house, Harper was able to bequeath messuages and a cottage standing on Macclesfield waste.

A comparison of the value of these inventories is not possible as the end of Ward's inventory is unreadable after £7 worth of goods while Harper's estate is appraised at £46 14s 6d. Appraisors normally listed occupational tools and produce at the end of the inventory, which means that any evidence concerning Ward's economic activities has been lost. A more personal comparison is possible from 'purse and apparel'; Ward owned £1 10s worth while Harper possessed £8 worth, five times as much. Without Ward's complete inventory, it is not possible to assess whether he was just a journeyman or something more substantial. Harper, however, possessed a Workhouse with 'work tooles' valued at 6s 8d and debts and specialities of £15. The Workhouse would indicate that Harper was employing journeymen to make button

⁶⁰ WS 1677; WS 1698.

⁶¹ Warrington, *Historical Geography*, p. 39.

⁶² WS 1670; WS 1677.

moulds for or with him. Their distribution to local chapmen would account for the debts due to him.

6.9 Other Trades

Five other probate files mention individual occupations. These are:

Table 6.4: Summary of Probate Files for Other Silk Related Trades

Probate File	Name	Occupation
WS 1606	Nicholas Blacklache	Silkman
WS 1669	John Massey	Gimptwister
WS 1686	Anthony Booth	Gentleman
WS 1695	Francis Dale	Silkweaver
WS 1752	Samuel Wood	Silk & Mohair Dealer

Nicholas Blacklache's will was preoccupied with his burial and all of his estate passed to his wife and children. His inventory shows a man heavily involved in agriculture: one 'kyne' and a young 'kyne', one 'ox styke', a calf and a mare plus corn and hay 'sown', husbandry ware and a 'little piece of ground for four years' worth £26 8s 4d from an estate valued at £69 13s 4d: agriculture accounted for 38 per cent of his estate. Blacklache also possessed buttons, silk, silk buttons, 'silk buttons unsett' and two twist wheels for twisting silk, all worth £38 8s 4d. This accounted for an even greater proportion of his estate, 55 per cent. But the inventory also shows large quantities of other goods which would be associated with the itinerant chapmen researched by Margaret Spufford and Lawrence Fontaine.⁶³ There were 30s worth of pins, rough flax worth another 30s, and in old soap another 24s. Was Backlache a

⁶³ Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, pp. 88 – 9; Fontaine, *Pedlars in Europe*, p. 19 cites Jacques Bérard with stockings, bonnets, bootlaces, braid, ribbons and lace.

yeoman/husbandman, chapman, twister, pedlar (possibly the supplier of pedlars?) or just a generic silkman who was engaged in numerous processes and activities. It is impossible to classify Blacklache in any one occupation.

John Massey's inventory shows that his estate was appraised at £37 2s 4d, the largest single entry being the lease of his house, £16. There is no mention of a separate workshop or croft, as in the case of Joseph Sherwin, (see pages 225 to 226), even though Massey owned two twisting wheels and crosses.⁶⁴ He was involved in gimptwisting but there is no evidence of either raw materials or finished products. Anthony Booth, gentleman, was a near contemporary of both Massey and Sherwin.⁶⁵ Booth's inventory records 25 lb. of gimp, a gross of gimp buttons and silver and copper twist. This copper twist was probably unfinished gimp. As Booth possessed no twisting wheels for either gimp or silk it is most likely that Booth put out the twist to gimptwisters who produced the finished product on their own wheels. Debts valued at £3 17s were owed to Massey. These could have been payments due for work done on another's gimp because, as there is no evidence of raw materials or finished gimp owned by Massey, it is unlikely that Massey would have been manufacturing and selling gimp in his own right. Massey possessed six lambs and ewes valued at £1 10s. The possession of small numbers of livestock was in common with other craftsmen, although cattle were the normal choice.

Anthony Booth possessed an extensive inventory being appraised at over £200. The inventory indicates a shop with shelves and counters but the majority of the shop goods were to be found in the parlour. The parlour contained twist, gimp, silk and mohair, buttons, garters, sattining and laces; scotch cloth, fustian and stuff. In

⁶⁴ WS 1698.

⁶⁵ WS 1686.

addition there was 6s worth of tobacco, also presumably for sale. Booth's inventory indicates debts due to him of almost £75 but unusually, with the exception of £1 2s 6d for rent in arrears, all of the debts were for lent money, mostly on bonds. There is no evidence of shop book debts or other trading debts which is what one would have expected to find. Two thirds of these bonds were desperate which emphasises the difficulty in retaining control over loaned money. Booth's will makes provision for his copyhold messuages in Rainow. The only other property identified were Booth's dwelling house and Worth orchard nearby. Booth did possess both cattle and sheep but it is unclear whether these were kept in Rainow or Macclesfield.

Silkweaving is not supposed to have arrived in Macclesfield until after 1740, so the presence of Francis Dale, silkweaver, almost 50 years earlier is unexpected. His inventory, however, listed no looms. Rather, there was an extensive range of silk products including braid, galloons, laces, thread and ribbons as well as scotchcloth and diaper. Dale could have been controlling the manufacture of these silk products with production being carried out in the outworker's home on their own looms or wheels. This would account for the presence of raw materials and finished goods, and the absence of looms or wheels. It does not explain why Dale was called a silkweaver when throwster or twister would have been more appropriate, unless Dale began his career as a silkweaver, possibly in Spittalfields, in the production of silk narrow goods.

Debts due to Dale accounted for two thirds of his appraised estate, with good book debts accounting for half of his estate, some £250. This is a much more common trading pattern than that show by Booth, above, who had a complete absence of trading debts. Dale was due rents in arrears for properties owned in Milne Street and

Wall Street, Macclesfield.⁶⁶ There were also two cows and a heifer together with barley as fodder but specific indication of where these animals would have been kept.

Samuel Wood's probate file consists of just his will, which provides little indication of his trading activities as a silk and mohair dealer. Wood's eldest son, also called Samuel, had been apprenticed to Mr John Dubourg of London, merchant, which could be an indicator of the direction of Wood's trading connections.

6.10 Chapmen.

There are 88 probate files for 86 chapmen from between 1617 and 1748. Four of the probate files were *Contested* but only two of these accompany either a *Supra* or *Infra* probate file. The button trade was organised on a 'putting out' basis. It was claimed that one Macclesfield chapman laid out £12 to £18 per week for work done in Wilmeslow alone.⁶⁷ There is some inventory evidence showing stock which was 'put out' at the time of the testator's decease. Samuel Phillip's inventory had stock worth £98 15s 1d with another £7 12s described as 'work forth at working'.⁶⁸ Hester Endon, widow and chapwoman, had 'work in the making in the Country' worth £2 16s and Ralphe Poole, chapman, had even more goods 'in the country'.⁶⁹ These amounted to buttons, Manchester ware and other goods together with good debts worth £934 4s 2d from an estate of just over £1500. The 'good debts in the country' accounted for all of Poole's good debts. This example may have been just an example in a change in wording from the norm, where they would have been listed as 'good debts' or 'sperate debts'.

⁶⁶ This should reinforce the point made on page 229 about not automatically assuming that all debts were trade debts.

⁶⁷ G. Malmgreen, *Silk Town: Industry and Culture in Macclesfield, 1750 – 1835* (Hull, 1985), p. 12, n. 33 citing a portion of a now lost manuscript by Samuel Finney, 'Survey of the Parish of Wilmeslow'.

⁶⁸ WS 1691.

The inventories of thirty-eight chapmen have survived containing sufficient data to draw conclusions from the way the industry was operated. These have been tabulated in Table 6.6, below. The shop stock is the sum total of all goods relating to the button trade, which may have included shop fixtures and fittings. It is assumed at this stage that all debts owed to the deceased were trade debts. In some cases, individual debtors are listed with the sum owed while in the majority of cases there is a single entry and value. Even in the cases where individual debtors are named, it is not possible to tell what the debt was incurred for. Debts, which are described as desperate, or bad, have been singled out. It is assumed that in all cases the appraisers actually determined whether debts were good or bad. It will also be assumed that all debts are good unless indicated as bad. Finally the total value of the estate is listed to give a standard by which to measure the personal wealth of the chapman and its change over time.

6.10.1 Capital Resources

The primary aim of this section is to ascertain the average working capital for a chapman and to use this as a benchmark by which to measure the amount of credit which was extended to customers. Secondly, the value of the shop stock is compared against the whole personal estate to see what degree of commitment was required. The value of the personal estate is also included to act as a rough indicator of relative standards of living. Finally, those inventories that list individual debtors will be used to ascertain the size of debts.

Table 6.6 shows the tabulated data for the thirty-eight chapmen identified between 1617 and 1738. The financial evidence of the chapmen from Table 6.5 was

⁶⁹ WS 1682; WS 1695.

separated into Tables 6.7 and 6.8. Table 6.7 covers twenty-five chapmen from the twenty-one years between 1677 and 1698. Two chapmen from 1617 and 1638 were not included in the following calculations as they were chronologically remote from the majority of the seventeenth century evidence. Table 6.7 shows eleven chapmen from the period 1700 to 1738.

In Table 6.6, total values were calculated for the shop stock, debts and total estates. These figures were then divided by thirty-eight to give a mean figure: Mean (38). The processes were then repeated to divide the Total figures by the number of values which had contributed to that Total figure. Due to the nature of the evidence, the number of contributing values varied. Therefore, this mean value was termed Mean (serial). By taking both mean values of the Shop Stock as being 100 per cent, it was possible to calculate percentage variations for the other three sets of values. This would enable the mean values for Debts and the Total Estate to be compared with the Shop Stock more easily. However, the percentage values for the Total Estates were not in a usable form so they were recalculated to present the Shop Stock as a percentage of the Total Estate. This whole process was then repeated for Tables 6.7 and 6.8.

In Table 6.6, for all of the chapmen between 1617 and 1738, the average shop stock value was almost £88, which accounted for 19 per cent of the Total Estate.⁷⁰ The chapman was also expected to provide credit to over four times the value of his Shop Stock and to write off losses in Desperate Debts of half the value of his Shop Stock. In Table 6.7, for the seventeenth century chapmen, we see a similar pattern. The chapman required almost the same amount of Shop Stock, £84 18s. This accounts

⁷⁰ For the Results, it was decided to use the Mean (serial) values from Tables 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8 as these were the most representative set.

for just 15 per cent of the Total Estate. He was, however, expected to offer much more credit, over five times the value of his Shop Stock, and to be prepared to write off much more stock as Desperate Debts: almost three times the value of his Shop Stock. In the eighteenth century, Table 6.8, the chapman required slightly more capital for his shop stock, £91 10s, which accounts for a larger proportion of his Total Estate, now at 26 per cent. However, he was required to offer less credit and accept less losses to bad debts in both financial terms and as a proportion of his Shop Stock. The chapman was now expected to offer just three and a third times his stock value in credit and to write off losses of two thirds the value of his shop stock.

Table 6.9 summarises the mean Shop Stock, Debts and Total Estate figures for the four appendices, and shows the Debts as a percentage of the Shop Stock, and the Shop Stock as a percentage of the Total Estate. These figures have been discussed above. Table 6.8 shows variation over time for the financial considerations of the button trade.

Between the periods covered by Table 6.7 and Table 6.8 there had been an 8 per cent increase in the capital required for the average chapman's Shop Stock, from £84 18s to £91 10s. At the same time, the value of the Total Estates fell by a third. This failure of the chapman's personal estate to match the increased commercial demands resulted in the proportion that the shop goods occupy in the whole personal estate increasing from 19 per cent to 26 per cent. This shows that not only would a new chapman be required to find more capital to enter the trade, but also that the capital would absorb a greater proportion of the family's finances. Chart 6.1 shows that although there was a second peak in incidents of probate files from the silk trade in the early-eighteenth century, this did not match that of the 1680s and 1690s, which

shows a decline in numbers of chapmen operating in the early-eighteenth century. When coupled with a decline in the value of estates, as shown in the probate inventories, by the 1710s and 1720s the silk button industry was not the profitable business it once was.

However, if the increase in the financial requirements to enter the silk button industry suggest that it became more difficult to become an 'average' chapman, by the early-eighteenth century the trading conditions appear to have become significantly more favourable for the chapman. In purely financial terms the amount of credit offered by chapmen decreased, as did the value of desperate debts. The early-eighteenth century chapman was now extending only 75 per cent of the credit of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the early-eighteenth century chapman was only providing credit at three and a third times his Shop Stock as against a five fold increase in the seventeenth century. At the same time the Desperate Debts the chapman was expected to write off fell even further. In the seventeenth century Desperate Debts were three times the value of the Shop Stock, but by the early-eighteenth century desperate debts accounted for less than double the value of the Shop Stock. These trading terms must have greatly improved the chapman's ability to operate his business.

6.11 Nature of Credit

In the inventories of two of the chapmen are details of individual debts owed to the deceased: Amos Fowler whose estate was appraised in 1718 and John Gesling 'thelder' whose will was proved in 1638.⁷¹ Beginning with Gesling's inventory, there are thirty-two debts owed. Two of these are unlikely to be trading debts: 20s owed by

William Ouldfield was 'lent money' while 10s owed by James Clarke was 'for charged in the Jale'. However, in order to establish uniformity with all the examples, all debts are treated as trade debts. All of the debtors are male with the exception of 2s owed by Katherine Jackson. The mean debt is £1 4s while the modal debt is 10s in eighteen out of thirty-two cases. The largest single debt is £8. Only two of the debtors are described by their place of abode (Whricksom (Wrexham) and Alderley (Over Alderley or Alderley Edge)) so it can be assumed at this stage that the remainder were from Macclesfield.

The inventory of Amos Fowler was more complex. Firstly, thirty-one debts were received amounting to £144 10s 6d, of which only five were owed by females. The modal debt is £2 10s with the mean debt being £4 13s. The largest single debt is £20 8s owed by a Mr Wrixham. A second set of six debts amounting to £30 18s 2d½ are described as 'buttons to....'. The mean debt is £5 3s with the modal debt being £6 4s. In this case it was relatively easy to identify the debtors. One of them, Mr Barton, was almost certainly the Nathaniel Barton of Macclesfield, chapman, described as a creditor of the late Amos Fowler. A further three debtors, Messers 'Brckhurt' [Brocklehurst], Hooley and Jno. Hough are immediately recognisable surnames of Macclesfield chapmen. The smallest debt is held by Esther Taylor, just 15s, which may represent work put out.

The third group of debts are 'Debts not paid'. Nineteen debts amount to £158 2s 3d. The mean debt is £6 6s 6d with the modal being £1 10s. All of the debtors were described as 'Mr' or 'Mrs' (in three cases) except for two whose christian names were indicated: I Charles (£1 14s 2d) and Tho: Sherdley (£8 17s 10d). Finally were fourteen 'bad debts' amounting to £139 6s 8d. The mean debt was £10 5s with the modal debt

⁷¹ WS 1718; WS 1638.

being below £1. All debts were owed by men and entitled 'Mr' with the exceptions of R. Wright, owing £11, Maglen Charlot owing 10s and Henry Smith of Altringham. Unusually, a number of the debtors were identified by their christian name, or an abbreviation of it, and 'Mr', which should make identification easier. With the exception of Henry Smith, above, the only other extra Macclesfield debtor is a Mr Richards of Eason, owing £10 5s.

At the moment it is not possible to draw conclusions relating to the nature of the origins of most debts because their origin has not been identified. Where these lists of debtors will be invaluable will be in linking chapmen together in a chain of production. In the case of Amos Fowler, who died intestate, administration was granted to Ralph Worsley of Manchester and Nathaniel Barton of Macclesfield, chapmen, the principal creditors of Fowler. A Mr Barton owed Fowler £5 12s 3d for buttons which, if it is assumed that this is the Nathaniel Barton mentioned as principal creditor, would suggest that this is owed for work done. No debts were directly attributed to the other principal creditor, Worsley, which could suggest that Barton was the local agent for Worsley in supplying materials to Macclesfield from Manchester and then receiving completed goods.

The debts owing to the deceased suggest that buttons were taken away. The variety of debts owed suggests that there were small petty chapmen to large scale wholesalers. Without the completion of the transcription of the parish register it is impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy the occupation of the debtors and therefore the nature of the chapmen's retail or wholesale business.

Credit was an essential element for early modern business. This was due partly to the failure of the Mint to produce adequate quantities of small denomination silver and copper coins, so it was convenient to build up a debt and pay it off with a larger

domination coin. Partly this was also due to the annual payment of debts when, for example, rents were paid or crops harvested so that even prosperous landed farmers and landowners paid of their debts annually.⁷² This business credit was not at interest, or usury, although Kerridge found that the price paid could be adjusted according to the length of credit agreed, and further adjusted if the debt was paid of early or late. As an individual's credit rating relied upon their 'good name', there was always an incentive not to abuse the agreed terms.⁷³ In the case of Macclesfield, most of the debts were shop book debts of this nature.

Julian Hoppit has investigated bankruptcies which can be evidence of business failure with outstanding debts. In the case of the eighteenth century (woven) silk industry, he found that the removal of French competition during the 1750s and early-1760s reduced competition for English merchants and numbers of bankruptcies declined. Bankruptcies rose with the return of competition in the 1760s.⁷⁴ Similar patterns should be discernible in Macclesfield when the incessant warfare after 1688 disrupted supply of silk and would have left chapmen with debts and overheads but no means to fund them: Peter Earle has identified London start-up costs, with £100 being an average minimum.⁷⁵ There does not appear to have been any major difficulties experienced by the chapmen in the 1690s, in fact this was their most successful period. This may reflect the notion of yeomen investing own spare capital, rather than borrowing money, and that the supply of silk, and therefore the capital risk, was retained in the hands of the few which would restrict the capital risk to a few, and those who were best able to weather any downturn.

⁷² L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 – 1837* (London, 1992), p. 66.

⁷³ E. Kerridge, *Trade and Banking in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1988), pp. 33 – 35.

⁷⁴ J. Hoppit, *Risk and Failure in English Business, 1700 – 1800* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 86 – 7.

⁷⁵ P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660 – 1730* (London, 1989), pp. 106 – 20, esp. Tables 4.1 and 4.3.

6.12 Dual Occupation

With a cohort of eighty-six chapmen it is inevitable that a more complex pattern of dual occupancy will emerge than had been shown previously in this chapter.⁷⁶ Dual occupancy for chapmen normally took one of three forms. It could be as a social position, for example as an alderman, gentleman or widow. The chapman could combine his trade with other related silk trades, such as a thread dyer, Thirdly, silk buttons could be combined with agriculture, either on a limited scale or where an agricultural occupation was the specified in the probate file.

There are seven probate files of chapmen with social descriptors: one gentleman, three aldermen and three widows. The single gentleman was Adam Mottershead whose estate was appraised at over £1600, which was, with the exception of household goods, money and plate worth £260, all due to the button industry or debts owing to Mottershead.⁷⁷ The Mottersheads were an extensive Macclesfield family who left twenty-one probate files (including two *Contested* files accompanying *Supra* files) during the period being studied. Nine years before Mottershead's will was proved, one Richard Mottershead of Macclesfield, chapman, left both *Supra* and *Contested* files.⁷⁸ Richard Mottershead left his message to an Adam Mottershead, son of his deceased brother, Thomas. Although the genealogical data is incomplete it is most likely that Adam was Richard's heir.

Although Richard Mottershead's will only bequeathed a message to Adam, Adam's inventory was appraised as fourth highest amongst the chapmen and so it is most probable that Adam's position in the button industry benefited from his uncle.

⁷⁶ This section excludes any probate files with evidence of buttons which have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Unfortunately there is no complete inventory for Richard Mottershead's estate from which to assess whether the uncle was able to assist his nephew in any financial manner. In Richard's will he was described as 'yeoman' which would imply that there was some substance to his position, as well as that of his nephew.

Of the three aldermen, whose inventories showed participation in the button industry, none were named as chapmen. They were Uriah Dean⁷⁹ and two brothers: James and Philip Andrew, whose wills were dated and proved in 1698.⁸⁰ It is unlikely that this concentration of chapmen/aldermen in the 1690s was anything other than coincidence.⁸¹ As one would expect, the aldermen's inventories were appraised at amongst the highest in this cohort. Dean's inventory lists contents worth over £2100 while the Andrew brothers were just over £1000 each.⁸² These were levels that few other chapmen could attain, or perhaps desired to accept the civic responsibilities. In the absence of a complete list of the aldermanic bench it is not possible to determine how many other chapmen were aldermen but went unrecorded in their probate files.

Three of the five women described as chapmen/women were widows. Of the two remaining women, only one, Mary Walker, can be actually identified as having a husband at her death.⁸³ With the widows it is not possible to identify their deceased husband's identity which would make it possible to determine how these women entered the trade. In the case of Catherine Nixon, widow, her inventory shows shop

⁷⁷ WS 1680.

⁷⁸ WS 1671; WC 1671.

⁷⁹ WS 1690.

⁸⁰ Both WS 1698.

⁸¹ The only other alderman associated with the silk trades was James Andrew, dyer, twister, alderman, whose will was also proved in the 1690s. WS 1698.

⁸² It should be noted that both Uriah Dean and Philip Andrew had debts due to them accounting for 50% of their estate. For James Andrew this was 75%. Philip Andrew's debts would approach 75% if bonds and mortgages were included.

⁸³ WS 1689.

goods, shop books and three bags of [mo]hair.⁸⁴ Attempts to identify her late husband were fruitless.

The three widows occur about the same time as the aldermen, between 1689 and 1700. Their inventories show a wide variety of fortunes and scale of economic activity. Catherine Nixon's estate was appraised at almost £1100 with debts upon bonds amounting to almost £700. She was operating on a scale that the Andrews brothers would recognise. At the other end of the scale, Elizabeth Mason's estate was appraised at £8 12s 3d with no debts owing to her and buttons valued at 12s.⁸⁵ A bond of administration was granted on Mason's estate to Joseph Redditch of Sutton, yeoman, identified as her principal creditor, and William Bagnall of Macclesfield, chapman.⁸⁶ The value of Mason's inventory suggests that she was an outworker in the button trade, most probably working for Bagnall who owed her 12s for work done. There was another, undisclosed, debt owed by Mason to Reditch which was possibly the reason for granting the bond of administration.

Catherine Nixon and Mary Dean appear to have been trading in their own right.⁸⁷ Both possessed shops with fittings, buttons and had debts owing to them. The debts owing to them accounted for a similar proportion of their estate as has been seen with male chapmen – in the region of 65 per cent.⁸⁸ These women were operating on a scale to match their male counterparts but whether their estates came from deceased male members of their families or were built up by their own efforts remains unclear.

⁸⁴ Catherine Nixon, WS 1693.

⁸⁵ WI 1696.

⁸⁶ A William Bagnall of Macclesfield, gentleman, left a probate file, WS 1727. He had agricultural interests but there was no evidence of the button trade.

⁸⁷ Mary Dean, widow, WS 1700.

⁸⁸ Catherine Nixon: £703 6s 6d debts out of £1090 13s 5d is 64%; Mary Dean: £196 13s debts out of £287 6s is 68%.

It is impossible to ascertain how money was invested in order to expand an existing trade. The best evidence of investment is when a craftsman invested in crafts outside his own. The most commonly identified secondary form of employment identified in the probate inventories were wheels, usually gimp wheels but occasionally for silk and on one occasion for 'spinning'.⁸⁹ Six inventories contained wheels. Usually these were single wheels, as with Joseph Bramwell in 1719 with one 'old twisting wheel' appraised at 2s.⁹⁰ There were four dyers, including James Andrew, alderman, who possessed utensils for dyeing and twisting as well as buttons⁹¹ and John Barber, chapman, whose inventory indicates nothing to do with the button industry.⁹²

John Barber was described as a chapman in the probate files resulting from his contested *Supra* will. The *Supra* will has not survived.⁹³ Despite being described as a chapman, there is nothing to associate him with button manufacturing Macclesfield chapman or Margaret Spufford's petty chapmen unless Barber was supplying goods for petty chapmen to distribute. However, Spufford's chapmen suppliers were shopkeepers supplying petty chapmen with a wide variety of wares.⁹⁴ Barber was primarily a manufacture of small textile products, which may well have become petty chapmen's stock.

Barber's warehouse contained over £40 worth of narrows wares: threads, apronstring, filliting, staytape, inkle, gartering and laces. A yarn chamber contained

⁸⁹ Thomas Hough of Macclesfield, chapman, WS 1690. Spinning is normally associated with cotton or wool, not silk, although waste silk could be spun, see J.A. Iredale & P.A. Townhill, 'Silk Spinning in England: The End of an Epoch', *Textile History*, iv (1973), pp. 100 – 8. There is no other evidence of cotton being produced in Macclesfield, so wool is the most likely use of the wheel.

⁹⁰ WS 1719.

⁹¹ WS 1698.

⁹² WC 1731 – 2.

⁹³ His inventory is dated 10 February 1729, which indicates the approximate date of his death.

⁹⁴ Spufford, *Great Reclathing*, pp. 58 – 67.

over £20 worth of yarn and bobbins. The manufacturing process was carried out on looms, all valued at £1 10s each, which were allocated to individual workers, although three looms appear to have been in storage in the Dyehouse Chamber. Charles Pott, for example, was listed as having one loom and 15 lb. of lace yarn at 10d per lb.. Occasionally a worker was responsible for two looms like Thomas Oldham with 36 lb. of yarn on one and 9 lb. yarn and 48 lb. staytape yarn on the other. As no workshop for the looms is mentioned these looms were probably worked from home. This would explain the format of the inventory. As the looms remained the property of Barber, the looms were listed and appraised at £1 10s each, but all the looms appear to have been in the possession of the worker rather than in a central workshop. The worker was also accountable for the value of the yarn supplied to him which, as it again remained the possession of Barber, was appraised and its location noted.

Barber's account, which exceeded his estate by some £800, makes no reference to debts due to the workers noted as working his looms. This would suggest that payments were made for work done when the finished products were collected and another consignment of yarn delivered. The account does mention payments due to individuals for goods sold, of which three were noted with a place of abode (and presumably the place in which they were selling Barber's goods): London, Manchester and Leek. Barber was selling his goods wholesale on a national scale. His inventory also lists book debts worth almost £1200. These debts were of small values, rarely more than £3 but often only a few shillings. Places of abode are extremely rare, suggesting that the debtors were from Macclesfield. Where places of abode were noted, they were local, like Elizabeth Leah of Sutton owing £1 4s 8d or Elizabeth Leah of Congleton owing 6s 3d. As these were the only two cases with a place of abode and there were common names, it is also possible that the towns were only

there to distinguish between the two women. Without an extensive database of all known inhabitants of Macclesfield from all available sources it would be impractical to create any form of assessment of the nature of the debts from the 350 or so.

The inventories of twenty-one chapmen indicate that some form of agriculture was practised. This assessment excludes those inventories that indicate land was possessed in one form or another. The possession of land does not indicate that the owner farmed it. Land could have been kept for its rentable value, especially if it was at a distance from Macclesfield, such as the lands in Didsbury, Lancashire, bequeathed by James Andrew, chapman, to his wife, Ann, for life.⁹⁵ Even lands closer to Macclesfield may have been kept solely for their rentable value if the owner was too preoccupied with other economic activities or not inclined to farm it directly.

Of the twenty-one chapmen with agricultural interests, all but five were small concerns with a maximum of three head of cattle, with just one beast being the most common. Stephen Rowe's estate was appraised at £71 18s 7d (excluding debts) in 1617.⁹⁶ His agricultural interest amounted to £40 worth of cattle and sheep and £2 worth of oat and barley growing. The inventory included butchered swine, butter and cheese. As food stuffs for the family is invariably not recorded in inventories, it is most likely that these were for market.⁹⁷ Rowe's trade goods amounted to just under £30, including £3 9s of 'work put forth'.

Rural by-employment is normally associated with arable regions where periods of intense activity (ploughing and harvest) contrast with periods of under-employment that could be utilised on a putting out basis. Rowe's inventory shows that his agricultural concerns were primarily pastoral with arable playing only a minor part,

⁹⁵ WS 1698.

⁹⁶ WS 1617.

most probably winter feed for the livestock. Seasonal by-employment for his family during the arable growing season seems to be an unlikely reason for Rowe to enter the button making trade. Furthermore, with 'work put forth', Rowe was utilising labour outside his family. Rowe possessed 6 lb. worth of silk valued at £9 waiting to be worked, as well as thread and hair. The most likely explanation for Rowe's involvement in button making would be an outlet for excess capital: at £1 10s per lb. silk was an extremely expensive commodity which could only be bought by those with either capital or a good credit rating. Even so, in this example button making remained a subsidiary source of income to agriculture.

James Barber the younger was recorded as a yeoman in his will and a chapman in his inventory.⁹⁸ With an estate appraised at £255 0s 10 ½d (less debts), some 60 per cent was accounted for by 'buttons and other goods in the shop'. Cattle, sheep and grain accounted for just £18. Whether other Macclesfield yeomen would consider £18 worth of livestock and grain to be adequate to maintain the position will be determined in a later chapter.⁹⁹ Clearly, agriculture was less important to Barber than it was to Rowe, both in financial terms (even excluding inflation) and as a proportion of the overall estate. This trend was continued for the three remaining chapmen with significant agricultural interests. Strangely, although the three termed themselves 'chapmen', the only one, Joseph Bramwell, had anything belonging to the button industry in his inventory, and that was limited to one old twisting wheel valued at 2s.¹⁰⁰ Bramwell did have a collection of nine cattle and ten sows which compares favourably with the size of Barber's and Rowe's herds, and the valuation of Barber's

⁹⁷ Nicholas Blacklache's inventory included bacon worth 5s, WS 1606.

⁹⁸ WS 1682.

⁹⁹ See Fig. 6.7.

¹⁰⁰ WS 1710.

herd at around £16 each. Richard Broster's flock of twenty sheep was worth just £3.¹⁰¹

John Hough the younger, chapman, possessed a cow and a horse and 'oats growing'.¹⁰²

Overall, the percentage value of agriculture in the inventories of chapmen decreased over the period in question. The limited information on the button trade for these cases limits the ability to compare the relative importance of agriculture against craft but the selection available suggests that agriculture was declining in relative importance, suggesting an increased reliance and specialisation into crafts.

6.13 Conclusion

Gail Malmgreen titled her monograph on late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Macclesfield 'Silk Town'.¹⁰³ That title could equally apply to seventeenth and early-eighteenth Macclesfield. The town was able to establish itself in a niche market where it was able to produce a high value, low volume luxury product at a time when ostentatious and luxurious living became fashionable and when economic growth made this style of living possible for more and more people.

Such high value, low volume goods as Macclesfield's buttons were precisely the sort of goods which Margaret Spufford found in the inventories of her chapmen and peddlers.¹⁰⁴ Carole Shammas has argued that the growth of consumerism required affordable products for the consumer to buy while Colin Campbell explained need for

¹⁰¹ Richard Broster, chapman, WS 1704.

¹⁰² Horses have been ignored as their use was normally for transport as shown by inventory evidence for saddles, panniers and packs. As nothing specific was required for breeding, it is not possible to determine if the horse was a brood mare.

¹⁰³ Malmgreen, *Silk Town*.

¹⁰⁴ Spufford, *The Great Recloning*, p. 88 – 9; Fontaine, *Pedlars of Europe*, p. 19.

social change to make consumerism acceptable and desirable.¹⁰⁵ This in itself should not be a surprise. The important change for the early modern consumer was the ability to market these goods in small units which were affordable to people further down the economic hierarchy. The inventory of Francis Lathom, chapman, lists the buttons in his possession.¹⁰⁶ Twenty-six gross (twenty) of silk crowns were valued at £2 16s, or 2s 1d per gross. Even allowing for the retail mark-up, luxury products to adorn the 'Sunday best' in the region of 2s would be within the reach of an increasing proportion of the population.

These successes in capturing a niche market for luxury goods should be seen in terms of marketing rather than of industrial practices and technological innovation. The industry was organised within the 'putting out' system, relying upon the cheap labour of the rural poor. One source suggested between £12 and £18 being paid out weekly in Wilmslow alone, and if multiplied across the other villages about Macclesfield, this represents a significant injection of cash into the local economy. In her study of the west Riding textile industry, Pat Hudson identified differences in the scale of production based upon the cost of the raw materials. Superfine West Country woollens and West Yorkshire worsteds which required more expensive raw materials were dominated by a small number of large entrepreneurs, whereas the traditional West Yorkshire woollen industry produced mainly blankets and coatings and was characterised by a large number of small manufacturers.¹⁰⁷ A similar pattern can be expected in Macclesfield with the high cost of raw materials producing a small

¹⁰⁵ C. Shammass, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 291 – 9; C. Campbell, 'Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-Action Approach', in J. Brewer & R. Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1994), pp. 40 – 57, on pp. 40 – 1.

¹⁰⁶ WS 1680.

¹⁰⁷ P. Hudson, 'West Riding Textile Industry in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *JHW*, xii (Autumn, 1981), pp. 34 – 61, on pp. 38 – 40.

number of large entrepreneurs. The figures in Tables 6.5 to 6.9 show that these were declining in wealth, but nevertheless with an average estate of over £450 for the whole period, this was a not inconsiderable economic group which was capable of displaying wealth despite being located on the edge of the economically marginal Peak District. Their control of the silk was also encouraged by the fact that silk has to be imported. This means that the supply was controlled by the importing merchants and then funnelled along lines of credit, unlike wool which was available for all to produce and purchase.¹⁰⁸ This control of a new raw material allowed the chapmen introduce appropriate working processes. This is most evident with the throwsters, who were all male rather than the females employed as spinsters and there is also limited evidence of by-employment which suggests a deliberate attempt by the chapmen to introduce an occupation which reflected their needs rather than adapting traditional production techniques.

Apart from the throwsters, there were no technological innovations or inventions until towards the end of the period under review. By-employment with agriculture was practiced amongst the chapmen (with the proviso of the throwsters), although as was shown in section 4.5, specialisation was occurring between the yeomen and chapmen. Dual employment within the silk button industry is also evident, again this is entirely normal, and will be shown again at the beginning of the next chapter with regards to the leather industry.

When there were innovations and inventions, these were imported into Macclesfield from Derby. These innovations coincided with the decline in demand for silk buttons and the surplus of labour associate with an industry in decline. As such,

¹⁰⁸ The supply of silk to England is beyond the scope of this project, but see A.C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford, 1935); R. Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the*

these innovations really fall into the story of Macclesfield as a silk weaving town. Macclesfield's reliance upon a single luxury product always ran the risk of decline in the face of the fickle vagaries of fashion. Unlike in the classic argument of proto-industrialisation, where decline is brought about through the factory system, the silk button industry declined though falling out of fashion, although twisting survived and moved into factories throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This occurred in the second and third decades of the eighteenth centuries which a number of writers have associated with the Act of 1718, although I argued that this was not the case. Such Acts were to promote the exports of West Country woollens to the Levant by promoting English purchases of silk. Although Macclesfield was only one recipient of Levant silk, it raises the interesting hypothesis that the town was at the end of an international trading network which began in the West Country and extended to the English silk towns via London and the Levant.¹⁰⁹

In contrast with Sheffield, where the Cutlers Company was the urban authority, in Macclesfield the corporation also regulated the town. The increased revenues required by the corporation to undertake their urban improvement schemes from the 1680s were funded by improved trading conditions, which paralleled the national picture. By the middle of the eighteenth century there is evidence of economic difficulties, and in 1729 the Corporation faced economic reality by revoking a prohibition against 'ingenious strangers' starting up new businesses: the earliest

Levant in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1967).

¹⁰⁹ See Section 6.5. However, Jenny Kermode has identified 'Irish silk' (probably a re-export from the Continent) entering Chester in 1525 – 6, so it remains possible that silk reached Macclesfield from other ports, especially with the growth of Liverpool. J. Kermode, 'The Trade of Late Medieval Chester, 1500 – 1550', in R. Britnell & J. Hatcher (eds), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 286 – 308, on p. 293.

known spinning mill was set up on Park Green by Michael Daintry by 1735.¹¹⁰ It could be argued that the Corporation's stance before 1729 was economically naive and short-sighted. But the button industry had brought great wealth to the town in the late-seventeenth century, and a number of firms did indeed survive to the late-eighteenth century.¹¹¹ The button industry simply lost its dominance and economic diversification, although still silk based, did indeed take place from the 1730s.

Whenever historians have written on the silk industry in the past, they have been referring to woven silk cloth. This thesis has added the silk button industry to the wider silk industry for the first time. Despite being a relatively minor element of the overall silk industry, as was shown in section 6.5 silk buttons were near the centre of the English textile industry though attempts to utilise legislation to promote woollen exports. Only four towns are known to have engaged in silk buttons production, so its prosperity was unlikely to make or break the English economy, but it was sufficiently important for the largest English industry, woollens, to incorporate it into a multi-national trading scheme, and for Daniel Defoe to include Macclesfield's buttons in his assessment of the nation.¹¹²

Overall, however, Macclesfield's button industry represents an example of a new material entering into mainstream British economic life through the increase in global trade coupled with new fashions coinciding with improving economic conditions to create a market for such new, luxury products. Despite this innovation, the methods of production (with the exception of certain techniques required for silk, like twisting rather than spinning) and the control of labour were, and remained,

¹¹⁰ G. Malmgreen, *Economy and Culture in an Industrialising Town: Macclesfield, Cheshire, 1750 – 1835* (unpublished Indiana University Ph.D. thesis, 1981), pp. 19, 20, but see also n. 29.

¹¹¹ There were ten good sized button firms in 1787 and in 1795 the trade was described as 'considerable'. Malmgreen, *Economy and Culture*, p. 19.

¹¹² See the quote at the beginning of chapter 8.

indigenous to the British Isles. Equally, those controlling the industry showed no inclination towards technical innovation or development, being essentially mercantile rather than industrial in nature.

Table 6.5: Probate Material for the Button Industry, 1606 – 1760

No	Year	Name	Occupation ¹¹³	Secondary Occupation ¹¹⁴	Agriculture	Trade Goods	Debts	Total Estate
1	1606	Nicholas Blacklache	Silkman		£26 8s 4d	£38 8s 4d	£5	£69 13s 4d
2	1617	Stephen Rowe	Chapman	[Farmer]	£36 10s 4d	£29 11s 8d	£55 17s 8d	£163 2s 6d
3	1617	Peter Downes	Dyer		£8	£15 18s 10d	£4 8s	£112 18s 2d
4	1635	Richard Blacklach	Chapman		£22 6s 4d	£63 2s 11d	£32 9s 2d	£185 16s 1d
5	1638	John Gesling elder	Chapman	----- -----	2s 6d	----- -	£39 6s 9d	£49 3s 9d
6	1663	John Metcleare	Chapman	[Petty Chapman]	-----	£21	-----	£24 6s 8d
7	1663	John Walker	Chapman	[Petty Chapman]	£2	7s 6d	-----	£7 6s 5d
8	1664	William Goodwin	Twister		-----	----- -	----- -	£1 14s
9	1669	Thomas Barber	Chapman	[Petty Chapman]	-----	£4 13s	£46 3s 10d	£83 14s
10	1669	John Massey	Gimptwister		£1 10s	12s	£3 17s	£37 2s 4d
11	1670	Nathaniel Ward, snr	Mouldthrower		-----	----- -	----- -	£7 0s 2d
12	1671	Richard Mottershead	Yeoman	See 13	-----	-----	-----	-----
13 ¹¹⁵	1671	Richard Mottershead	Chapman	See 12	-----	-----	-----	-----
14	1675	Nathaniel Poole	Chapman	Buttonman	-----	£169 8s	10s	£149 2s 3d
15	1675	William Hodgkinson	Chapman		-----	----- -	£2	£3 3s 6d
16	1676	Henry Boone	[Chapman]		£3 3s 3d	£7	-----	£25 11s 5d
17	1677	Francis Andrew	[Chapman]		£11 12s 6d	£76 10s 4d	£85 9s 5d	£320 14s 11d
18	1677	William Birtels	Chapman		-----	----- -	£69	£96 10s
19	1677	William Devis	Chapman		-----	-----	-----	£22 19s 2d
20	1677	Thomas Oldham	Silktwister		-----	10s	£2 9s 3d	£25 6s 7d
21	1677	Edward Allem	[Dyer]		£3 6s 8d	£2 13s 1d	-----	£43 3s 3d
22	1677	John Harper	Buttonmould-turner		-----	----- -	£15	£46 14s 6d
23	1678	Thomas Greaves	Chapman		-----	£20 2s 8d	£21	£61 6s 2d
24	1679	James Shipley	Chapman		£2	-----	-----	£3 13s ¹¹⁶
25	1680	Francis Lathom	Chapman		-----	£122 9s 19d1/2	£28 14s 6d1/2	£228 8s 10d1/2
26	1680	Adam Mottershead	Chapman	Gent	-----	£400 17s 7d	£951 15s 6d	£1314 15s 5d
27	1681	Edward Jackson	Chapman		£3 4s	£12 17s 6d	£86 16s 2d	£128 17s 3d
28	1681	Joshua Poole	Chapman		£6 15s 7d	£18 14s 6d	£16	£74 10s 9d
29	1682	Philip Swindells	Chapman		-----	£28 8s 3d	£25 4s 3d	£92 18s 11d
30	1682	James Barber the yo	Chapman	Yeoman	£18 2s 6d	£157 11s	£232 3s	£487 4s

¹¹³ Square brackets indicate an occupation implied by probate material. 'Chapman' is given precedence over other trades.

¹¹⁴ Square brackets indicate an occupation implied by probate material. 'Chapman' is given precedence over other trades.

¹¹⁵ WS 1671 and WC 1671, Richard Mottershead.

¹¹⁶ Damaged inventory. This is a minimum figure.

						4d1/2	1d1/2	
31	1683	Thomas Hopley	Chapman			£1 3s	£1 10s	£15 19s 6d
32	1684	Thomas Lowe	Chapman			£5 1s 7d	£2 18s	£29 18s 10d
33	1685	Anthony Booth	[Gimptwister]	Gent	£31 10s 4d	£8 14s 8d	£74 15s 10d	£205 7s 1d
34	1689	Charles Kirk	Chapman		£2	£23 5s 7d	£1500	£1574 11s 11d
35	1689	Charles Howley	Chapman		£6	£79 18s 3d	£218 3s 4d	£350 15s 1/2d
36	1689	Catherine Nixon	[Chapwoman]	Widow	£4 19s 6d	£190 3s 3d	£703 6s 6d	£1090 13s 5d
37	1690	Thomas Hough	Chapman		£7 1s 8d	----- -	£1275 2s	£1735 17s 8d
38	1690	James Lomas	Chapman	Yeoman	-----	-----	-----	£15 6s 4d
39	1690	Henry Delves	Chapman		£6	£12 14s	£146 6s	£170 17s 7d
40	1690	Uriah Dean	Chapman	Alderman	£22 19s	£33 6s 11d	£1101 11d	£2134 9s 2d
41	1691	Samuel Phillips	Chapman		-----	£106 7s 1d	£276 17s 5d	£426 13s
42	1692	James Broadbent	Chapman		£15	-----	-----	£73 6s 1d
43	1693	Daniel Mainwaring	Dyer		-----	-----	-----	£5 1s 6d
44	1694	Thomas Oldham	Chapman		£3	£381 11s 5d	£702 8s 6d1/2	£1239 9s 11d1/2
45	1695	Edward Ridgeway	Chapman		-----	£414 17s 8d	£375 7s 6d	£414 17s 8d
46	1695	Ralph Poole the yo	Chapman	[Petty Chapman]	-----	£242 2s 8d	£1165 1s	£1520 17s 7d
47	1695	Stephen Blackledge	Chapman	Gent	-----	3s 4d	-----	£28 2s 4d
48	1695	William Critchley	Chapman		-----	£37 14s 9d	£8 18s 8d	£76
49	1695	Thomas Hill	Chapman		-----	15s	£3	£58 8s 10d
50	1696	Elizabeth Mason	[Chapwoman]	Widow	-----	12s	-----	£8 13s 3d
51	1696	Francis Dale	Silkweaver		£16	£99 1s 7d	£320 2s 8d	£529 3s 3d
52	1697	Charles Yarwood	Chapman	Yeoman	-----	£497 8s	£5205 8s 2d	£9226 4s 8d
53	1697	John Etherington	Chapman		£5	£63 11s	£13	£98 19s
54	1697	Elizabeth Mottershead	Chapman		-----	-----	-----	-----
55	1698	William Roylance	Chapman		-----	£17 16s 6d	£58 9s 3d	£120 11s
56	1698	James Andrew	[Chapman]	Alderman	£210s	£70 19s	£757	£1046 2s 6d
57	1698	Philip Andrew	[Chapman]	Alderman	-----	£134 18s 6d	£725 18s	£1027 11s 7d
58	1698	James Andrew	[Dyer/Twister]	Alderman	10s	£107 19s	£751	£1046 2s 6d
59	1698	Joseph Sherwin	[Twister]		-----	15s	-----	£13 10s
60	1699	Thomas Twallin	Chapman		£40 15s 8d	-----	£10	£253 16s 1d
61	1699	Peter Dean	Chapman		-----	£79 3s 10d	£150	£240 12s 4d
62	1700	Charles Watson	Chapman	Husbandman	-----	-----	-----	-----
63	1700	Mary Dean	[Chapwoman]	Widow	-----	£50 6s	£196 13s	£287 6s
64	1700	Thomas Walker	Chapman		-----	-----	-----	-----
65	1700	Jasper Hooley	Chapman		-----	-----	-----	-----
66	1704	Richard Broster	Chapman		£3	-----	£70	£87 17s 4d
67	1707	Thomas Hough	Chapman		-----	-----	-----	-----

68	1708	James Linney	Chapman		-----	£15 4s 8d	£210	£247 8s
69	1710	Roger Beswick	Chapman		-----	-----	£41	£924 4s
70	1710	Samuel Thomicroft	Chapman		-----	£105 12s 6d	£120 19s 10d	£309 10s 9d
71	1711	Daniel Holland	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
72	1713	Richard Worthington	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
73	1715	Geoffrey Alcock	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
74	1717	William Smallwood	Chapman		£6 13s	£58 4s 7d	-----	£123 8s 2d1/2
75	1717	Samuel Haward	Chapman		-----	£25 5s 8d	£166 3s 6d	£256 4s 9d1/2
76	1718	Robert Warburton	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
77	1718	Amos Fowler	Chapman		-----	£95 11s 1d1/2	£441 19s 1d ¹¹⁷	-----
78	1718	John Collons	Chapman		-----	£3 7s 6d	-----	£36 7s 11d
79	1718	Henry Orme	Twister		-----	-	-	-----
80	1718	John Janney	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
81	1719	Mary Walker	Chapwoman		-----	£12 19s	-	£49 16s 4d1/2
82	1719	William Walker	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
83	1719	Joseph Bramwell	Chapman		£16 14s 8d	2s	-----	£36 1s
84	1720	Thomas Smedhurst	Twister		-----	£2	-----	£12 10s 11d
85	1721	William Davenport	Chapman	Thread Dyer	-----	£139 16s 3d	£429 4s 6d	£649 4s 6d
86	1722	Benjamin Finney	Thread Dyer		-----	-	-	-----
87	1723	John Wright	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
88	1723	John Fallows	Twister		-----	-	-	-----
89	1724	John Hough the yo	Chapman		£13 10s	-	-----	£93 16s 3d
90	1726	Jonas Hall	Twister		£12	-	-	£460
91	1726	John Latham	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
92	1727	Edward Mottershead	Twister		£7	5s 4d	-----	£14 8s 5d
93	1728	James Barber	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
94	1728	Samuel Davenport	Dyer		-----	-	-	-----
95	1729	Richard Worthington	Chapman		-----	50s 10d1/2	£591 7s 6d	£942 9s 8d1/2
96	1731	John Barber	Chapman	WC 1731 - 2	-----	£158 10s	£1189 4s 10d	£1359 9s 10d
97	1732	Thomas Halland	Buttonman		-----	-	-	-----
98	1734	John Dean	Chapman	Cordwainer	-----	-	-	-----
99	1736	Zachary Sherwin	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
100	1736	John Johnson	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
101	1736	Francis Boulton	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----

¹¹⁷ Some noted as 'Debts Received'.

						-	-	
102	1738	Samuel Braddock ¹¹⁸	Chapman		-----	£342 14s 5d	£158	£527 2s 1d
103	1742	John Holliwell	Twister		-----	-	-	-----
104	1742	Urian Wagg	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
105	1745	John Hudson	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
106	1745	Samuel Clowes	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
107	1747	Urain Wagg	Chapman	See 1742	-----	-	-	-----
108	1747	John Hudson	Chapman		-----	£158 10s	£1189 4s 10d	£1359 9s 10d
109	1747	John Hudson ¹¹⁹	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
110	1748	John Hudson	Chapman		-----	-	-	-----
111	1752	Samuel Wood	Silk & Mohair Dealer		-----	-	-	-----
112	1756	Nathan Crompton	Silk Throwster		-----	-	-	-----
113	1758	James Wood	Twister		-----	-	-	-----
114	1758	Henry Lomas	Throwster		-----	-	-	-----
115	1760	Thomas Gandy	Dyer		-----	-	-	-----

¹¹⁸ Silk Mohair Buttons and Good Debts, £342 14s 5d; Bad debts £158.

¹¹⁹ WS 1747 and WC 1747 John Hudson.

Table 6.6: Chapmen's Probate Inventories, 1617 – 1738.

Name	Probate	Shop Stock	Debts Total	Debts Desperate	Total Estate
Stephen Rowe	WS 1617	£29 11s 8d	£55 17s 8d		£163 18s 6d
John Gesling	WS 1638	na	£39 6s 9d		£49 3s 9d
Francis Andrew	WS 1677	£78 10s 4d	£85 9s 5d	£16 1s 6d	£320 14s 11d
William Birtles	WS 1677	Na	£69		£96 10s
Thomas Greaves	WS 1678	£20 1s 8d	£21		£64 6s 2d
Francis Lathom	WS 1680	£124 3s 7d1/2	£28 14s 6d1/2	£10 3s 8d1/2	£228 8s 10d1/2
Adam Mottershead	WS 1680	£400 17s 7d	£951 15s 6d		£1314 15s 5d
Joshua Poole	WS 1681	£18 14s 6d	£16		£74 10s 9d
James Barber	WS 1682	£157 11s 4d1/2	£232 3s 1d1/2	£57 4s 6d1/2	£487 4s
Thomas Hopley	WS 1683	£1 10s	£1 3s		£15 19s 6d
Thomas Lowe	WS 1684	£5 1s 7d	£2 18s		£29 18s 10d
Charles Howley	WS 1689	£79 18s 3d1/2	£218 3s 6d	£14 18s 8d1/2	£350 15s 1/2d
Charles Kirk	WS 1689	£23 5s 7d	£1500	£500	£1574 11s 11d
Catherine Nixon	WS 1689	£2	£8		£1090 13s 5d
Thomas Hough	WS 1690		£1275 2s		£1735 17s 8d
Uriah Dean	WS 1690	£33 6s 11d	£1711 0s 11d	£1111 0s 11d	£202 0s 9d
Henry Delves	WS 1690	£12 14s	£146 6s & cash		£170 17s 7d
Samuel Phillips	WS 1691	£106 6s 3d	£276 17s 5d	£72 13s 5d	£426 13s
Thomas Oldham	WS 1694	£381 1s 5d	£702 8s 2d1/2	£702 8s 2d1/2	£1239 9s 11d1/2
William Critchley	WS 1695	£37 14s 9d	£17 10s	£17 10s	£75 12s 5d
Edward Ridgeway	WS 1695	4s	£375 7s 6d	£39 11s 6d	£414 17s 8d
Ralphe Poole	WS 1695	£247 7s 2s	£1165 1s	£449 19s 6d	£1520 17s 7d
Thomas Hill	WS 1695	15s	£3		£58 8s 10d
Elizabeth Mason	WI 1696	12s			£8 13s 3d
John Etherington	WS 1697	£63 11s	£1	£1	£98 19
Philip Andrew	WS 1698	£134 18s 6d	£725 18s		£1027 11s 7d
James	WS	£107 19s	£757	£257	£1046 2s 6d

Andrew	1698				
Mary Dean	WS 1700	£50 6s	£196 13s		£287 6s
James Linney	WS 1704	£15 4s 8d	£210		£247 8s
Samuel Thornicroft	WS 1710	£196 19s 6d	£120 19s 10d		£309 10s 9d
William Smallwood	WS 1717	£58 4s 7d			£123 8s 2d1/2
John Sutton	WS 1718	£95 11s 1d1/2	£441 19s 5d	£139 6s 8d	£652 8s 9d1/2
John Collons	WS 1718	£3 7 6d			£36 7s 11d
Mary Walker	WS 1719	£12 19s			£49 16s 4d1/2
Joseph Bramwell	WS 1719	2s			£36 1s
William Davenport	WS 1721	£139 16s 3d	£429 4s 6d		£649 4s 6d
Richard Worthington	WS 1729	£324 3s 11d1/2	£590 7s 6d	£155 11s 4d	£942 9s 8d1/2
Samuel Braddock	WS 1738	£ 342 14s 5d	£158	£158	£527 2s 1d
Total		£3307 6s 1d1/2	£12533 6s 9d1/2	£3702 10s	£17748 16s 2d1/2
Mean (38)		£87 1s	£329 6s	£18 10s	£467 1s
Mean (serial)		£87 15s	£379 15s	£44 7s	£461 1s
% (38)		100%	378%	22%	536%
% (serial)		100%	435%	50%	525%

Shop Stock as a Percentage of the Total Estate

	Total Estate	Shop Stock
Mean (serial)	£461 1s	£87 15s
% (serial)	100%	19%

Table 6.7: Chapmen's Probate Inventories, 1677 – 1698.

Name	Probate	Shop Stock	Debts Total	Debts Desperate	Total Estate
Francis Andrew	WS 1677	£78 10s 4d	£85 9s 5d	£16 1s 6d	£320 14s 11d
William Birtles	WS 1677	Na	£69		£96 10s
Thomas Greaves	WS 1678	£20 1s 8d	£21		£64 6s 2d
Francis Lathom	WS 1680	£124 3s 7d1/2	£28 14s 6d1/2	£10 3s 8d1/2	£228 8s 10d1/2
Adam Mottershead	WS 1680	£400 17s 7d	£951 15s 6d		£1314 15s 5d
Joshua Poole	WS 1681	£18 14s 6d	£16		£74 10s 9d
James Barber	WS 1682	£157 11s 4d1/2	£232 3s 1d1/2	£57 4s 6d1/2	£487 4s
Thomas Hopley	WS 1683	£1 10s	£1 3s		£15 19s 6d
Thomas Lowe	WS 1684	£5 1s 7d	£2 18s		£29 18s 10d
Charles Howley	WS 1689	£79 18s 3d1/2	£218 3s 6d	£14 18s 8d1/2	£350 15s 1/2d
Charles Kirk	WS 1689	£23 5s 7d	£1500	£500	£1574 11s 11d
Catherine Nixon	WS 1689	£2	£8		£1090 13s 5d
Thomas Hough	WS 1690		£1275 2s		£1735 17s 8d
Uriah Dean	WS 1690	£33 6s 11d	£1711 0s 11d	£1111 0s 11d	£202 0s 9d
Henry Delves	WS 1690	£12 14s	£146 6s & cash		£170 17s 7d
Samuel Phillips	WS 1691	£106 6s 3d	£276 17s 5d	£72 13s 5d	£426 13s
Thomas Oldham	WS 1694	£381 1s 5d	£702 8s 2d1/2	£702 8s 2d1/2	£1239 9s 11d1/2
William Critchley	WS 1695	£37 14s 9d	£17 10s	£17 10s	£75 12s 5d
Edward Ridgeway	WS 1695	4s	£375 7s 6d	£39 11s 6d	£414 17s 8d
Ralphe Poole	WS 1695	£247 7s 2s	£1165 1s	£449 19s 6d	£1520 17s 7d
Thomas Hill	WS 1695	15s	£3		£58 8s 10d
Elizabeth Mason	WI 1696	12s			£8 13s 3d
John Etherington	WS 1697	£63 11s	£1	£1	£98 19
Philip Andrew	WS 1698	£134 18s 6d	£725 18s		£027 11s 7d
James Andrew	WS 1698	£107 19s	£757	£257	£1046 2s 6d
Total		£2038 4s 6d1/2	£10290 18s 1d1/2	£3249 12s	£13674 10s 7d1/2
Mean (25)		£81 10s	£441 12s	£129 19s	£546 19s
Mean(serial)		£84 18s	£411 12s	£249 19s	£546 19s
%(25)		100%	541%	159%	671%
%(serial)		100%	520%	294%	644%

Shop Stock as a Percentage of the Total Estate

	Total Estate	Shop Stock
Mean (serial)	£546 19s	£84 18s
% (serial)	100%	15%

Table 6.8: Chapmen's Inventories, 1700 – 1738

Name	Probate	Shop Stock	Debts Total	Debts Desperate	Total Estate
Mary Dean	WS 1700	£50 6s	£196 13s		£287 6s
James Linney	WS 1704	£15 4s 8d	£210		£247 8s
Samuel Thornicroft	WS 1710	£196 19s 6d	£120 19s 10d		£309 10s 9d
William Smallwood	WS 1717	£58 4s 7d			£123 8s 2d1/2
John Sutton	WS 1718	£95 11s 1d1/2	£441 19s 5d	£139 6s 8d	£652 8s 9d1/2
John Collons	WS 1718	£3 7s 6d			£36 7s 11d
Mary Walker	WS 1719	£12 19s			£49 16s 4d1/2
Joseph Bramwell	WS 1719	2s			£36 1s
William Davenport	WS 1721	£139 16s 3d	£429 4s 6d		£649 4s 6d
Richard Worthington	WS 1729	£324 3s 11d1/2	£590 7s 6d	£155 11s 4d	£942 9s 8d1/2
Samuel Braddock	WS 1738	£ 342 14s 5d	£158	£158	£527 2s 1d
Total		£915 5s 1/2d	£2147 4s 3d	£452 18s	£3861 3s 4d
Mean (11)		£83 4s	£195 4s	£41 3s	£351 11s
Mean (serial)		£91 10s	£306 14s	£150 19s	£351 11s
% (11)		100%	234%	49%	422%
% (serial)		100%	335%	165%	384%

Shop Stock as a Percentage of the Total Estate

	Total Estate	Shop Stock
Mean (serial)	£351 11s	£91 10s
% (serial)	100%	26%

Table 6.9: Comparison of the Changes in Chapmen's Inventories

Table	Period	Shop Stock	Debts Total	Debts Desperate	Total Estate
6.6	All	£87 15s	£379 15s	£44 7s	£467 1s
		100%	435%	50%	536%
6.7	1677 - 1698	£84 18s	£411 12s	£249 19s	£546 19s
		100%	520%	294%	64%
6.8	1700 - 1738	£91 10s	£306 14s	£150 19s	£351 11s
		100%	335%	165%	384%
Variation 6.7 to 6.8		+£6 12s	-£104 18s	-£99	-£195 8s
Percentage Variation 6.7 to 6.8		108%	75%	60%	64%

Chapter 7: Other Economic Activity in Macclesfield

7.1 Introduction

There is nothing uniquely urban about industrial activity; in the early modern period, the ‘putting out system’ meant that although industrial activity was controlled by the towns, many of the actual processes were carried out in rural areas. This control of industrial activity from urban environments reflected the greater concentrations of human activity, and also ‘the concentration of social and economic value generated by their work’ leading to ‘greater...general cultural impact’.¹ That is to say, the concentration of people in towns, compared with the countryside, allowed for more economic activity to take place, but also increased the social and economic impact of their work because their work effected more people. In historical terms, this increased the likelihood that records which identify these activities will have survived. Penelope Corfield put it that ‘Urban work was not therefore defined by its uniqueness in terms of the labour process. It was rather the characteristic concentration of certain sorts of economic activity in one relatively densely settled location that helped to define the urban community.’² The example of the ‘putting out system’ as employed by the Yorkshire woollens industry shows that urban and rural work can not be isolated.³ Other industrial activity took place in a rural environment because of the availability of resources other than labour. Charcoal burning required trees while fast flowing streams in the Pennines powered industrial processes. The location of yet

¹ P.J. Corfield, ‘Defining Urban Work’, in P.J. Corfield, *Work in Towns, 850 – 1850* (Leicester, 1990), pp. 207 – 30, on p. 220.

² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

³ *VCH Yorkshire*, II (London, 1912), pp. 329, 226, 406 - 29; *VCH Yorkshire*, III (London, 1913), pp. 438 – 40, 460; *VCH Kent*, III (London, 1932), pp.406; J. Thirsk, ‘Industries in the Countryside’, in F.J. Fisher (ed.), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England in Honour of R.H. Tawney* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 70 – 88.

more industrial activities was fixed by the location of the raw materials. Coal could only be mined where it existed. Labour followed, turning the rural into urban.

Urban growth and economic activity are not constant. The development of new industrial towns was often associated by contemporaries with the decline of older, urban-based industries in the guild-controlled medieval cities, like York, Beverley and Coventry. A direct cause and effect may be difficult to prove, but the coincidence of growth and decline raises suspicions.⁴ It should be noted that 'decline' does not automatically mean 'decay' or 'stagnation' but could simply be a failure of economic activity to maintain its position relative to other towns.

What, then, constituted urban economic activity? The woollen industry operated in both urban and rural environments, and was the largest and most widely practised industry in early modern England. After the woollen industry were the leather and building trades.⁵ Both of these industries highlight the essential difference between urban and rural industry. Both industries could be practised in either environment: leather production was an industrial by-product of pastoral regions. One such agricultural region included Cheshire, and in 1697 sixty of 154 petitioners against the introduction of Excise Duty on leather came from this region.⁶ Leather production was also a by-product of the 'on the hoof' meat industry: the larger the demand for meat, the greater the supply of hides to support a leather industry, and the greater the demand for leather products. In 1619, there were an estimated 3000 leather workers in Southwark, suggesting not only a formidable degree of concentration, but

⁴ P. Clark & P. Slack, 'Introduction', in P. Clark & P. Slack, *Crisis and Order in English Towns* (London, 1972), pp. 1 – 55, on p. 11.

⁵ L.A. Clarkson, 'The Organisation of the English Leather Industry in the Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *EcHR*, xiii (1960 – 1), pp. 245 – 56, on p. 245; L.A. Clarkson, 'The Leather Crafts in Tudor and Stuart England', *Agricultural History Review*, xiv (1966), pp. 25 – 39, on p. 25; D. M. Woodward, 'The Chester Leather Industry, 1558 – 1625', *THSLC*, cxix (1967), pp. 65 – 111, p. 65.

⁶ Clarkson, 'Leather Crafts', pp. 26 – 7. See J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), pp. 234 – 5 for a map of petitions against the leather tax, 1697 – 9, showing petitions from three Cheshire towns, but not Macclesfield.

also a formidable demand for meat and leather products.⁷ Industrial processes required demand and where demand was concentrated it often became a convenient place to locate industry.

There is an exception to this location theory which is that of the town as a service provider: 'Towns provided services: doctors, lawyers, educational institutions and the most advanced religious facilities'.⁸ Towns possessed a hinterland, which has been shown by Chalkin, Rodgers and Dyer to extend over differing distances in different directions depending on local conditions.⁹ Within that hinterland existed a demand for services which could not be sustained in the villages but which could be sustained at a central location through the combined demands of the whole hinterland. This is subtly different from rural industry where products for which there was no market could be transported and sold at market. So, as Sharpe has observed, lawyers, doctors, churches and schools tended to be located in towns.

Identifying urban occupations in towns is imprecise: for John Patten 'the true nature of urban occupations in the pre-industrial period are always likely to remain blurred, and often confusing,' while for Penelope Corfield 'claims to occupational title were either allocated by others or made by self ascription both affording some leeway for evasion and exaggeration'.¹⁰ To this self-ascription has to be added social descriptors, for example alderman or widow, which are not occupations and obscures the economic reality. Economic titles also obscured the scale of operation and exactly what the individual did. Was a 'tailor' a freeman, a great merchant tailor or a poor bodger, and what distinguished between a grocer, a mercer and an overseas

⁷ J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History, 1550 – 1760* (London, 1987), p. 150.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁹ See pp. 13 – 4.

¹⁰ J. Patten, 'Urban Occupations in Pre-Industrial England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, ns, ii (1977), pp. 296 – 313, on p. 296; Corfield, 'Defining Urban Work', p. 217.

merchant?¹¹ Possibly the best way to identify exactly what an individual actually did is to use probate where a good inventory and possibly even an account can shed detailed light upon economic activity. A detailed inventory can get behind titles like alderman by listing shop stock or work tools. They can also identify what practices within a specific industry an individual was engaged in and also dual occupations, especially agriculture. Finally, the inventory can give an indication of the scale of production through quantities of stock held and from the total valuation of the estate. Unfortunately, inventories did not record debts due by the deceased. These are only found in an account which are less common.

The disadvantages of probate are that they tended to represent the wealthy, those with an estate to justify the expense of probate and so under represents the poorer members of society.¹² Probate becomes less common in the early-eighteenth century and so becomes less representative of even the wealthier classes.¹³ Finally, wills and inventories reflect a moment in an individual's career, at the point of death. This may occur at the height of a person's career, but equally could reflect a period of 'retirement' when economic activity has been transferred to an heir.

There is an important aspect to studying the 'other' economic activities in the early modern town. Often the concentration is on the 'new' developments: the proto-industrial towns, like Manchester and Halifax, the ports like Liverpool and Whitehaven and leisure towns like Bath. J.A. Sharpe wrote that the 'traditional industries so often ignored in accounts of the Industrial Revolution were probably more significant and in a healthier condition. The leather trades, for example, would

¹¹ Patten, 'Urban Occupations', pp. 301, 304.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹³ See Chart 2.2, for fluctuations in the wills proved in Macclesfield, and compare it with Chart 1.8, for the projected population growth across the same period. A growing population should produce more probate files.

probably repay close investigation as exemplars of early modern industrial production’.

To this end, this chapter will investigate those smaller, less visible economic activities which were nevertheless still vital for the economic life of the town. This chapter will be divided into two. Part I will examine the leather industry as an example of a significant industry which certainly preceded silk in Macclesfield. As significant industry on a national scale, there are already published secondary works which allows comparisons to be made. Part II will look at the smaller industries, often with only a handful of probate files over many decades. Also, it is far less likely that secondary works exists for these occupations by which to make comparisons against national trends and therefore conclusions will be more difficult to come by.

Part I: The Leather Industry in Macclesfield

The production of leather was a long process involving many stages which should be carried out by different craftsmen. The first stage was for the skinners to remove the skin from the carcass. Having been skinned, the animal hides were prepared by tanners who soaked them in lime solutions which removed hairs and a fatty layer on the inside. The skins were then ‘batted’ in a mixture of dog and bird droppings which further softened the leather. The Leather Acts of 1563 and 1604 specified that tanning of leather for the outer soles of shoes took at least 12 months and that for other shoelather at least 9 months.¹⁴ Excessive time in either solution would damage the leather beyond use, and judging the correct length of time was ‘one of the poyntes or workmanship’.¹⁵ Tanning removes the natural oils which waterproof the leather. This ‘crust’ leather passed to curriers who curried it with train oil and

¹⁴ 5 Eliz, c. 8 and 1 Jac I, c. 22 quoted in Clarkson, ‘Organisation’, p. 246.

¹⁵ B. M. Lans. MS. 5, no. 58 quoted *ibid.*, p. 246.

tallow to replace the oils. Oak bark was an essential ingredient for the tanning process. The currier also shaved the leather to the correct thickness, 'grains' the surface to improve its appearance and stains to the required colour.¹⁶ Tanning was a long process, and the only way to speed it up was to produce poorer quality leather.¹⁷ It was necessary to have leather at different stages of the tanning process in order to provide a regular supply of leather throughout the year. The leather could now be turned into manufactured goods.

The leather industry as a whole was divided into two branches: heavy leather crafts such as tanning, currying and shoemaking, and light leather crafts such as glovemaking. This division was implicit in the Leather Act of 1563, which only regulated the production of tanned leather and footwear.¹⁸

In Cheshire, the leather industry was of major importance. R.H. Morris wrote that the glovers 'formed until early in the eighteenth century, with the skimmers and tanners, the staple trade of Chester, employing a large number of men, and importing many thousands of skins from Ireland, Wales and other parts.'¹⁹ D.M. Woodward supported this statement by finding that of 1871 craftsmen who became freemen of Chester between 1558 and 1625, 416 (22 per cent) were from leather trades. Shoemakers and glovers were the most numerous, and tanners were only surpassed by tailors, who were members of the largest craft sector at the time.²⁰ Chester's leather industry was supported not only by the city's demand for meat and its location in this pastoral region, but also by the importation of skins from Ireland, Wales, the Isle of

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁹ R.H. Morris, *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns* (1893), pp. 111 – 12 quoted in Woodward, 'Chester Leather Industry', p. 65; J. Kermode, 'The Trade of Late Medieval Chester, 1500 – 1550', in R. Britnell & J. Hatcher (eds), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 286 – 308, on pp. 292, 298, 301

²⁰ Woodward, 'Chester Leather Industry', p. 66.

Man and elsewhere in England by coastal shipping.²¹ Nantwich was particularly noted for glovemaking. In Chester, glovemaking was a poor trade: glovers could only afford to buy leather in small quantities, made a profit of 4s per week and ‘never had more than 20s together at one time’.²²

Two skinners left probate files but died a century apart, which prevents any meaningful comparison.²³ In John Poole, senior’s, inventory where two skin pits of stone, appraised at 10s. This would imply that Poole was also engaged in tanning as pits are also mentioned in tanner’s inventories.²⁴ Four tanners left probate files containing sufficient information to assess their occupational activities. Table 7.1 summarises their inventories, and compares them with other tanners identified by L.A. Clarkson.

In 1738, Francis Worthington had 140 hides in pits worth £80 and dyed hides worth another £8. This was the largest portion of his inventory after his debts, about 20 per cent, was appraised at £434.²⁵ Two John Partingtons appear as tanners. The estate of the elder was proven in 1690.²⁶ The first named of his four children, and presumably the eldest, was also called John with an estate proven in 1744.²⁷ These have been treated as father and son. John Partington’s inventory listed leather, oak bark and a bark mill worth £55 14s 3d, or 41 per cent of his estate.²⁸ Oak bark was a key element for tanning. Nathan Crompton possessed bark stocks worth £26 17s²⁹ while Worthington had another £24 worth of bark. Clarkson cited a

²¹ Woodward, ‘Chester Leather Industry’, pp. 67 – 75.

²² Clarkson, ‘Organisation’, p. 248; BM Harl. MS 1996 f. 248 quoted in Clarkson, ‘Leather Crafts’, p. 29 and Woodward, ‘Chester Leather Industry’, p. 80. The date of the document is unclear. Woodward points out that Clarkson’s assertion that the document is late 16th century is erroneous as the document is addressed to ‘the Kinges most excelent Matie’, which dates it to the 17th century.

²³ John Poole, senior, WS 1675.

²⁴ See Francis Worthington, below.

²⁵ WS 1738.

²⁶ WS 1690.

²⁷ WS 1744.

²⁸ WS 1690.

Table 7.1: Selected Tanners' Inventory Valuations³⁰

No	Year	Name	Place	Value of Craft Goods		Total value (ex. debts)	
1	C16th	Edward Blake	Lincs.	£6 18s 4d	25	£13 6s 8d	25
2	C16th	Henry Wallis	Tattershall, Lincs	£73	13	£137 6s 10d	12
3	1537	Thomas Whytwell	Lincoln	£25 6s 8d	21	£37 18s 10d	21
4	1541	Robert Wyllerton	Boston, Lincs.	£118 12s 10d	10	£176 3s 1d	10
5	1565	Richard Bayne	Gateshead, Co. Durham	£22 4s	22	£29 3s 2d	22
6	1567	John Neall	Horncastle, Lincs.	£770 6s 8d	1	£1314 1s 8d	1
7	1588	John Chucking	Horncastle, Lincs.	£13	24	£20 18s 10d	24
8	1595	Barnard Friends	Holland, Lincs.	£70 10s	14	£99 5s	15
9	1599	John Whiting	Horncastle, Lincs.	£61 7s	17	£89 4s	17
10	1599	Alexander Durne	Horncastle, Lincs.	£20 10s	23	£24 1s 10d	23
11	1611	Thomas Clarke	Kimbalton, Hunts.	£125 12s 8d	9	£178 14s	9
12	1616	John Doddington	Grantham, Lincs.	£50 1s 4d	19	£82 18s 7d	18
13	1616	William Dawson	Grantham, Lincs.	£261 0s 6d	5	£322 3s	5
14	1616	Robert Hanson	Grimsby, Lincs.	£50 approx.	20	£96 approx.	16
15	1620	Samuel Lucas	Eleham, Kent	£65 9s 6d	16	£75 4s 2d	19
16	1621	-----	Kent	£154	7	£250	7
17	1633	John Chamberlain	Bourne, Lincs.	£80 3s 4d	12	£127	13
18	1665	John Spenter	Enfield, Middlesex	£65 12s	15	£72 16s	20
19	1666	William Dodd	Enfield, Middlesex	£140	8	£220	8
20	1681	Robert Burrill	Market Rasen, Lincs.	£365 10s	3	£450	4
21	1689	Thomas Wyatt	Writtle, Essex	£479 14s 8d	2	£542 3s 5d	3
A	1690	John Partington	Macclesfield	£214 12s 4d	6	£290 2s 2d	6
B	1735	Nathan Crompton	Macclesfield	£309 10s 8d ³¹	4	£735 10s 5d ³²	2
C	1738	Francis Worthington	Macclesfield	£112	11	£154	11
D	1744	John Partington	Macclesfield	£55 14s 3d	18	£112 8s	14

1 – 21 after Clarkson; A – D after Macclesfield.

²⁹ WS 1736.

³⁰ After Clarkson, 'Organisation', p. 254.

³¹ Nathan Crompton's inventory only listed one item for tanning, £26 17s for oak bark. The remainder of the trade goods were made up of money received for leather.

³² Crompton's inventory implies some £286 17s 8d was received for debts which were listed as if in a ledger. No outstanding debts are listed. Equally, however, there are no indications of any tanning interests or that any had been recently liquidated.

Gateshead tanner with stocks of £20 in 1569 which he suggests indicated a wholesale bark trade with other tanners.³³ There is no indication of bark trading in Macclesfield because although Crompton's inventory contains an extensive list of repaid debts, there were no debts for oak bark. Oak mills were required for grinding bark. Clarkson discredited assumptions by Kerridge and Nef that they were expensive pieces of machinery, citing values of 3s 4d in 1614 and another with a sieve worth 18s in 1630.³⁴ Two bark mills were appraised in Macclesfield, one alongside leather and bark but the second, belonging to Crompton, cost 20s, which agrees with Clarkson.

Nathan Crompton's inventory listed debts repaid with the debtor's name and purpose of the debt.³⁵ He had substantial sums of money loaned out at interest as bonds and notes, as well as agricultural interests. Debts for leather were repaid by Phillip Holland, Richard Orme, John Sharratt, William Young and William Worthington. Philip Holland was a cordwainer and alderman who could have been purchasing uncurried leather to be curried, as Clarkson suggests this would have been normal practice.³⁶ William Young was a currier and probably buying crust leather to be curried, which shows that carriers did indeed buy crust leather directly from the tanners.³⁷ William Worthington, tanner, was probably the brother of Francis.³⁸ It is not specified why one tanner should be buying leather from another, though surplus capacity may be one reason. Neither John Sharratt nor Richard Orme have been identified.³⁹

³³ Clarkson, 'Organisation', pp. 249 – 50; See also *VCH Leicester*, IV (London, 1958), pp. 83 – 6.

³⁴ Clarkson, 'Organisation', p. 248 n.6 and p. 249.

³⁵ WS 1735.

³⁶ WS 1757. The inventory of Isaac Royle, cordwainer, listed 'leather, curried and uncurried. WI 1691.

³⁷ WS 1750.

³⁸ WS 1751; WS 1738.

³⁹ A Richard Orme, tailor, WS 1704 but without evidence of ever worked with leather.

Only one currier left a probate file, William Young, whose trading arrangements have been discussed above.⁴⁰ A second currier, John Swindells, appears as executor to three wills between 1736 and 1744.⁴¹

One saddler, Jonathan Cotteril, left a probate file which contained just an inventory and, unusually, an account which provided a more accurate statement of his affairs.⁴² The inventory offers no evidence of industrial practices, showing just £1 worth of goods in the shop but unusually recorded no debts. The account, however, shows a different picture, with three substantial debts worth £25 6s owing by Cotteril and a bond for another £4 10s. Overall the estate was shown to be in debt to £10 1s 4d.

‘Shoemaker’ and ‘cordwainer’ were used to describe the same occupation. The *OED* quotes Mrs Behn in *False Count* (1682) I. i, ‘Her father...was in his youth an English cordwinder, that is to say a shoemaker’. Both terms have been considered as the same trade, but individuals retained separate titles. Probate files have survived for eight shoemakers between 1609 and 1729, and seven cordwainers from between 1682 and 1757. The inventory valuations are summarised in Table 7.2, together with those of the sole glover.

Amongst the shoemakers, Peter Mayer’s inventory is typical in its brevity – ‘Leather and working tools £14’⁴³ or ‘leather and other things belonging to his trade £4 15s 2d’ and ‘Book debts for shoes 19s 11d.’⁴⁴ Only Peter Fley provided a detailed list of goods and trading activities.⁴⁵ His inventory lists cushions, nineteen pairs of

⁴⁰ WS 1750.

⁴¹ For William Newton, yeoman, WS 1736; Thomas Mottershead, gentleman, WS 1743; Sarah Mottershead, widow, WS 1744.

⁴² WS 1677.

⁴³ WS 1726.

⁴⁴ Both George Amory, WS 1682.

⁴⁵ WI 1609.

Table 7.2: Summary of Shoemakers, Cordwainers and Glovers Inventories

Year Proved	Name	Occupation	Agriculture	Work Goods ⁴⁶	Inventory
1609	Anthony Fley	Shoemaker	£6 6s 8d	£3 18s 4d	£35 5s 9d
1640	Samuel Witton	Shoemaker	£6	£3 6s	£124 19s 8d
1678	John Norbury	Glover	£5 19s 6d	£10 6s 1d	£57 0s 3d
1682	George Amory	Cordwainer	£8 13s 5d	£4 15s 2d	£133 19s 10d
1682	Isaac Button	Shoemaker	£24 5s	£0	£58 2s
1683	Jervais Newton	Cordwainer	£0	£0	£14 17s 1d
1690	John Meire	Shoemaker	£0	£0	£117 7s 6d
1691	Isaac Royle	Cordwainer	£0	£6 9s	£22 7s
1711	John Hartles	Shoemaker	£0	£0	£2 15s 11d
1726	Peter Mayer	Shoemaker	£0	£14	£37 4s 6d
1739	George Blackwell	Cordwainer	£0	6s	£30 1s 7d

shoes, eyes, leather, tools, worktops and laces.⁴⁷ In his will is a list of debts owing to him in a form which might have been his shop book debts. These debts amounted to £9 5s 4d together with a note for 4s received. All of the debts were for distinct sums by a named individual. The place of abode of only one debtor was noted, John Broadhurst of Simonley, so it is assumed that the remaining debts were owed by inhabitants of Macclesfield. Fley's trade was dominated by the internal demands of Macclesfield rather than exporting across the country as at Northampton.⁴⁸

Debts owed to Fley by George Day are the most informative. Day owed 7s 6d for a pair of boots, 8s 2d for seven pairs of shoes and 10d for sealing boots. A note indicated that 4s had been received, although it is unspecified whether this 4s had been removed from the remaining debts. The debts for the shoes are listed in batches of one or two pairs at a time, which might indicate the nature in which they were bought. The shoes cost between 10d and 13d per pair. This variation in price could reflect different values of shoes, or possibly that part of the debt had been settled. Isaac Royle, cordwainer, also possessed twenty-two pairs of shoes at an average of

⁴⁶ Tools, raw materials and finished goods. Debts have not been counted.

⁴⁷ These cushions may referred to the previous entry in the inventory, which included chairs and stools, rather than being leather cushions for sale.

⁴⁸ *VCH Northamptonshire*, I (London, 1906), pp. 317 – 331.

19d per pair, which again matches the value of shoes in Fley's shop.⁴⁹ Fley is also the only shoemaker to reveal his trading methods. His inventory revealed a shop containing worktops and shelves, and nineteen pairs of shoes worth 30s.⁵⁰ (Another possible reference to a shop is in Peter Mayer's inventory, which noted a 'Chamber over the Shop', but no shop itself.⁵¹) The shoes recorded in Fley's inventory were still his property and so they were not made to order otherwise they would have appeared as debts owing. This shows that Fley was producing shoes for the passing trade and using his shop-cum-workshop to advertise his wares. He was also undertaking repairs and, given the cost of George Day's boots, most probably making footwear to order.

The only evidence of the employment of apprentices and journeymen came in the will of Peter Mayer who bequeathed to his son, Nathaniel, 'the advantages of my apprentices, money and debts owing by journey men or servants.' The second part of this statement would suggest that work was being put out. This is supported with evidence showing that Mayer had more capital tied up in shoemaking than any other shoemaker or cordwainer, but also the highest proportion of his estate tied up in trade (37 per cent). This scale of production would require additional labour. An example of this comes from a bequest in the will of Margaret Phillips to Esther Cottrell, one of her two servants, and wife of William Cottrell of Macclesfield, shoemaker.⁵² The evidence that Cottrell's wife had to take up employment highlights the existence of a poorer, non-probate producing section of society.

The cordwainers did put out more money at interest than the shoemakers. George Amory's inventory recorded bonds worth £72 (of which £34 were desperate)

⁴⁹ WI 1691.

⁵⁰ An average of 19d per pair, which is significantly more than the 10d to 13d per pair owing for shoes by George Day, indicating that Day had settled part of the debt.

⁵¹ WS 1726.

⁵² WS 1752. No occupation.

and George Blackwell had £20 'upon bond and apparell'.⁵³ Nathaniel Mayer, cordwainer, was granted probate of the estate of Mary Mayer, wife of Peter, in 1733.⁵⁴ This was not the same Peter Mayer, shoemaker, discussed above as probate was granted on his estate in 1726. In that will, Peter Mayer bequeathed his shoemaking interests to two of his three sons, Peter and Nathaniel. It is almost certain that the sons followed their father's trade, and appear in probate files from 1726 and 1729. This finding reinforces the original assumption that shoemakers and cordwainers were interchangeable occupations.

Table 7.3 compares the values of Macclesfield's shoemakers and cordwainers inventories with those identified by Clarkson. Chronologically, they occur late in the data series. Eight of nine Macclesfield wills were proved after 1680 while only two of Clarkson's twenty-three wills were proved after the same date. The value of the Macclesfield inventories fits in within the same range as those estates identified by Clarkson: two of the wealthiest and the poorest estates were to be found in Macclesfield.⁵⁵ This is despite expectations that personal wealth would have increased over the two centuries. Overall, Macclesfield's shoemakers and cordwainers were amongst the poorer identified, with seven of nine estates being ranked in the lower two thirds of the data series. The same pattern is found for the value of the craft goods found in Macclesfield. Although the figures for Macclesfield fall largely within the ranges identified by Clarkson, four of the five values are ranked in the lower half of the whole data series.

⁵³ George Amory, WS 1682; George Blackwell, WI 1729.

⁵⁴ WS 1733.

⁵⁵ These are George Amory, John Meire and John Hartles.

Table 7.3: Cordwainer's and Shoemaker's Inventories from across England⁵⁶

Rank of Estate	Date	Name	Place	Value of Craft Goods	Rank of Craft Goods	Total Value of Estate (ex. debts)
1	1675	John Eastwood	London	£21 16s	4	£488 3s
2	1700	Charles Anderson	London	£127 5s	1	£171 1s
3	1682	George Amory	Macclesfield	£4 15s 2d	16	£132 19s 11d
4	1638	John Mowbray	Boston, Lincs	£17 19s 4d	5	£120 5s 5d
5	1690	John Meire	Macclesfield	N/K	---	£117 7s 6d
6	1670	Edward White	London	£43 14s	2	£90 6s
7	1622	Robert Bond	Kent	£10 16s 4d	8	£82 7s 8d
8	1672	Francis Lames	Spilsby, Lincs	£37 7s 6d	3	£70 16s 6d
9	1592	John Whiting	Horncastle, Lincs	£3 6s 8d	20	£62 5s
10	1682	Isaac Button	Macclesfield	N/K	---	£58 2s
11	1593	John Philipson	Newcastle	£1 17s 8d	25	£51 9s 4d
12	1636	John Williamson	Boston, Lincs	£8 15s 8d	9	£43 18s 2d
13	1620	Morgan Borman	Cranbrook, Kent	£11 8s 6d	7	£42 19s 10d
14	1726	Peter Mayer	Macclesfield	£14	6	£37 4s 6d
15	1666	Stephen Clark	Waltham, Essex	£6 10s	12	£35 2s
16	1681	William Oldfield	Saltfleet	£1 18s 4d	24	£33 8s 4d
17	1588	Edward Hodgekinson	Morton, Lincs	£4 3s	17	£30 9s 1d
18	1673	John Loveday	Stamford, Lincs	£3	21	£30 8s 6d
19	1739	George Blackwell	Macclesfield	6s	28	£30 1s 7d
20	1609	Anthony Fley	Macclesfield	£3 18s 4d	18	£26 0s 5d
21	1616	Henry Page	Great Chart, Lincs	£7 6s 4d	11	£22 6s 8d
22	1691	Isaac Royle	Macclesfield	£6 9s	13	£19 7s
23	1637	Luke Jones	Leicester	£7 12s	10	£16 13s
24	1683	Jervais Newton	Macclesfield	N/K	---	£14 17s 1d
25	1591	Robert Ffyllippe	Leicester	£3 15s 4d	19	£11
26	1620	John Miller	Sandwich, Kent	£2 8s	22	£10 12s 8d
27	1566	William Kempe	Faversham, Kent	£4 16s	15	£10 3s 4d
28	1666	Thomas Herne	London	£2	23	£10 5s
29	1566	Thomas Date	Kennington, Kent	£1	26	£10 3s 4d
30	1633	Hugh Burditt	Grantham, Lincs	£5 16s 4d	14	£8 9s 4d
31	1595	Thomas Coulson	Boston, Lincs	8s 2d	27	£5 11s
32	1711	John Hartless	Macclesfield	N/K	---	£2 15s 11d

Macclesfield's cordwainers and shoemakers appear to have been working on a smaller scale than those found nationally by Clarkson. Furthermore, in Macclesfield a smaller proportion of the total estate was committed to the craft. Despite this, Macclesfield was still able to produce shoemakers and cordwainers who could operate on a nationally recognisable scale. The presence of a few large craftsmen within a limited market may well have had a restraining effect on the growth of Macclesfield's other shoemakers and cordwainers.

The sole Macclesfield glover to leave a probate file was John Norbury.⁵⁷ Table 7.4 compares Norbury with the other glovers (and leatherdressers) identified by

⁵⁶ After Clarkson, 'Organisation', Table 2, p. 255. All sources not from Macclesfield are from Clarkson.

⁵⁷ A summary of the valuations from his inventory are included in Table 7.2.

Clarkson. Overall, gloving does not appear to have been an important trade within Macclesfield. Most probably they supplied the town's internal demand, with the fairs and markets providing an opportunity for retail to the town's hinterland.

Table 7.4: Leatherdresser's and Glover's Inventories⁵⁸

No	Year	Name	Place	Value of Trade Goods		Value of Estate (ex. debts)	
1	1563	Henry Patchett	Barrow-on-Soare, Leic.	£5 16s	7	N/K	---
2	1599	William Thompson	Grantham, Lincs	£1 0s 8d	11	£11 2s 8d	9
3	1599	Leonard Gyffothe	Grantham, Lincs	£15	4	£108 10s	2
4	1610	Thomas Pigbone	Wye, Kent	1s	12	£3 12s 4d	10
5	1616	Robert Burton	Grantham, Lincs	£35 18s 8d	1	£89 10s	4
6	1618	Christopher Keples	Milton, Kent	£4 7s	8	£62 13s 3d	5
7	1621	Robert Chapman	Bethersden, Kent	£16 13s 9d	3	£329 0s 5d	1
8	1636	Thomas Faulkner	Holbeach, Lincs	£26 3s 4d	2	£98 0s 8d	3
9	1638	Thomas Hareby	Bourne, Lincs	£10 0s 8d	6	£24 17s 4d	7
10	1665	Thomas Pouter	Writtle, Essex	£4 10s	8	£20 9s 9d	8
A	1678	John Norbury	Macclesfield	310 6s 1d	5	£52 0s 3d	6
11	1680	Nathan Wade	Roxwell, Essex	£2	10	N/K	---

Although one inventory cannot be used to place Macclesfield's glovers in a national context, the inventory of John Norbury does provide sufficient financial information for him to be compared to Clarkson's findings. Although Norbury is chronologically late amongst Clarkson's research, Norbury's scale of operation was median for the whole series: his total estate is ranked sixth out of ten while the value of his craft goods sixth out of ten. Trade goods account for a fifth of his estate (19 per cent).

⁵⁸ After Clarkson, 'Organisation', Table 3, p. 256. All sources are from Clarkson except for John Norbury.

Part II: Other Occupations in Macclesfield

7.3.1 Coalmining

Coal was mined on Macclesfield Common from at least the early-seventeenth century where the coal seam naturally outcropped which allowed mining without needing substantial investment. In 1712, the coalmines were leased to the earl of Huntingdon in the face of popular opposition. This re-organisation was required due to the exhaustion of surface outcrops and the need for specialist mining equipment and experience to exploit the deeper seams. Stone was also quarried from the Common. As with the coalmines, after attempts to regulate stone quarrying in the seventeenth century, the quarries were leased out in the eighteenth century.⁵⁹

Evidence of coalmines from the probate material predates evidence of coal miners. In the wills of John Jackson and William Watson there are references of titles to and profits from coalmines at ‘the Cliff’ near Macclesfield. Watson’s will also referred to mines at ‘Henry Tempsons’.⁶⁰ A confused passage in the will of Edward Ridgeway, chapman, mentioned that he held ‘Packett heyes’ from Phillip Orme of Macclesfield by one coal mine, indicating more coal mines in Packett Heyes.⁶¹

One coal miner and one collier left probate files containing two wills and one inventory, but they contain no information on the nature of their economic activities.⁶² More information was gained from incidental evidence from other probate files, such as Robert Harper, yeoman, whose inventory contained an entry for hay, turfs, and

⁵⁹ C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), p. 90 – 2. For coal, see Corporation Minute Book CCRO LBM 1/1 entries for 6 Dec 1687, for the leasing of the coal mines and coal pits for 7 years at £25 pa; for 8 Jan 1696 for a developing dispute between the Corporation and the earl of Macclesfield for a lease from the King for, amongst other things, the coal mines. This dispute was settled on 21 Aug 1702 when Henry Rowbotham, collier, ‘resigned into the power of the Corporation’ those coal mines late in the hands of the late earl of Macclesfield.

⁶⁰ John Jackson, yeoman, WS 1690; William Watson, no occupation, WS 1672.

⁶¹ WS 1695.

other coal pit ware worth £1.⁶³ Harper's inventory identified a cow and 93 lb. of cheese. Such a quantity of cheese would be for sale rather than for personal consumption as inventories rarely mention foodstuffs in the house. Coal mining was part time or seasonal employment, especially in the summer when lower rainfall totals reduced the risk of flooding, making dual occupation essential.

There are probate files for three coal carriers in Macclesfield which were proved between 1701 and 1714.⁶⁴ Of these, only one, Philip Hall, hints at the nature of his trade with an inventory entry for two little mares and one little old horse.⁶⁵ Strangely there were no mentions of panniers or any other method of carrying the coal.

For such an important commodity as coal, there is surprisingly limited information available. There is as much information about the location and ownership of coal mines as there is on the miners themselves. This would reflect the characteristics of the probate material – the personal wealth required to justify the expense of probate favoured the mine owners rather than the miners. However, as the coal outcrops were on common land, this would preclude private ownership or management until the mines were leased in 1712. Perhaps more important was the demand for coal. Inventories show far greater reliance on turf than coal for fuel. Twenty-nine inventories noted coal or coals compared with fifty-five for turf. There was more incidental evidence of turf cutting, as with turf spades and turf carts, than for coal mining: the only record of coal mining tools was those of Robert Harper. Access to free turf upon the Moss was a privilege granted to burgesses. At his death, Ralph Orme had £1 worth of turves cut and lying upon the Moss. The right to cut

⁶² Francis Arnald, coal miner, WS 1717; Henry Rowbotham, collier, WS 1737.

⁶³ WS 1691.

⁶⁴ James Moores, WS 1701; William Shepley, WS 1705; Philip Hall, WS 1714.

⁶⁵ Together with a cow, these were worth £5 17s.

turf was hereditary and John Ridgeway granted his rights to his wife.⁶⁶ Access to free fuel upon the Moss would have deterred the development of a market for coal, particularly as the privileged class who could cut turf were most likely to be those who could best afford to pay for coal. What about those without access to turf? There were coal carriers to bring coal into the town and firewood is mentioned in the inventories. Despite the key advantage of coal as a cleaner burning fuel than turf, the presence of turf in more inventories than coal suggests that the limited number of colliers and coal miners in the probate material reflects a limited demand for (and possibly supply of) coal in Macclesfield. The cost of mined coal over free turf was probably also a limiting factor.

7.3.2 Building Trades

Three masons have been identified in the probate material of which one, Roger Bolton, presented the sort of conundrum common amongst probate material.⁶⁷ His inventory stood at a respectable £500 but neither his will nor inventory contained anything related to stone. Indeed, after his purse and apparel, his largest entries were for £8 worth of sheep and cattle, almost £160 worth of silk, gimp and buttons and over £200 worth of shop book debts. Bolton has not been treated as a stonemason.

Two other masons had wills proved in the same year, 1729, and shared a common surname, Blackwell.⁶⁸ The will of neither man indicated any form of masonry work in progress, raw materials or masonry tools. They do, however, indicate the possession of houses leased for profit. Richard Blackwell bequeathed to one son properties at the Waters upon repayment of a £20 debt. This debt was to go to a second son which was to be used as part payment on 'houses lately bargained in

⁶⁶ Ralph Orme, yeoman, WS 1690; John Ridgeway, yeoman, WS 1641.

⁶⁷ WS 1685.

Barn Street'. John Blackwell allocated the profits of two houses to his wife until his two daughters came of age.

Richard Blackwell's will mentions three sons, John, George and Thomas and left £3 for Thomas to join in partnership with John. Richard's will was dated 26 December 1728 and preceded that of John by five months so the partnership may well have been established. A will of George Blackwell, cordwainer, in 1739 mentioned his brother, Thomas, as a mason of Adlington who was most likely the youngest surviving brother and the sole surviving Blackwell mason, following the occupation of his father and eldest brother.⁶⁹

The lack of evidence of raw materials or tools could be explained if raw materials were bought in for specific jobs and if journeymen provided their own tools. In 1673, John Whittakers possessed timber, stone and slate 'for building' worth £7 15s. This would save the mason the expense of the outlay of the raw materials and thereby reduce his capital outlay.⁷⁰ The £20 sum mentioned in Richard Blackwell's will could indicate that properties had been bought and were considered to be good investments for excess capital by the building trades. Equally, however, capital could have been used to purchase materials and labour for a housing development, to accommodate urban population growth. English inventories were not required to list real estate it is difficult to determine the full extent of real estate ownership.

A single brickmaker, William Reddish, has been identified from a probate file proved in 1632. His occupation was incorrectly recorded as a 'breechmaker' in the CCRO database, but corrected through the presence of debts for bricks owed by him and to him for in excess of 2400 bricks.⁷¹ Reddish's probate file does not provide any

⁶⁸ Richard Blackwell, mason, WI 1729; John Blackwell, mason, WS 1729.

⁶⁹ WI 1729.

⁷⁰ John Whittakers, yeoman, WS 1673.

⁷¹ WS 1632.

evidence that he was actually making bricks, or where his activities were taking place. However, Reddish's occupational title would suggest that he was making bricks if not in Macclesfield then nearby and transporting them. Stella Davies found no evidence of brickmaking in Macclesfield until 1696, when Nicholas Thornley requested permission from the Corporation to erect a brick works upon the Common. The following year a 'riotous assembly' threw down the walls and twenty arrests were made. Popular opinion still evidently saw the Commons as a communal asset. However, it is clear that Macclesfield's builders had access to bricks as a building material at least sixty years before the date suggested by Stella Davies.⁷²

Allied to masons and brickmakers are slaters. As with the masons, there is no indication of raw materials in the inventories which again suggests that the contractor did not provide raw materials. One slater, Thomas Pott, did possess his own tools.⁷³ Property again makes up a prominent aspect of the wills or inventories. Pott possessed a cottage upon the waste which may be the 'house where I dwell' which he left to his relict. It was not necessary to record real estate in inventories and as the deceased's dwelling house is rarely mentioned specifically in inventories, it may well be that this cottage was considered by the appraisers to be a capital investment which needed to be recorded, possibly because of its remote location.⁷⁴

Another slater, Richard Gregory, possessed at least two messuages in Jordangate.⁷⁵ His file does not include an inventory. The inventory of his father, also called Richard and a slater, mentioned goods in the house, which would suggest that

⁷² Davies, *Macclesfield*, pp. 93 – 4; CCRO LBM 1/1, 8 Jan 1696, Thornley's request for permission to make brick upon the common; 15 Sept 1697, in a 'tumultuous and riotous manner' on 14 July 1696 bricks made upon the common for the use of Thornley and other burgesses were destroyed. A suit was brought at the King's Bench.

⁷³ Thomas Pott, slater, WI 1738.

⁷⁴ Houses are mentioned in passing, usually when the inventory is broken down into buildings or rooms, as in 'Goods in the house'.

⁷⁵ Richard Gregory, slater, WS 1728.

his son was able to invest in property.⁷⁶ This would reflect the pattern shown by the masons. In the case of Richard, senior, his will returned to his relict, Mary, her 'goods owned before our marriage'. Whether these goods would have included one of the Jordangate messuages is impossible to tell as a probate file suspected of being hers is too fragile to be consulted.⁷⁷

Richard, senior, was owed debts worth some £15, which accounted for half of his estate. He is the only slater (or mason) to have been identified with debts owed by him. Three of the eight debts (including the two largest sums) were bonds. Again, this was the only example of masons and slaters to have invested money at interest. As this was the earliest probate file from either of the building trades it could suggest that investment in property was not always considered to provide the best returns but given the expansion in Macclesfield's population at this time which would have increased demand for housing, it is strange to find members of the building trades not taking advantage of this new market.

The masons and slaters appear to have followed similar paths, as one would expect from what are essentially two halves of the same trade. Neither set of tradesmen stocked their own raw materials and both invested in housing to be rented out. The possession of houses may have been from a desire to find a suitable investment for their profits and to provide themselves with constructive employment between paid jobs. This impression is derived from the 1720s and 1730s, but in the 1680s the sole inventory showed that investing capital in bonds was favoured. Of all of the builders and slaters, only one possessed his own tools, indicating that most were, to use modern terms, building contractors rather than day labourers. Given the nature of probate, under-representation of day labourers is what one would expect.

⁷⁶ WS 1682.

⁷⁷ Mary Gregory, no occupation, WS 1691.

7.3.3 Plumbers and Glaziers

Probate files for six glaziers have survived. When compared with the two previous building trades (and also the plumbers who follow), the glaziers were not only more numerous but were of a sufficiently high social standing to produce probate files during the seventeenth century. The almost complete absence of glazier's probate files in the eighteenth century, a time when one would expect their presence to increase due to urban expansion, would suggest that the trade declined in profitability.⁷⁸

The most intriguing inventory came from Bryan Harden, glazier, as a man combining glazing and farming.⁷⁹ Harden was owed £1 for glass in William Parson's house in Macclesfield. Tools, glass and lead accounted for another £8 13s 4d. Unlike the previous building trades, Harden found it desirable to stock the raw materials and his own tools. Glass is a fragile material liable to be broken. Harden would have needed glass in stock to provide a repair service and the presence of tools shows that Harden was a glazier in his own right, rather than a contractor.

Bryan Harden's will mentioned a son, Edward, who may have become Edward Harding, glazier.⁸⁰ Harding's inventory also recorded a vice, melting ladle and soldering iron but no glass or lead.⁸¹ Harding appeared to be less financially stable than Harden and an account with his inventory showed extensive debts which exceeded his appraised estate by over £4. As glass and lead accounted for a substantial amount of Harden's inventory, Harding may simply not have had the

⁷⁸ James Broadbent, glazier, WS 1748 was the only glazier to have their will proved after 1703.

Jonathan Willet, plumber and glazier, was an executor for Mary Jackson, widow, WI 1752.

⁷⁹ WS 1604.

⁸⁰ WS 1669.

capital reserves to build up a stock but he was willing to invest in almost £5 worth of 'buttons silkes and gimpe'. The socio-economic conditions of the silk button industry with the prospect of larger profits may have tempted Harding and others away from more traditional forms of employment.

The link between plumbing and glazing was the use of lead to provide a watertight seal to windows and waterpipes. One plumber in particular, Thomas Warburton, was a substantial figure.⁸² His will disposed of lands in Rainow, £200 'upon a mortgage', bequests of another £100 as well as 'the residue'. His will suggests he was operating on a scale far in excess of that of a lone craftsman. The time of Warburton's death coincides with the provision of piped water into Macclesfield and it is tempting to see him as one of the contractors laying the pipes.

7.3.4 Manufacturing

Four watchmakers have been identified of whom three, John, Edward and Samuel Smallwood appear to have been brothers. Samuel Smallwood was noted as a goldsmith in the bond of administration for his estate, but as a watchmaker in the bond of administration for John.⁸³

Ironically, it was Samuel Smallwood, the goldsmith, who provided the most information on watchmaking. There were three watches, one 'wallwatch' and tools amounting to £15, or 40 per cent of his estate. John Smallwood's inventory lists tools, shop fittings and a 'wall watch' at under £11, which is similar to the £11 10s for the equivalent items in Samuel Smallwood's inventory. John's inventory also includes £58 worth of livestock and agricultural produce (39 per cent). The impression given is

⁸¹ Edward Blagge, 'glasier', WS 1687, was the only other glazier with his own work goods, with 'seeling and other goods' worth £2 11s 2d. As this was the only entry in the House Place, 'other goods' could account for anything.

⁸² WS 1712.

that Samuel, the poorer of the pair, was an active watchmaker (despite being described as a goldsmith) while the agricultural interests of John Smallwood may have reduced his need to practice as a watchmaker, and the craft may have been secondary to agriculture. Samuel Smallwood, the goldsmith brother who died in 1719, left a shop containing three watches (£3 10s), a 'wall watch' (clock) at £1 10s and work tools with other odd things at £10. There was no mention of gold. There was a dynasty of watchmaking Smallwoods, possibly brothers, operating in Macclesfield around the beginning of the eighteenth century of whom one, Samuel, had been working in gold.

There are probate files for two Macclesfield gunsmiths. Unfortunately, neither was particularly useful for evidence on the production of firearms. Humphrey Cherry's inventory simply noted 'Goods in the smithy £5' and debts by bill and bond amounting to almost £11.⁸⁴ Robert Boothby did possess a sword, bayonet and gun worth 6s 8d.⁸⁵ These were listed amongst the household goods, not amongst the tools in the smithy and so were more likely to be personal possession rather than goods for sale. The presence of a sword and bayonet suggest that these were military in origin. Amongst the goods in the smithy were hinges and horseshoes, but no mention of firearms. Whatever Boothby's aspirations to be something more than just a blacksmith, the contents of his smithy implies that that was just what he was, and indeed the bond of administration called him a blacksmith.

Whitesmiths worked in tin. Five whitesmiths have been located from Macclesfield although two, James Hewitt and Edward Bibby, appear only as

⁸³ John Smallwood, watchmaker, WS 1715; Samuel Smallwood, goldsmith, WS 1719.

⁸⁴ WS 1682.

⁸⁵ WC 1690.

executors.⁸⁶ The purpose of the will of another whitesmith, Henry Grantham, was for his relict and executor to surrender her powers to his principal creditor, Frances Ashworth of Macclesfield, spinster.⁸⁷ Thomas Buckley's inventory was appraised at below £6 and the contents suggest that he was not economically active.⁸⁸ His executors were his spinster daughter, Jane, and one Joseph Buckley of Chester, whitesmith. Throughout the first third of the eighteenth century, Macclesfield appears to have been well provided for by whitesmiths of whom at least one showed a connection with a Chester whitesmith. This may indicate a trading connection, or the place where the whitesmiths had been apprenticed. As the two whitesmiths who acted as executors did so in 1736 there is no reason to suspect that this service was not maintained until the end of the period under review.

Joshua Mottershead combined tallow chandelling with soap making or soap boiling.⁸⁹ In a somewhat badly organised entry in the inventory, the appraisal of his shop and workhouse was entered with his linen and apparel, which prevented any meaningful assessment. What is illuminating is an entry for soap in a coffer ready for market at the shop of Joshua Wyat, £1. One Joshua 'Wyatt' of Macclesfield, chapman, had acted as an administrator to the estate of Anthony Pennavayre of Macclesfield, gentleman, the previous year.⁹⁰ Selling soap was not an activity associated with Macclesfield's chapmen. As there is evidence that Macclesfield was

⁸⁶ James Hewitt as executor to Ann Ferinhough, widow and innkeeper, WS 1717; Edward Bibby as executor to Mary Chantry, wife, WS 1736. Ann Ferinhough chose a Manchester whitesmith, James Rotherne, as another executor.

⁸⁷ WS 1713. Ashworth was accompanied by Dorothy Ashworth, spinster, probably her sister, who was named as one of the administrators. Grantham presumably held a sum of money by bond of Ashworth, although this was not specified. Four years later, Francis Ashworth was again the principal creditor in another case, that of Edward Denham, no occupation, WS 1717. On that occasion another apparent sister, Joan, accompanied her as one of the administrators. It may be that the credit extended by Frances Ashworth to Grantham had been collected and then extended to Denham, only to be collected again four years later.

⁸⁸ WS 1701.

⁸⁹ WS 1735.

⁹⁰ WS 1734.

becoming congested on market days, it may be that the soap was simply being stored at a convenient location close to the market.⁹¹ Alternatively, Mottershead may have decided that a division of labour was sensible so that while somebody sold his soap for him, he could continue to produce soap and candles.

Joiners, wheelwrights, carpenters and coopers all appear in Macclesfield probate files. These four crafts had specific connotations with regards to the type of wooden product they produced, especially the wheelwright and cooper. Due to the nature of the probate inventory it is unlikely that it would be possible to distinguish between the four crafts unless the craftsman had specific goods recorded in his inventory e.g. wheels or barrels.

Of the woodworkers leaving probate files, only the inventory of Josiah Clowes, joiner, provided information beyond a list of tools.⁹² Although Clowes could justifiably call himself a joiner from a inventory entry accounting for the sale of his lathe and tools, a more appropriate term would be a dealer in goods of which timber made up a part. Clowes' inventory listed each type of timber in stock by species, thickness, occasionally quality, length and price per unit length, for example 964 feet of ½ inch oak at 8d per yard, £8 0s 7d. The quantity of timber listed implies a timber yard. This scale of operation was beyond that of a carpenter and a workshop. A wide selection of woods were listed including Norwegian oak, 'English dole', sycamore, mahogany and poplar. Also in stock were sixty-two ash coffin sides and eighteen ash coffin bottoms. Neither the surplus of sides over bottoms nor the absence of lids can be explained. In addition to timber, woodenware goods like sieves and bowls were stockpiled. There were earthenware products including Nottingham-ware and Lancashire-ware and glass-ware in the form of flint-glasses.

⁹¹ Davies, *Macclesfield*, p. 58.

⁹² WS 1737.

Although the listing of a lathe and tools implies that Clowes was a practising joiner, the fact that they were listed as sold in the inventory suggests that they were not central to his operations at the time of his death. The coffin sides and bottoms were the only example of finished goods in the inventory of any woodworker. Rather than the traditional image of the coffin being made to measure for the deceased, these appear to have been mass-produced for the poorer end of the market. In this context, stored alongside substantial stocks of timber and wooden, earthen and glassware, it is most likely that the pre-fabricated coffin sections were mass-produced and bought in by Clowes wholesale. Rather than an active joiner, Clowes was most probably a timber merchant supplying Macclesfield's woodworkers in the early-eighteenth century.

7.3.5 Victualling

The earliest tobacconist in Macclesfield was John Toplis but his probate file gives no indication of his trading activities.⁹³ The earliest mention of tobacco was in 1669 when Peter Downes, husbandman, died leaving tobacco, pipes and a wide selection of other exotic items like loaf sugar, wine vinegar, long pepper and turmeric.⁹⁴ Downes was acting in the capacity of a mercer, despite being termed a husbandman. Almost a century later, Daniel Eccles, grocer, was acting in a similar capacity as he possessed tools for the preparation and cutting of tobacco.⁹⁵ Despite a long established demand for tobacco in Macclesfield, the lack of substantial evidence about its sale may be due to the presence of Hugh Worthington of Upton, tobacconist. Worthington appears in a number of probate files in the capacity of administrator or

⁹³ WS 1718.

⁹⁴ WS 1669.

⁹⁵ WS 1754.

executor, for example to Thomas Lunt, gentleman, in 1734.⁹⁶ Although not of Macclesfield, Worthington's presence in the town and the town's knowledge of his capacity as a tobacconist could have competed with any tobacco sales from within the town.

There are probate files for six butchers of which two appear to have been rearing cattle. The presence of butchering tools and, in one case, a 'standing' suggests that they were stockrearing to supply Macclesfield with meat. John Lees had six 'kyne' worth £19 on two tacks of ground.⁹⁷ Robert Nixon's inventory shows a similar pattern but on a much larger scale: forty-four cattle plus horses, lambs and swine worth £163 17s 3d.⁹⁸ Substantial debts were owed to Edward Blagg, butcher, amounting to over £2500 and another £120 in desperate debts but Blagg's inventory makes no mention of butchering tools and there was only one cow.⁹⁹ Nixon possessed tools and a standing worth £1 which also suggest a large-scale operation but there are no indications that any of the butchers owned a shop.

One of the problems identified with trades like grocers (and mercers) is what constituted grocery wares. Here the probate inventory can be invaluable, and at the same time frustrating. Inventories like that of William Thornley simply list millinery goods (£40 7s 6d) and grocers and shop goods (£35 16s 11d) which do not add to our knowledge of what the goods were.¹⁰⁰ Then an inventory like that of Thomas Rathbone is located which lists all of his shop goods.¹⁰¹ Appendix E transcribes the complete list. In summary, Rathbone sold everything except what would be expected in a modern grocer. Foodstuffs, in the widest sense, were sugar, herbs and spices,

⁹⁶ WS 1734.

⁹⁷ WS 1640.

⁹⁸ WS 1697.

⁹⁹ WS 1700.

¹⁰⁰ WS 1690.

¹⁰¹ WI 1735.

sweets and tobacco. Haberdashery goods included pins and buttons while hardware goods included pipes and candles, glue and gunpowder, corks and paper.

More importantly, how did a grocer's goods differ from that of a mercer? The twenty mercers provided eight probate files. Mercers were well established in Macclesfield earlier than the grocers. The will of William Healey, mercer, from 1587 was too unintelligible to be read, while the will and inventory of Thomas Wood of 1616 offered only a tantalising glimpse into an early trader. As with the grocers, most of the probate files reveal no details of trading activities, or are in the briefest of formats, like 'Goods in the Shop £72' of Thomas Wood.¹⁰² Three inventories have survived with lists of shop goods.¹⁰³ In complete contrast to Thomas Wood's single line entry, when transcribed the shop goods in these three inventories take up fourteen pages of A4 at 10 point. Warburton's inventory then has another sixteen pages of debts due. Warburton's inventory was composed entirely of fabrics, accessories and small finished goods, like stockings and hats. As such, he should be considered as a draper. One draper has been identified in Macclesfield, James Penketh, who was an executor in 1721. William Bamford's inventory shows shop goods which were very similar to the grocer, Thomas Rathbone, above. Although separated by almost fifty years, there is a great degree of similarity between the two inventories. Finally, James Oldfield's inventory covers similar goods to Bamford's, although as Oldfield's is four times the length of Bamford's inventory there was a much greater selection of goods. Overall, there was little to differentiate between the grocer and mercer in Macclesfield except for the scale of operation with mercers being the larger operators.

¹⁰² WS 1616.

¹⁰³ James Oldfield, WS 1635; William Bamford, WS 1688; Thomas Warburton, WC 1740.

7.3.6 Textiles

Roger Toft is described as a ‘sherman’ or shearman.¹⁰⁴ There were unspecified goods in the shop together with ‘teanters in the place yard’ worth £2 10s and thirty-one yards of cloth worth a further £4 10s. His inventory also contains twenty-two sheep worth £5.

Two weavers have been identified in the probate material and despite post-dating Roger Toft by at least fifty years, show that weavers were practising in Macclesfield. Neither weaver left their own probate file and so the nature of their activities, the structure of their trade and the material they wove remain unknown.¹⁰⁵ Three websters have been identified, all of which left probate files, but their estates were appraised at just 11s 2d and £1 11s 6d respectively.¹⁰⁶ They represent the lower end of the economic scale, but their presence is further evidence that there were non-silk based textile activities.¹⁰⁷

William Smethurst, feltmaker, was active in the production and sale of hats.¹⁰⁸ His shop contained hats, for men and women, and accessories including ‘french frills’, linings and bands. There was even a looking glass for the final touch. In his workhouse were iron basins and ‘leads’ where the hats were produced.

Most of the drapers identified through probate were based in London.¹⁰⁹ Only two have been identified from Macclesfield, both with the same surname (Barber)

¹⁰⁴ WS 1676. See p. 106 about wool at the market.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Barrow was named as the administrator of his son, John, minor, in a bond of administration for a legacy by John’s maternal grandfather, WI 1741; Moses Parrie was named as the husband of the recipient of a legacy from her father, Richard Gregory, slater, WS 1728.

¹⁰⁶ WI 1610; WS 1680.

¹⁰⁷ WS 1615.

¹⁰⁸ WI 1693.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Mr John Whinnole of London, draper, who received £37 13s 7d in settlement of a debt from the estate of Thomas Warburton of Macclesfield, draper, WC 1740.

which may indicate a father-and-son concern. Philip Barber's inventory lists the textiles in his possession.¹¹⁰ A simplified list of his textiles, by value, is as follows:

Serges	£27 10s
Linen	£22 6s
Crapes, Galloons and Tooque	£17 10s
Woollen cloth	£14 14s
Thread	£7 10s
Callico and Buckram	£3
Hessian	14s
Total	£93 4s

Serges and woollens made up the largest stock value at almost half the total, although it is not possible to convert this into lengths of cloth. This is to be expected given that they were produced within Britain. The linens may have originated from Lancashire or Ireland where there was already linen and fustian production. The linens themselves were divided between dyed linen and linen cloth. There was no major division of linens to conform to the diversity of linens available, as shown by Margaret Spufford.¹¹¹ Crape many have come from further a field, possibly Norwich. Cotton was not banned in England yet nor would be manufactured in a pure cotton be achieved for some time although English manufacturers were able to produce cotton

¹¹⁰ WS 1686. The other linen draper was Nathaniel Barber, administrator to Joseph Chadwick, no occupation, WS 1756. Many Barbers were chapmen so it is not unsurprising to find these two Barbers in the textile trade in some capacity.

¹¹¹ Spufford, *Great Reclathing*, p. 92; J.B. Owen, *The Eighteenth Century, 1714 – 1815* (London, 1974), p. 135; J. Stobart, 'County, Town and Country: Three Histories of Urban Development in

and wool or linen mixes, is absent from this list but it is strangely absent from this shop stock. Calico is present, but only in small quantities, £3 together with buckram. Calico was a mainstay of the East India Company: in 1664 over 250,000 pieces were imported, accounting for 73 per cent of the year's trade, and about a third of that calico was sold in England. This trade continued throughout the 1680s and 1690s although by the beginning of the eighteenth century, legislation and the Calico Riots attempted to reverse this trend. Despite this, Barber's shop stock does not reflect the apparent national craze for Indian textiles: for Defoe, writing in 1708 calico 'crept into our houses, our closets and bedchambers; curtains, cushions, chairs, and at last beds themselves were nothing but calicoes or Indian stuffs' while 'everything that used to be made of wool or silk, relating to either the dress of the women or the furniture of our houses, was supplied by the Indian trade.' Barber's had either run down his stock of calico at his death, possibly awaiting a new supply, or else this national craze for Indian textiles had failed to impact upon Macclesfield's tastes in textiles.¹¹²

Despite being termed a linen draper, linen was not Barber's most valuable stock, accounting for only 24 per cent of the total behind serges at 29 per cent. There was no account or list of debts due to or by Barber which would assist in identifying where these fabrics originated. Incidental evidence from the probate material suggests London or, to a lesser extent, Manchester.

Eighteenth-Century Chester', in P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland: Change, Convergence and Divergence* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 171 – 195, on p. 191.

¹¹² B. Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660 – 1800* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 15 – 17, 31 – 5; B. Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660 – 1800* (London, 1997), pp. 6, 38, 64; for Defoe, see Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite*, p. 16; 11 & 12 Will. III, c.10.

7.3.7 Retail

Four shopkeepers have been identified but without any information which would clarify the role of a shopkeeper. Paradoxically, the evidence only served to confuse the issue. Thomas Fernihough, for example, was noted as a shopkeeper when he was named as an administrator of the estate of Mary Boulton, spinster.¹¹³ Three years later, when named as a guardian for Mary and Martha Warburton, minors, he was a grocer.¹¹⁴ Excluding the possibility of a change in profession, ‘shopkeeper’ would refer to any retailer in possession of a shop regardless of the goods sold. This hypothesis is supported by the case of William Swindells, who was already deceased when mentioned in the will of Humphrey Swindells, yeoman.¹¹⁵ William Swindells was a shoemaker and shopkeeper. He was likely to have been a shoemaker who sold retail directly to the public through his own shop. ‘Shopkeeper’ appears to have been a generic terms which could also mean ‘workshopkeeper’.

These examples show that Macclesfield was involved, albeit in a small way, with the woollen trade beyond the role of the market for selling wool. This was not an unexpected revelation, given the proximity of the Peak District and the repeated occurrence of sheep in probate inventories. The identified occupations also suggest that within Macclesfield there were also spinners and weavers of wool which have gone largely unrecorded due to predominance of silk-based industries from the seventeenth century onwards.

7.3.8 Public and Professional Services.

From the seven clergymen to leave probate files, there is no indication of religious denomination, but it was assumed that these clergymen were all Anglican

¹¹³ WS 1736.

¹¹⁴ WS 1739.

ministers in Macclesfield chapel as there was no evidence to suggest otherwise. Five clergymen show a strong trend towards book ownership (as would be expected), and agriculture. Bradley Hayhurst's estate was appraised at £162 17s 2d with books worth £10. After removing the debts due, the books were the single largest entry in the inventory, accounting for 19 per cent.¹¹⁶ John Asworth's library was worth even more, £30, and was worth almost a quarter of his appraised estate (after debts removed).¹¹⁷

Three of the clergymen were heavily involved in agriculture, and appear to have been farming the land directly. John Blackshaw possessed no books, but amongst his husbandry ware were thirteen gallons of butter, Robert Barlow owned three cows and three turkeys worth £6 10s, more than his £5 worth of books, and John Ashworth owned livestock and corn growing worth £11 10s.¹¹⁸

Only Adam Holland conformed to what would now be considered a member of the Anglican clergy. His library, worth over £40, accounted for 20 per cent of his appraised estate, his debts stood at £12 11s 6d and were minimal compared with his predecessors and there were no agricultural activities to distract him from his spiritual flock.¹¹⁹

Free education within Macclesfield was focused on Macclesfield Free or Grammar School.¹²⁰ This should not preclude the existence of other educational establishments within the town, or of private education. These schoolmasters paid great attention to their libraries, as with the clergy. John Meire's £10 worth of books accounted for a twelfth of his estate while Caleb Pott owned over £60 worth of books

¹¹⁵ WS 1744.

¹¹⁶ WS 1685.

¹¹⁷ WS 1689.

¹¹⁸ WS 1623; WS 1667; WS 1689.

¹¹⁹ WS 1711.

¹²⁰ See pp. 28 – 9 for a summary of the history of the school.

and maps, pictures and globes worth another £2 15s.¹²¹ The schoolmasters also displayed a concern for the fate of their books. Caleb Pott donated his two dictionaries and Mercator's *Atlas* to Macclesfield Free School while John Ashworth instructed that his library, writings and manuscripts were not to be sold as he disapproved of the breaking up of such libraries to be sold for a 'trifle'. The actual fate of his library went unrecorded.¹²² Apart from the schoolmaster's affection for books, there are limited references to actual education. Robert Huntingdon's inventory lists debts owed to him, including £32 by [blank] Glegg of Grange, Cheshire, esquire, for diet (board and lodging) and schooling for 'several years', towards payment of which a silver hilted sword was in the administrator's possession.¹²³ The mention of 'diet and schooling' would suggest a private educational establishment had been operation in competition to the Free School.

Six medical occupations including the variable renderings of barber and surgeon produced twenty-one named medical professionals as follows:

Table 7.5: Medical Practitioners from Macclesfield's Probate Files.

	Probate Files	Named in Passing	Total
Apothecary	4	6	10
Bone Setter	2	0	2
Barber/Surgeon	3	5	8
Practitioner	1	0	1
Total	10	11	21

These medical professionals have been identified between 1664 and 1757 without any discernible trends or patterns.¹²⁴

¹²¹ John Meire, schoolmaster and shoemaker, WS 1690; Caleb Pott, schoolmaster, WS 1692. The combination of schoolmaster and shoemaker is not unique, as the first master of a Dorchester 'under school, was Aquila Purchase, the town clerk and a former shoemaker. D. Underwood, *Fire From Heaven: The Life of an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1992), p. 113.

¹²² John Ashworth, schoolmaster and clerk, WS 1748.

¹²³ WS 1702.

¹²⁴ Henry Sheply, bone setter, WI 1664; John Whittakers, administrator of John Poole, no occupation, WS 1757. Timothy Lightbrowne, barber/surgeon, was an administrator for Elizabeth Heald, spinster,

Only in the case of Robert Winterbottom was there any indication of the nature of his practice. Two gilded boxes of instruments worth 6s 8d implied the capacity for intrusive surgery. Three Thornleys, Nicholas, Thomas and William, appear as barber/surgeons between the 1670s and 1702. They appear in passing and it was not until 1736 that the will of Nicholas was proved.¹²⁵ There is no indication of any ties of kinship from that probate file. However, the appearance of three barber/surgeons of the same surname in the same town over the same 30 year period would suggest some connection, and could even suggest a family dynasty perhaps with informal in-house training.

7.3.9 Military

Three soldiers have been identified. Two were the recipients of legacies while the third was named as an executor with powers subsequently reserved. Thomas Hall and Humphrey Swindells were soldiers in 1714 and 1744, during the Wars of the Spanish and Austrian Successions respectively. These two may have been soldiers 'for the duration', assuming they survived.¹²⁶ Edward Goodwin was a soldier in 1755.¹²⁷ Although the French and Indian War had just commenced in North America, it would not spread to Europe for another two years. Goodwin may have been recently recruited into the Army but he was most probably a 'career' soldier. In no case were details of the soldier's regiment or corps given. Equally, no mention was made of rank, length of service or garrison.

Probate files were proved for Thomas Hall and Edward Goodwin in the years after their wars had ended. Thomas Hall, husbandman, had his will proved in 1723.

WS 1752. His own will was proved in 1761 which, although only just outside of the period under review, has not been included.

¹²⁵ WI 1736.

¹²⁶ Phillip Hall, coal carrier, WS 1714; Humphrey Swindells, yeoman, WS 1744.

Similarly, the will of an Edward Goodwin was proven in 1766 when he was a button dyer. While there is no evidence to link those soldiers to these probate files, it would be intriguing to speculate that these men survived the wars and returned to Macclesfield to pursue more productive careers in their later years.

7.3.10 No Occupation

Some 250 files did not record an occupation. As there was a prerequisite for moveable wealth before there was any requirement to enter into any aspect of probate, vagrants and the propertyless poor were automatically excluded from the process. For the purposes of this study 'no occupation' has been listed as an economic or social descriptor in order not to exclude any section of Macclesfield's probate material.

In practice, many of those listed in the CCRO database as 'no occupation' were misrepresented by the original compilers of the list.¹²⁸ Josiah Clowes, for example, was in fact, a joiner¹²⁹ while Bryan Harden, was listed as a glazier in his will.¹³⁰ Sometimes a little more investigation was required, either by reading further into the probate file or drawing conclusions from the contents of the inventories. Isabella Hawkins, has been identified as the wife of Peter Hawkins, gentleman, of Macclesfield, from the contents of the certificate of administration.¹³¹ Henry Boone, was identified as a chapman from the presence of stocks of buttons in his inventory.¹³² Finally, some other links which were further removed have been identified, such as John Combes being identified as the same John Combes, innholder, as both probate

¹²⁷ Mathew Goodwin, yeoman, WS 1755.

¹²⁸ For these purposes, No Occupation also includes the absence of any other social descriptor.

¹²⁹ WS 1737.

¹³⁰ WS 1604.

¹³¹ WS 1721.

¹³² WS 1676.

files were proved in 1723, the former being named in WC 1723 and the later WS 1723.

Those probate files identified as being ‘no occupation’ in the CCRO database have been analysed, both manually and through Idealist wordsearchs for keywords, to identify likely sources of economic activity. (The same processes were used to identify possible examples of dual occupations). Any probate files which displayed economic or social factors were assessed as part of that economic or social grouping, above. Any probate files which did not display any of those characteristics would not offer the researcher any further material with which to work and so have not been assessed.

7.4 Conclusion

Within the constraints of space it has not been possible to examine all of the economic activity which has been identified in Macclesfield from the probate material. This sample shows the variety available, with over 60 occupations.¹³³ This compares well with 125 trades (including forty-four types of retailer) recorded in Norwich in 1750, which had been the second largest city until surpassed by Liverpool.¹³⁴ This figure compares well in excess of twenty occupations given by Clark and Slack for Ashford and Sittingborne in east Kent.¹³⁵ Restoration Chester had at least thirty-four occupations, although certainly more as a number have been grouped together, for example the seventy-seven tax-payers collectively described as

¹³³ See Fig. 2.9 This figure reflects all of the occupations and social descriptors identified throughout the whole dissertation.

¹³⁴ K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715 – 1785* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 306. See also M.J. Powers, ‘The East London Working Community in the Seventeenth Century’, in P.J. Corfield and D. Keene (eds), *Work in Towns, 850 – 1850* (Leicester, 1990), pp. 103 – 120 for the occupational diversification there, although the interest is in percentage occupational changes rather than absolute numbers of occupation.

¹³⁵ Clark & Slack, *English Towns in Transition*, pp. 19 – 21.

'Distributive trades', which parallels the figures given for Norwich.¹³⁶ Unsurprisingly, given the population estimates shown in Chart 1.4, larger populations did indeed produce concentrations of economic activity as Corfield suggested at the beginning of this chapter. Quite apart from the new proto-industrial activity discussed in chapter 3, it has been shown that there was a substantial leather industry in Macclesfield. Given Macclesfield's location at the edge of a pastoral region, with a vaccary known to have existed in the fourteenth century and a significant population demanding meat, the presence of this industry should have been no surprise. It was not a particularly wealthy industry – only one leather-working alderman has been identified – but it was the largest after silk and agriculture.

By surveying the economic activities from the probate evidence it has been possible to suggest some of the methods of operation of different occupations. Due to the limitations of the sample size for many occupations, this research would further benefit from a similar survey of neighbouring towns. This would allow the completion of a wider corpus of material from which to identify more robust trends and to identify anomalies, like the seventeenth century builder who invested in bonds rather than in property.

It has also been possible to further clarify what contemporaries meant by different occupational descriptors, like drapers and grocers, through an examination of the goods they traded in based upon their probate inventories. To these findings can be added the unusual anomalies, like the carpenter who was actually a timber merchant. If anything, this chapter has highlighted the perils of relying upon the contemporary's choice of occupational descriptor, and shown the need for town-wide

¹³⁶ J. Alldridge, 'House and Household in Restoration Chester', *UHY* (1983), pp. 39 – 52, Table 4 on p. 44.

surveys of probate to gain a more rounded and accurate picture of economic activity in the early modern town.

Despite this, the survey of 'other' occupations, especially when combined with similar work elsewhere in the dissertation, shows that there was a wide variety of occupations and economic activities being practised within early modern Macclesfield. Only by comparing this figure with another, nearby town of a similar population would it be possible to talk in terms of a healthy economic diversification.¹³⁷ Oddly, though, the one occupation which appears to be missing, and one which is supposed to have existed in an urban environment, were the lawyers which Sharpe and Holmes expected us to find.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Nantwich would provide an interesting choice given similar populations sizes about 1660, see p. 30.

¹³⁸ Sharpe, *Early Modern England*, p. 79; G. Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679 – 1722* (London, 1986), pp. 309 – 11.

Chapter 8: Macclesfield and its Hinterland

If his coat be of woollen-cloth, he has that from Yorkshire; the lining is shalloon from Berkshire; the waistcoat is of callamanco from Norwich; the breeches of a strong druggat from Devizes, Wiltshire; the stockings being of yarn from Westmorland; the hat is a felt from Leicester; the gloves of leather from Somersetshire; the shoes from Northampton; the buttons from Macclesfield in Cheshire, or, if they are of metal, they come from Birmingham, or Warwickshire; his garters from Manchester; his shirt of home-made linen of Lancashire, or Scotland.¹

8.1 Introduction

In the Introduction I identified a need to place the town in a wider regional and national context. This is generally seen in terms of an economic hinterland, as with the examples given in Map 1.2 of Preston and Worcester. Furthermore, as Dyer identified in his research on Worcester, the hinterland differed depending upon the material consulted. Christaller went further when he noted that this variation could also occurred over time and even with the seasons.²

For the purposes of this chapter, three sources have been used to produce separate hinterlands, but which when combined should produce a series of concentric hinterlands. This will permit a more detailed assessment of the nature of 'hinterland' to be made. Of course, with the presence of the silk button industry which was dependent upon imported silk, it could be argued that Macclesfield's hinterland extended over thousands of miles to Asia Minor. For the purposes of this study, however, it is assumed that London silk dealers were responsible for importing silk, so the limit of Macclesfield's merchants in this respect was London.

The three sources chosen are the administrators and executors named in probate together with other references such as legacies, the horse fair toll book and the 1672 stallage court book. During the transcription of the probate files, it became clear that a significant list of names, places of abode and relationships existed. In many

cases, these were deeply personal family connections spreading over great distances, but equally could be more public like a business partner. By distinguishing between types of connections (friendship v kinship) and the type of link (e.g. a legacy), it would be possible to analyse trends such as strength of friendship or kinship over distance or the extend of landholding patterns outside of Macclesfield.

The importance of the horse fair toll book originates from its unique status as the only inland trade which was required by law to keep a toll book.³ The requirement that purchasers and vendors should be identified and vouched for provided another substantial list of names and places of abode. Due to the important nature of this 'rediscovered' toll book, the changing economic impact of the horse fair will also be examined to determine whether hinterlands were variable over time, as Christaller believes.

The 1672 stallage court book is a much smaller source than the previous two, but relates directly to one of the key functions of the early modern market town – the market.⁴ This source post-dates the end of the horse fair toll book by only a couple of years and will make an interesting comparison between the extents of the fair and the market.

An important methodological point is what weighing should be applied to multiple occurrences of the same individual, for example Edward Cherry, gentleman, who is named as an administrator, executor or appraiser in eleven probate files between 1677 and 1711. Cherry was probably chosen for his social standing rather than any family or business connection. From the horse fair toll book, William

¹ D. Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (Stroud, 1987), p. 229.

² See pp. 13 – 4.

³ P. Edwards, *The Horse Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 1. C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield*, (Manchester, 1961) pp. 63 – 6 mentions the horse fair almost in passing and it was given no further thought until the full extent of the toll book was 'rediscovered'. The fair was also omitted from *AHEW*, Vol. V, Pt. I, p. 147.

Baddison of Edingley, Nottinghamshire, chapman, was the most important single trader.⁵ The decision was whether to give each named individual only one 'count' and so underevaluate their position, or whether to give them one count per appearance in the records. The second choice was taken as the event rather than the individual was the factor being assessed: people from Macclesfield or horses from Nottinghamshire. However, within the constraints of the chapter, explanations will be given for the extent of significant trends or individuals.

8.2 Executors of Wills and Signatories of Bonds of Administration

Executors of wills were those people, usually two or three, whom the writer of the will intended to administer their estate after death. Those who actually undertook the task were the signatories to the bond of administration. The administrators were theoretically, but not necessarily, the same people as the executors. Executors could, and did, surrender their obligations. For example, the death of an executor could prevent an executor becoming an administrator. Probate files did not necessarily contain wills and bonds of administration. For this study, the signatories of the bond were preferred to the executors as the signatories were those who actually undertook the duties. From an initial survey, it was found that bonds of administration appeared to contain more of the required bibliographical details (name, place of abode and occupation, social status or relationship to the deceased) about the individuals under inspection than the wills. Executors were used when there was no accompanying bond of administration.

The executors/administrators were entered into a database under one of the following categories:

⁴ Macc. Coll. B/II/10. See chapter 3 for further details about the market.

⁵ See pp. 358, 360.

Wife, widow or husband⁶

Family member, identified as 'of Macclesfield'

Family member, not identified as living in Macclesfield

Family member, identified as living in another location

Non family member, identified as 'of Macclesfield'

Non family member, identified as living in another location

'John Doe'

Not Known

A limited number of executors/administrators were identified as being the principal creditor of the deceased. Their presence was noted. Executors/administrators with the same surname as the writer of the will/deceased were not treated as family unless a link was specifically stated.

Some 726 files provided details for this survey, dating from 1553. In total, there were 1524 named executors/administrators, an average of 2.1 per file. Family members (as identified in the first four categories of Table 8.1), from all sources, accounted for 45 per cent of executors/administrators. This is almost twice as many as those identified as being a non-family member being 'of Macclesfield' which would include friends, business acquaintances and possibly a few family members who were not identified as such.

John Doe accounted for 3.1 per cent of the executors/administrators. This is a significant minority. In modern parlance, John Doe is the name given to an unidentified corpse. In the early-nineteenth century, John Doe (and Richard Roe)

⁶ 'Wife' appeared in wills to describe an executrix, 'widow' appeared in the bond of administrations for the administratrix. For the limited number of probate files belonging to women, 'husband' or 'late husband of' was usually used.

were described as a fictitious name created for legal purposes.⁷ Fifty-three John Does have been located. All occur in the early-eighteenth century, between 1702 and 1755, with none located in the seventeenth century. John Does are found in thirty-one of the fifty-three years. They predominate in the first three and a half decades, with only six John Does in the eighteen years after 1737. In all but one example John Does were found as signatories to bonds of administration. This exception was when John Doe was used as a witness to a bond of administration. In all cases, the name was almost always the last of the signatories, usually third of three. When John Doe was not third of three, his signature was the penultimate one. Personal details about John Does were only recorded in two examples, both from 1729.⁸ In both cases, John Doe was described as being 'of Macclesfield' and in one case as a yeoman.

Table 8.1: Breakdown of Executors and Administrators from Macclesfield, 1553 – 1760.

Type of Source	Number	Percentage
Wife, widow or husband	252	16.3%
Family member, Not in Macclesfield	287	18.6%
Family member, 'of Macclesfield'	97	6.3%
Family member, another location	62	4%
Non family member, 'of Macclesfield'	393	25.5%
Non family member, another location	216	14%
'John Doe'	48	3.1%
Not Known	164	10.6%
Principal Creditor	5	0.3%

⁷ On John Doe. 'This quaint title...originated from the fictitious names that the law, in its own roundabout and strange mystification, inserts in ejectments served on those whom it is gravely about to dispossess of their tenements; and it must have been curious enough to observe the incipient Shanavests or Caravats putting their heads together, spelling over the jocose piece of parchment, and making a variety of shrewd conjectures as to whom this Richard Roe or John Doe could really be.' O'Hara Family, *Tales by the O'Hara Family*, vol. iii, 'John Doe' (London, 1825), p. 62. Many thanks to Dr Sheryllynne Haggerty for this source.

⁸ Robert Hordern, yeoman, WS 1729; William Slack, yeoman, WS 1729.

Despite his regular appearance as an administrator, John Doe was never named as an executor in a will. Even with his prominence as a signatory to the bonds, he is unlikely to have been a real person. This is supported by the almost complete absence of bibliographical details. Rather, John Doe was a legal fiction active in the first third of the eighteenth century to provide a third name to bonds of administration. When a suitable, live signatory subsequently became available, John Doe was relegated to the penultimate, rather than final, signatory. What remains unanswered is why it was felt necessary to create this fiction on what was a legal document. There are examples of bonds with more or less than three signatories so it was not essential to have three.⁹

Principal creditors, the only category which is identifiable purely by economic ties, accounted for only 0.3 per cent. Those without identifiable family ties who lived outside Macclesfield accounted for 14 per cent of executors/administrators. This is a higher level than expected because this figure is almost four times the figure for 'family members, another location'. One would have expected that these figures would have been reversed, as ties of kinship maintained links outside Macclesfield.

8.2.1 Executors and Administrators in South Lancashire and Cheshire, 1700 – 1760.

Jon Stobart published his findings on a similar piece of research by sampling bonds of administration across the whole of south Lancashire and Cheshire.¹⁰ He aimed to conceptualise 'the region as a system of towns together with their

⁹Jonathan Broadhurst, no occupation, WI 1736. The signatories to his bond were his widow, Esther, and John Doe.

¹⁰J. Stobart, 'Regional Structure and the Urban System: North West England, 1700 – 1760', *THSLC*, cxlv (1996), pp. 45 – 73.

corresponding areas of influence'.¹¹ From his findings, he described Macclesfield, alongside Wigan and Rochdale, as a town whose 'local rural contacts were paired with a range of more distant urban links, including a high proportion of contacts with towns more than 50 miles away'.¹² Of the thirty towns sampled, Macclesfield had the third highest percentage of urban links over distances of greater than 50 miles.¹³ Stobart's research studied thirty towns in south Lancashire and Cheshire. As such, he sampled 20 to 25 per cent of each town's probate material for the period 1701 to 1760. He was primarily concerned with the inter-regional links. My research focused on just one town over the full spectrum of probate material prior to 1760 with the intent of determining Macclesfield's linkages in a regional and national scale.

Table 8.2: Macclesfield Contact Patterns: status and distance (percentages)¹⁴

Distance	< 5 miles		5-10 miles		10-20 miles		20-50 miles		>50 miles		Total	
	Urb	Rur	Urb	Rur	Urb	Rur	Urb	Rur	Urb	Rur	Urb	Rur
Macclesfield	0	36.5	3.8	9.6	11.5	5.8	15.4	1.9	15.4	0	46.2	53.8

Stobart classed Macclesfield with Wigan and Rochdale, which he saw as exhibiting the same characteristics. These towns, he argued, were located centrally in the region and were important in terms of population (4000 to 6000) and function. Two were characterised by commercial dealings while Wigan benefited from 'being dominated by highly specialised manufacturing industry'.¹⁵ By the late-seventeenth century, Wigan was the second most important pewter-producing centre after London.¹⁶ Macclesfield's involvement in the silk button industry should also be

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 60 – 1.

¹³ Only Chester and Middlewich had higher percentages of long distance urban links than Macclesfield. Chester's position is as one would expect from a major port and regional centre. Middlewich is strange, possibly resulting from the salt industry.

¹⁴ After Stobart, 'Regional Structure', Table 3, p. 61.

¹⁵ Stobart, 'Urban Systems', pp. 60 – 1.

¹⁶ J. Hatcher & T.C. Barker, *A History of British Pewter* (London, 1974), pp. 125 – 6.

considered 'highly specialised'. Rochdale should be researched to identify its own speciality.

This description of Macclesfield pairing local rural and long range links corresponds with Simmons' description of the urban system which was essentially 'still based on urban nodes.... but also includes the relationships of the nodes to their surrounding areas and particularly the linkages among nodes'.¹⁷ In the case of Macclesfield, these long distance inter-nodal linkages were amongst the most important in the region.

8.2.2 Nature of the Inter Personal Linkage

Stobart identified a problem with his research in the absence of a pre-existing defined methodology. In particular this focuses upon the basis upon which the links portrayed actually existed, the coverage of the total population and the degree to which the links represented actual, and particularly economic, contacts.¹⁸

The links identified by the naming of executors/administrators must have existed. The disposal of an individual's estate was a significant undertaking. Furthermore, it was invariably unpaid beyond the receipt of a legacy. As a position of trust, it can be assumed that a link was to a trustworthy individual, either family, friend or business associate. What the link actually amounted to outside of probate is a question which will be addressed in Sections 8.3.1 to 8.3.7, below. Family links were fixed and although distance or family feud could weaken them, they could only be broken by death. A friend might be preferable to a family member as more impartial. Friendships, however, require constant interaction in order to be

¹⁷ J.W. Simmons, 'The Organisation of the Urban System', in L.S. Bourne & J.W. Simmons (eds), *Systems of Cities: Readings on Structure, Growth and Policy* (New York, 1978), p. 61 quoted in Stobart, 'Regional Structure', p. 47.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 49 – 50.

maintained, and as such are more likely to decline over distance than family ties. Business associates also require constant interaction to sustain the link but was less susceptible to lapsing. These links would be maintained because commercial activities would keep the link active for as long as the commercial activities were active. They could, however, be maintained over long distances through commerce.¹⁹

The degree to which probate was representative of the whole population of Macclesfield is not a subject which has been covered by this dissertation. This is primarily because of the limits established for the research. Due to the constraints of time and other research interests, particularly the discovery of the horse fair toll book, it was not possible to undertake a family reconstruction exercise which would have identified the extent to which probate was representative of the town's population.

The third issue raised by Stobart was what these links actually indicate. They are, in essence, the choice of executors/administrators for the disposal of the estates of inhabitants of early modern Macclesfield. For the reasons given above, these links indicate more than a random link.

8.2.3 Comparison of Data with Stobart's Research

Stobart's data identified a 'high degree of closure' in the region, that is that the majority of links were within a clearly defined region, in this case south Lancashire and Cheshire. Three-quarters (75.3 per cent) of the recorded contacts being within the same town as the deceased, which suggests that proximity to the deceased was a key factor in determining executors. On average 35 per cent of regional internodal links were with one of the other twenty-nine towns in the North West and almost 50 per cent were with rural settlements within the same area. Nine out of ten links (93.5 per

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50 – 51.

cent) were within twenty miles of Macclesfield.²⁰ Stobart then presented his findings for towns by 'status' (urban or rural) and distance. For Macclesfield, 36.5 per cent of links were within five miles of the town, all of which were rural. This is above the average figure for all the towns in the region, 25.1 per cent (all but 0.2 per cent were rural). 67.2 per cent of links were within 20 miles of Macclesfield, which is significantly below the regional average of 73.7 per cent. This may reflect the high percentage of long distance links from Macclesfield. 15.4 per cent of links were to urban locations further than 50 miles from Macclesfield. This was the third highest figure for long distance links which Stobart identified, behind Chester (22.4 per cent and 2.4 per cent to rural locations) and, surprisingly, Middlewich (20 per cent). Macclesfield was ranked higher than Manchester, at only 8.2 per cent.²¹

My findings show that Macclesfield's regional internodal links was as low as 18 per cent with only 50 identified links. The most common linkage was with Chester (nineteen) followed by Congleton (eight) and Manchester (seven). Map 8.4 illustrates the regional internodal links from Macclesfield. 52 per cent of Macclesfield's links were with rural settlements within the region. This should not be surprising given the massive population growth within Macclesfield Deanery, estimated at 222 per cent in the century to 1664.²² 13 per cent were extra-regional links extending into Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire in the medium range, and London, the Home Counties, Wales and Ireland in the longer range. Although this is a lower level than Stobart's

²⁰ Stobart, 'Regional Structure', p. 53 and Table 2. Chester and Bolton, two of the regional locations furthest away from Macclesfield with links to Macclesfield are about 20 miles from Macclesfield. Stobart's next distance was 20 – 50 miles which would have included too many locations outside the region.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Table 3.

²² C.B. Phillips & J.H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540* (London, 1994), p. 9.

figure, it supports his suggestion that there were 'low levels of close social contact with other locations.'²³

Macclesfield was a town with most of its links to local rural communities and to distant locations greater than 50 miles.²⁴ The middle range links, 5 to 20 miles, were under represented. Map 8.4 plots these trends.

8.2.4 Destination of Links

Table 8.3 shows that there is a strong correlation between the two sets of data for Macclesfield: all of the total figures and most of the urban and rural figures vary within three percentage points. The exceptions to this are the figures for urban links from Macclesfield at distances greater than 50 miles where my figures are half of Stobart's. My findings were unexpected given Macclesfield's reliance upon imported silk from London. However, it should be remembered that these figures are percentages. My own figures cover the period 1600 to 1740 while Stobart's figures are for the eighteenth century.²⁵ This may be explained if long distance travel (migration and also trade links) was less frequent during the seventeenth century when compared with the eighteenth century. This would reduce the importance of long distance travel from Macclesfield across the whole period as a whole. Links for distances beyond 50 miles remained important and the probate material shows links to London, Bristol, Oxford and Bangor, as well as into Essex, Surrey and Ulster.

Table 8.3 shows that for the North West, half of all the rural links were within 5 miles of the town.²⁶ There is also a strong correlation between distance from the town and decay of links to insignificant levels beyond 25 miles. In Chart 8.5, both sets

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²⁵ 1700 to 1760.

of figures for Macclesfield show that rural links within 5 miles of Macclesfield provide two-thirds of the links. This concentration of rural links declines rapidly to below 10 per cent beyond 5 miles.

Table 8.3: Comparison of Distances from Macclesfield of Places of Abode of Administrators/Executors for North West England and Macclesfield after Stobart and Knight.

		<5 miles	5 – 10 miles	10 – 20 miles	20 – 25 miles	25 – 50 miles	>50 miles
Stobart	North West England ²⁷						
	Urban	0.2%	9.4%	17.0%	12.6%	7.9%	
	Rural	24.9%	12.0%	10.2%	4.9%	1.0%	
	Total	25.1%	21.4%	27.2%	17.5%	8.9%	
Stobart	Macclesfield ²⁸						
	Urban	0.0%	3.8%	11.5%	15.4%		15.4%
	Rural	36.5%	9.6%	5.8%	1.9%		0.0%
	Total	36.5%	13.4%	17.3%	17.3%		15.4%
Knight	Macclesfield						
	Urban	0.0%	3.8%	13.4%	1.0%	12.4%	7.7%
	Rural	39.7%	9.0%	6.2%	4.3%	2.4%	0.0%
	Total	39.7%	12.8%	19.6%	5.4%	14.8%	7.7

Rural links predominate over urban links up to distances of 10 miles. This can be explained by the shortage of towns within 10 miles of Macclesfield. The role of the town as the provider of higher order functions means that there must be a certain distance between towns in order to justify their existence. Macclesfield's position on the edge of the Peak District, which was devoid of towns, reinforced the importance of rural links. To the east of Macclesfield, the nearest town was Sheffield, some 22 miles away. It could be argued that the trough in the number of links up to 10 miles from Macclesfield shown in Chart 8.5 were a direct response to the geographical

²⁶ 25.1% of all links. The 24.9% of rural links within 5 miles of Macclesfield accounts for 47% of all of the rural links.

²⁷ After Stobart, 'Regional Structure', Table 1, p. 54.

conditions of the Peak District, i.e. the lower population levels and absence of towns, rather than any trends specific to Macclesfield itself.

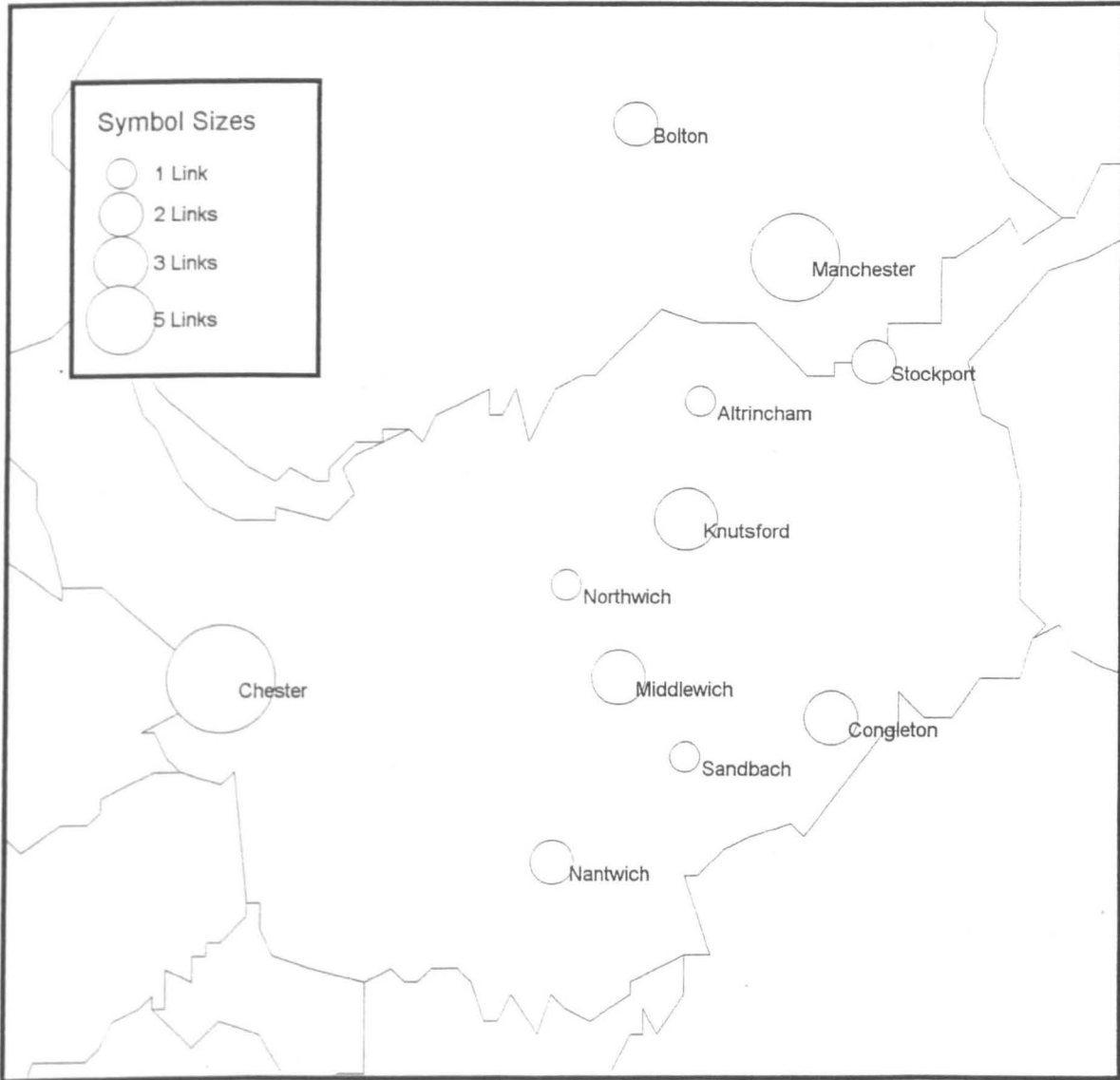
Of Macclesfield's links within the North West, only Chester and Bolton were more than 22 miles from Macclesfield. Any town further than 20 miles from Macclesfield required a particular function to produce strong links. Chart 8.5 shows low levels of links to towns up to 10 miles away. There was only one town within that radius, Congleton. Map 8.4 shows the strength of these links between Macclesfield and Congleton, which was second only to Chester for number of links identified. Closeness to another town was not sufficient in itself to produce a large number of links. Size, economic, social and administrative functions can be shown to be more important. Middle distance towns such as Stockport, Knutsford and Middlewich all had no more than four links with Macclesfield. Chester, the regional city at the greatest distance from Macclesfield, had the greatest number of links with Macclesfield. This can be explained by Chester's size which attracted economic activity and service functions, and also its position as the county town with the associated administrative functions. Manchester, also one of the furthest regional towns from Macclesfield, was ranked third again due to its size and economic functions increasing over the period.

As has been discussed above, my own findings under represent the importance of long distance links (those beyond 50 miles). Even so, long distance urban links remained significant. For these long distance urban links, Stobart placed Macclesfield third out of the thirty towns he studied in the North West.²⁹ Using my own figures, Macclesfield would have fallen to fourteen, which still remains average for the region. Stobart stated that this 'dichotomy of local rural and distant urban personal social

²⁸ After Stobart, 'Regional Structure', Table 3, p. 61.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Table 3.

Map 8.4: Regional Inter-Nodal Links from Macclesfield, after Stobart.



contacts implies a dense heartland of linkages for each town coupled with comparatively fewer distant contacts, comparable with both a Christallerian service economy and a proto-industrial urban system.’³⁰ This dichotomy is still found for Macclesfield using my figures. Table 8.3 and Chart 8.5 show the importance of the ‘dense heartland’ for links up to 5 miles at over a third of all links. The subsequent reduction in the number of links to 20 miles were exaggerated by the geographical characteristics of the Peak District. The existence of links to London resulted from trade links from the proto-industrial button trade.

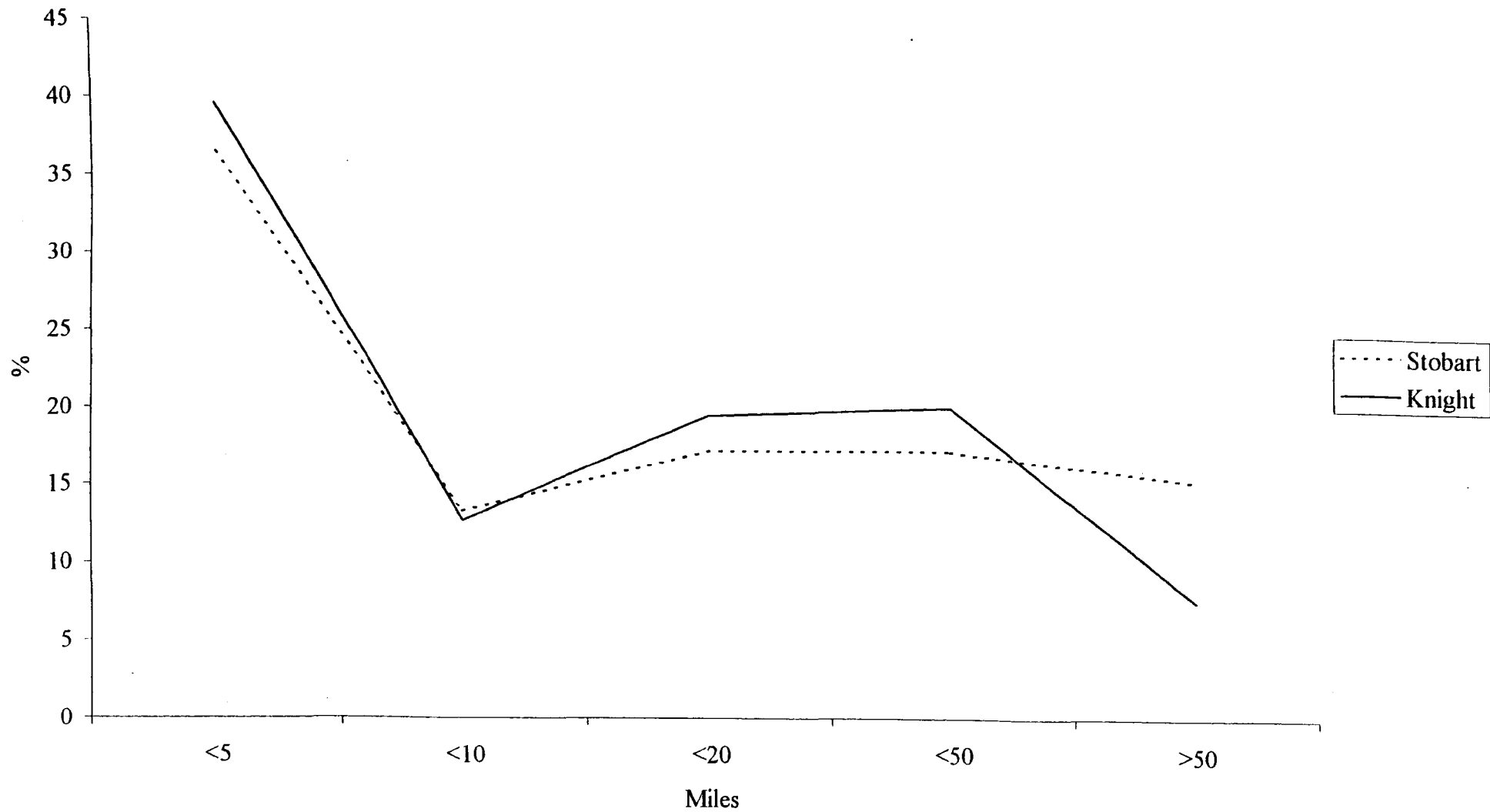
8.2.5 Ties of Kinship and Friendship

Having established the spatial relationship between the executors/administrators, what then was the relationship between the executors/administrators and the deceased? 41 per cent of the 1542 executors/administrators have been identified as possessing a tie of kinship with the deceased. The criterion for a ‘tie of kinship’ was any indication given in the will or bond of administration. A common surname on its own was not considered to be sufficient. In 16 per cent of these cases, the link was the former wife or husband of the deceased. Of the remaining 25 per cent, 6 per cent were identified as living in Macclesfield. As with Table 8.3, above, it is possible to compare these figures with those provided by Stobart.

During the survey of the probate material, individuals were categorised by their relationship to the deceased. Of the 1542 names, 212 (13.7 per cent) were removed as either ‘John Does’ or because no clear relationship to the deceased or a place of abode could be determined. A further 287 (18.6 per cent) were removed as

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54. See pp. 12 – 3 for a summary of Christaller’s theories.

Chart 8.5: Total Linkages over Distance from Macclesfield.



family members for whom no place of abode could be determined. The results are tabulated below.

Table 8.6: Relative importance of Kin and Friends as Executors and Administrators, over Distance.³¹

		In Town	<5 miles	5 – 10 miles	10 – 20 miles	20 – 50 miles	>50 miles	Total
Knight	Kin	36.6	2.2	0.3	1.6	0.5	0.6	41.9
	Friend	41.2	7.1	2.3	2.9	3.4	1.0	58.1
	Total	77.8	9.3	2.6	4.5	3.9	1.6	100
Stobart	Kin	36.7	1.0	1.1	1.6	1.2	0.9	42.6
	Friend	38.6	5.1	4.1	5.1	3.1	1.3	57.4
	Total	75.3	6.2	5.3	6.7	4.3	2.2	100.0

Table 8.6, above, compares the differences between kinship and friendship as a criteria for selecting executors/administrators, and their decline over distance from Macclesfield. These are compared with similar results produced by Stobart, with caveats. A remarkable degree of consistency exists between the two sets of figures, with corresponding figures varying to within 3.1 per cent points. Charts 8.7 and 8.8 break down the two sets of data into the corresponding parts, kin and friends. Chart 8.9 compares the total figures. Three common patterns emerge. Firstly, that friends dominate kinship. Secondly, once outside the town, contacts fall to or below 5 per cent. Finally, again outside the town, kin ties remain more stable which, although at a lower level than friendship, display less susceptibility to decline over distance.

³¹ Knight for Macclesfield; Stobart for his regional findings, 'Urban System', Table 2, p. 57.

Chart 8.7: Evidence of Friends as Administrators and Executors over Distance.

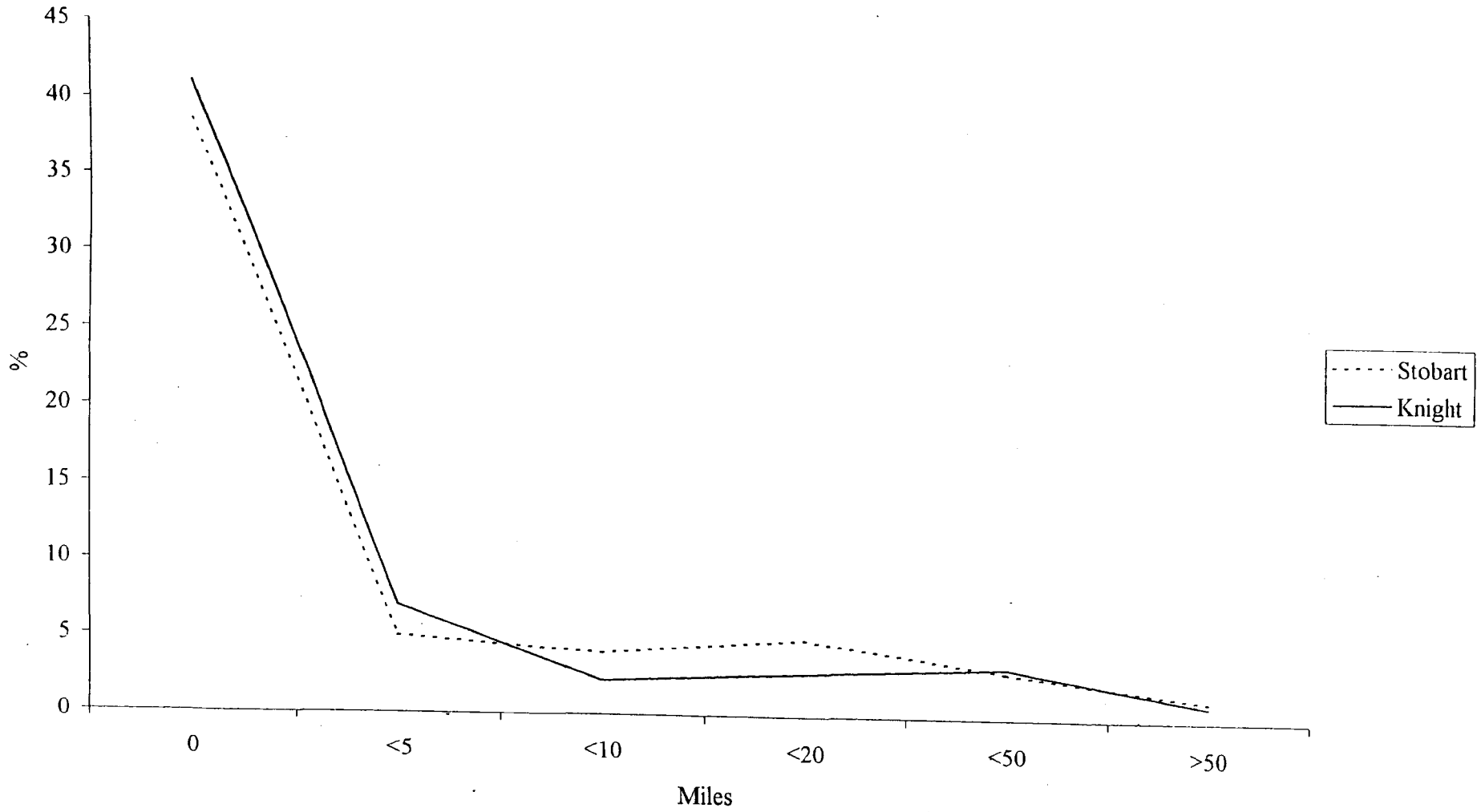


Chart 8.8: Evidence of Kinship as Administrators and Executors over Distance.

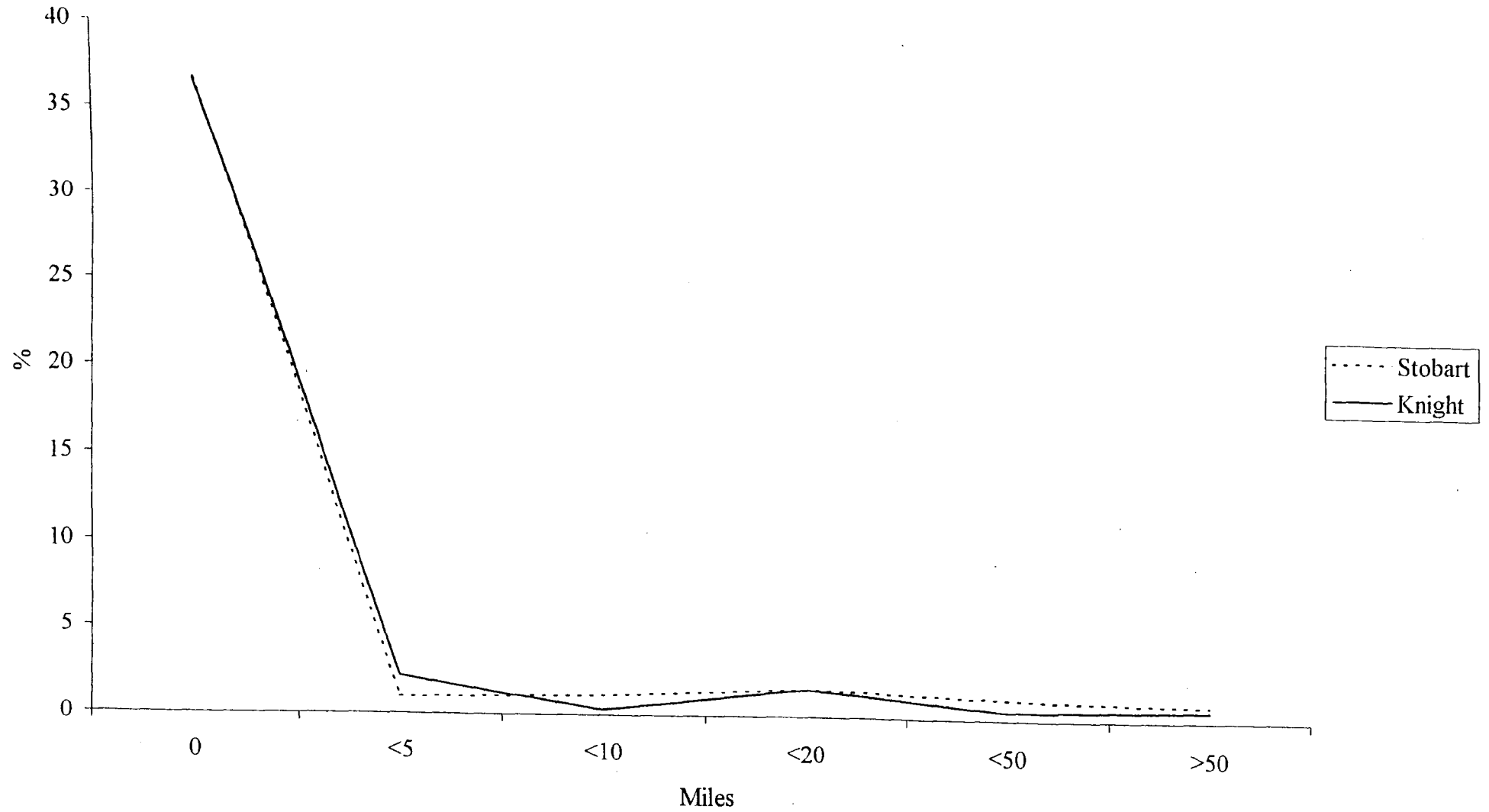
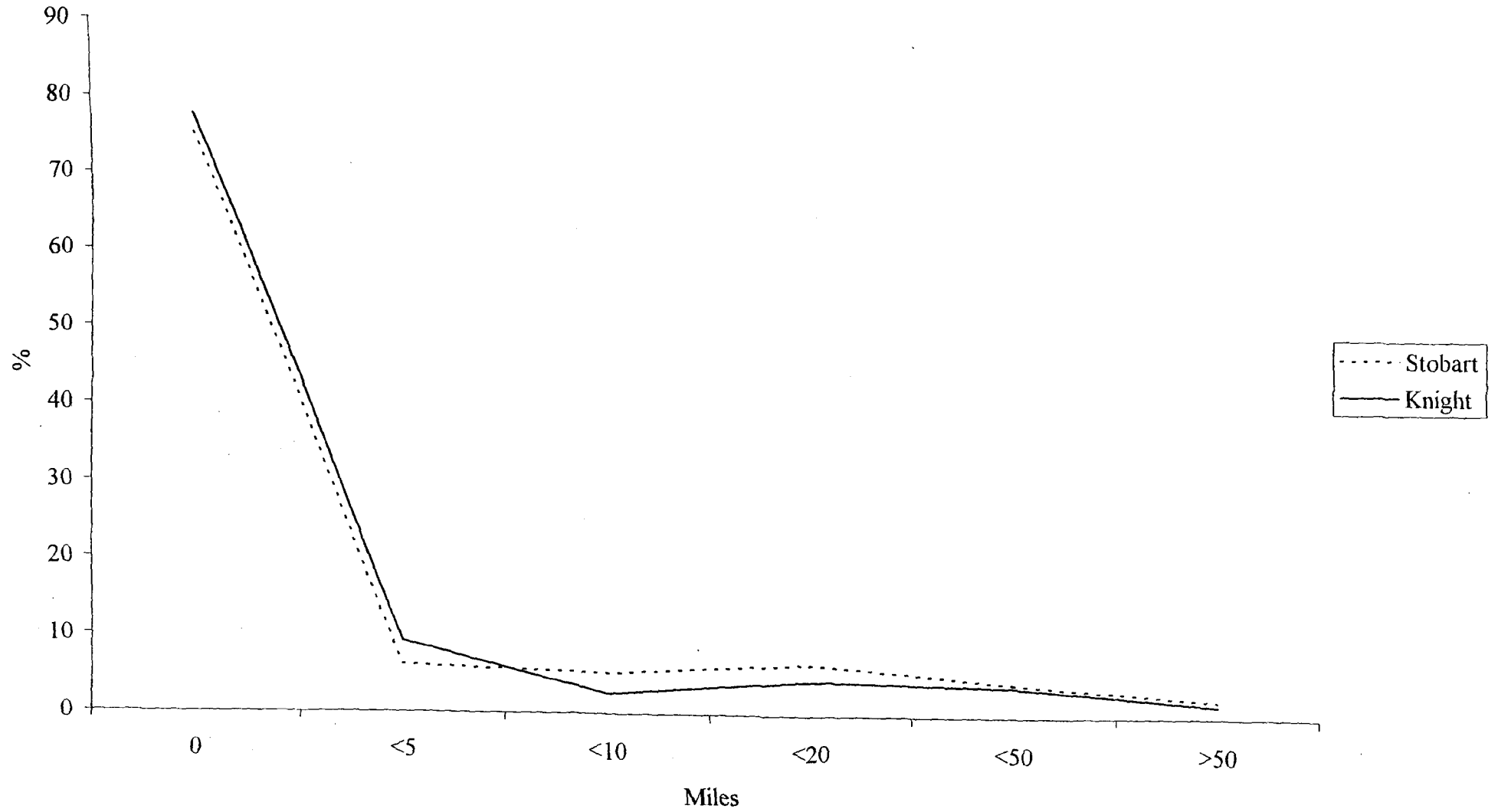


Chart 8.9: Comparison of Combined Findings of Knight and Stobart.



Does this evidence support, as Levine and Wrightson argue, ‘dense clusters of locally-resident “friends” [and a] dispersed network of close relatives’ which ‘constituted a resource: a network of trusted individuals bound by special obligation, a pool of assistance and support which could be drawn upon when occasion demanded’ in this case called upon to fulfil the role of executor/administrator?³² Overall, three-quarters of all executors/administrators were located within the town and almost nine out of ten within 5 miles.³³ Of this group within 5 miles of Macclesfield, over half were friends, which gives some support to Levine and Wrightson.³⁴ Table 8.6 shows that friendship was more important over all distances. So, although Macclesfield does exhibit this ‘dense cluster’ of local friends, the dispersed network was made up of friends, probably the result of the long range trading contacts with London.³⁵

The presence of other family members within close proximity of the deceased (almost 40 per cent of all links within 10 miles of Macclesfield) shows that despite the recent emphasis on migration in early modern England, many people stayed put or did not migrate significant distances.³⁶ From probate records, it is impossible to determine whether sons and daughters had left home. Although it is assumed that a married daughter had set up a home with her husband, she could also have moved into her husband’s family home. Similarly, a married son may have brought his bride into the family home.³⁷ Many probate entries simply state ‘my son X’ or ‘my daughter Y’

³² Stobart, ‘Regional Structure’, p. 56.

³³ 77.8% in Macclesfield; 87.1% within 5 miles.

³⁴ 48.3% of 87.1% gives 55.5%.

³⁵ Defoe, *English Tradesman*, pp. 201 – 211.

³⁶ For example, D. Souden, ‘Migrants and the Population Structure’, in P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns* (London, 1984), pp. 133 – 168, 41.9% of the executors/administrators were ‘kin’ of which 39.1% (93.3% of the kin) lived within 10 miles of the deceased.

³⁷ Peter Laslett argues that this image of the extended family all living under one roof is incorrect. This is supported in Macclesfield’s probate material for widows who often receive a settlement for their

without indicating their marital, domestic or paternal status. There are, however, many occurrences of other family members who would not be expected to live in the same house as the deceased, for example uncles and cousins. This would suggest that there were extended families close to Macclesfield.

Why should kinship be less important than friendship, for providing executors/administrators, regardless of distance from Macclesfield? It may be because there were smaller numbers of kin available. However, given the relatively small pool of people available to be described as kin, then in actual fact the kin provide a more significant element than the figures alone suggest. Therefore, although kinship contacts were less important than those of friendship in absolute terms, given the limited pool from which to draw as executors/administrators were, kinship proved to be particularly important from a social perspective. While friendship contacts remained more important overall they were more susceptible to fluctuation over distance.

One category remains uninvestigated, that of the principal creditors who acted as administrators (they do not appear as executors). This was the only category nominated for purely economic reasons, the settling of outstanding debts. Principal creditors were small in number, only 0.3 per cent of executors/administrators. This sample is small, but it does suggest that financial factors were an insignificant factor in determining the choice of executor/administrator.

8.3.1 Assessment of the Nature of Links with Executors and Administrators.

The Idealist database was used to conduct word searches throughout the whole of the probate material to allow the identification of other linkages with Macclesfield beyond just executors or signatories of bonds of administration. The majority of the new data is from the wills but include appraisers of the inventories and those named in other documents included in probate files. To identify possible links, the index of the Idealist database was browsed. It is accepted that this method of browsing is not flawless and that some villages will have been missed. However, experience gained while compiling the database helped in identifying which names were towns and villages and names were surnames. Once a town or village had been identified, a wordsearch was then carried out to determine the nature of the link with Macclesfield. It was often necessary to carry out wordsearches relating to several spelling variations of the town or village, for example Mobberley, Moberley, Mobberlay. These links were then categorised as Land, where some form of tenure existed; Executors/Administrators names in the will; Appraisers named in the inventories; Debts due to a Macclesfield resident; Legacies gifted by a deceased Macclesfield resident; Trade links to Macclesfield and Other, for any remaining links. In total, 617 links with sixty-seven settlements were identified from Hurdesfield to London, with overseas towns including Dublin and Londonderry.³⁸

8.3.2 Land

'Land ownership' was taken as any reference to any estate where the writer of the will had sufficient control over the estate to influence its immediate future after death. For copyhold estates in Macclesfield Forest, this normally meant a reference in

the will that the lands had been 'surrendered to use'. The will would indicate not only that the lands were surrendered, according to the customs of the Manor and Forest, but to whom they were surrendered. Other types of land usage and possession can be identified through preambles to a bequest such as 'late purchased from', 'now in the possession of', or 'occupied by.' This is not the place to determine the nature of land tenure or usage; rather it is sufficient to identify over which area people of Macclesfield held land. No attempt has been made to establish the size or value of holdings.

Of 103 links with a land holding, most (89) fall within a 10 mile radius of Macclesfield.³⁹ Smaller concentrations of estates were identified in Lancashire and Staffordshire: particularly at Up Holland, near Wigan, Manchester and Burslam. Three links were found with London. Distant estates like these may well have originated from inheritance from migratory relatives, as in the case of Ellen Walton, widow.⁴⁰ Her estate consisted of moieties of copyhold messuages in Rotherhide, Surrey and a leased messuage in Moorfields in London. Her moieties had been inherited from her late cousin of St Lawrence Jewry London and all of her estates were granted to her half brother of Whitehart Yard, Drury Lane, London. Was Walton a Londoner who had moved to Macclesfield, possibly with her late husband? Or had her kinsmen moved to London for economic advancement? There is insufficient information to support either possibility.

³⁸ A legacy to somebody believed to be in America was found, unfortunately this was from a will of 1770 which is outside of the chronological scope of this dissertation. Mary Watson of Macclesfield, spinster, WS 1770. See Table 8.22.

³⁹ These were in the towns and villages of Bollington, Broken Cross, Congleton, Gawsworth, Henbury, Hurdesfield, Knutsford, Mobberley, Mottram St Andrew, Peover, Prestbury, Rainow, Sutton, Taxal, Titherington, Wildboarclough and Winkle.

8.3.3 Appraisers

Appraisers of a deceased's inventory should, according to ecclesiastical law, have fallen into one of the following categories: firstly, a creditor or the recipient of a legacy; secondly, next of kin; thirdly, honest people.⁴¹ This survey only identified sixteen appraisers (2.6 per cent of the total survey) which provides an insufficient cohort for analysis. This may well be because it was considered desirable to choose appraisers who lived close to the deceased's estate (i.e. in Macclesfield), while this survey looked at appraisers living outside Macclesfield.

This assumption is supported by the geographical distribution of the sixteen appraisers identified. Ten appraisers lived within a ten mile radius of Macclesfield, including three in Congleton, 8 miles away. The furthest afield was a single appraiser from Adlington, 32 miles away in Lancashire.

8.3.4 Debts

Debts due to the deceased were mainly to be found in inventories although they could also be found in wills where the debt could be covered by a legacy. As with the appraisers, debts also provided a small cohort, just eighteen or 2.9 per cent. This sample is again too small for statistical analysis, but again the geographical distribution is clustered within a 10 mile radius of Macclesfield. Only two debts were located outside this 10 mile radius, one each for Stockport and Derby. The debt from Derby was described as a debt by bond while that in Stockport was a debt of 3s in the hands of the deceased's brother. Neither debt can be identified as a trading debt.

⁴⁰ WS 1738.

⁴¹ N. Cox & J. Cox, 'Probate Inventories: the legal background, Part I', *Local Historian*, xvi (1984), pp. 134 – 135 taken from D. Riley, 'Wealth and Social Structure in North-Western Lancashire in the Later Seventeenth Century', *THSLC*, cxli (1992), pp. 77 – 100, on p. 92.

Macclesfield was clearly a source of ready capital, at interest, with a market catchment area of up to 10 miles in radius.

8.3.5 Legacies

Legacies account for over a third of all the links identified. This is what would be expected, as the main purpose of the will was the reallocation of the deceased's estate. In all 235 links were identified. These were categorised by distance from Macclesfield and are shown in Chart 8.10.

As expected, there is a marked diminution in the number of legacies over distance. This extends as far as the 10 – 20 mile range, before increasing over the next distance range. The number of legacies again begins to decline but the final level is not significantly below that reached at the 10 – 20 mile range point. Upon re-examination of the figures, it was discovered that for both the 20 – 50 miles and Greater than 50 miles ranges, there was one dominant point of destination for the legacies. Manchester range accounted for twenty out of thirty-eight legacies in the 10 – 20 mile while London accounted for nineteen of the twenty-three legacies over 50 miles.

The statistics for Chart 8.10 were recalculated to exclude London and Manchester. Immediately, it becomes clear that an almost straight line is created, showing a close correlation between decrease in the number of legacies and distance. The distortion created by London and Manchester is clear and shows that the effects of distance can be overcome by large towns, a point already made with regards Chester.⁴² Earlier in this chapter, while comparing my findings with those of Jon Stobart, it was assumed that long distance links represented trade links. This section

⁴² See Map 8.4.

has shown that many of these links represented social ties, which would also have meant migration at some point in the past. Manchester and London would have had a significant, although currently unknown, social impact on Macclesfield.

8.3.6 Trade

This category produced a disappointingly small cohort with which to work. It had been initially hoped that this source would provide a major source of information on wider aspects of the silk supply chains. The cohort amounted to just 4.2 per cent of the total number of links. The geographical distribution of these links displays a marked difference from that experienced previously, particularly in respect of the Appraisers and Debts. Only three of the twenty-six trading links were within a 10 mile range. Of the remaining links, over half were with London and a quarter were with Manchester. The distorting effects of London and Manchester were again taken into consideration and added to the graph. Unlike on Chart 8.10 when the removal of the distorting effect of London and Manchester produced a near straight line graph, the same procedure for Chart 8.11 served only to reduce the trend. For the ranges up to 10 - 20 miles, there is on average one link or less. This rises to two links for the longer distance. This was due to contacts with Halifax, Shrewsbury and Worcester. Trading was an intermodal activity i.e. between towns and cities rather than with the countryside. As there are no other towns within a 10 mile radius of Macclesfield it is not surprising that there were few trading contacts within those ranges. The findings from all of these charts are plotted onto Map 8.12 to produce a special representation of Macclesfield's national links. These can be compared with Stobart's findings for Chester, 1701 – 1760, and both show a national concentration north of a line between

Chart 8.10: Degradation of Legacies over Distance from Macclesfield.

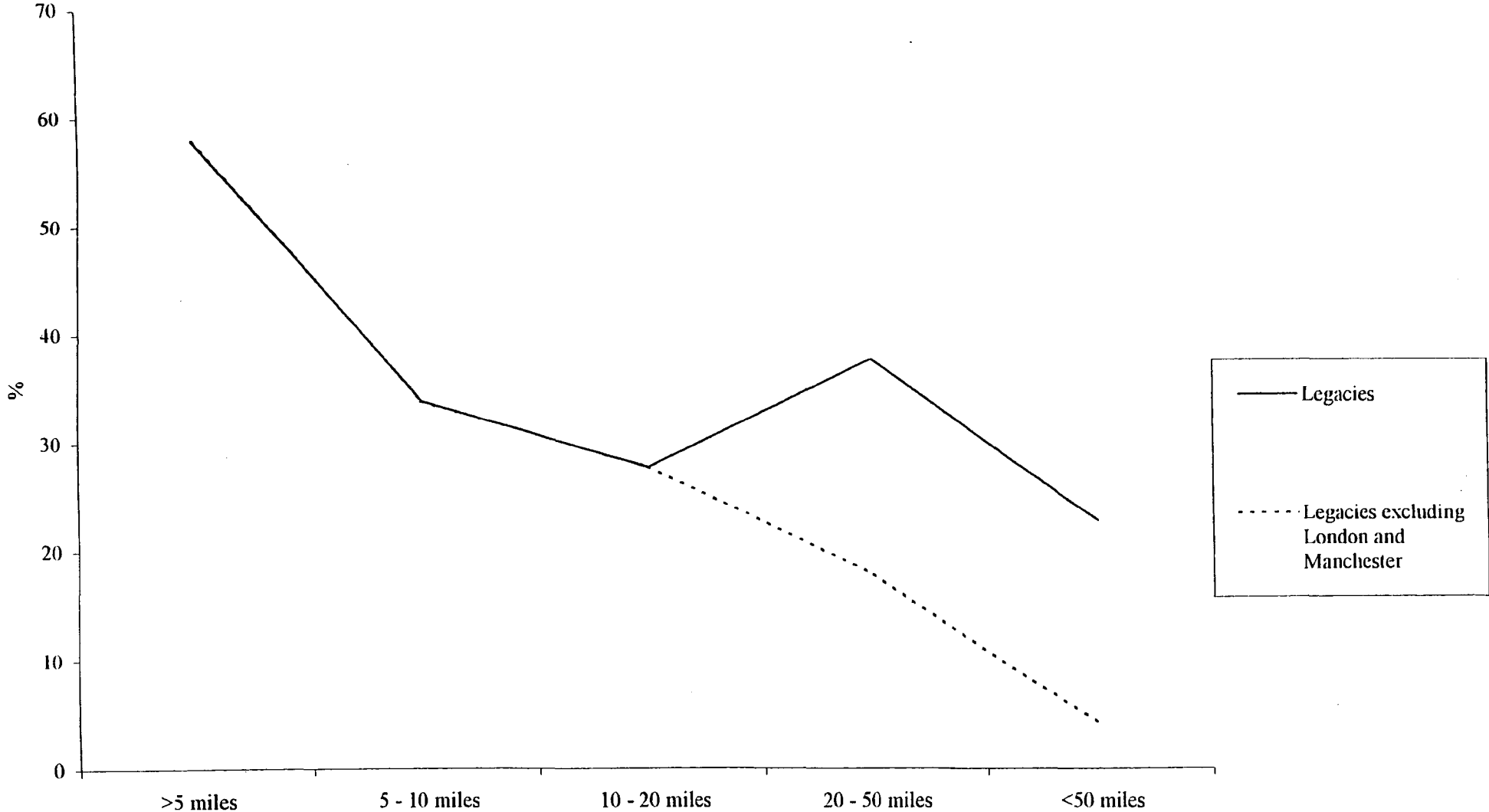


Chart 8.11: Trading Links to Macclesfield.

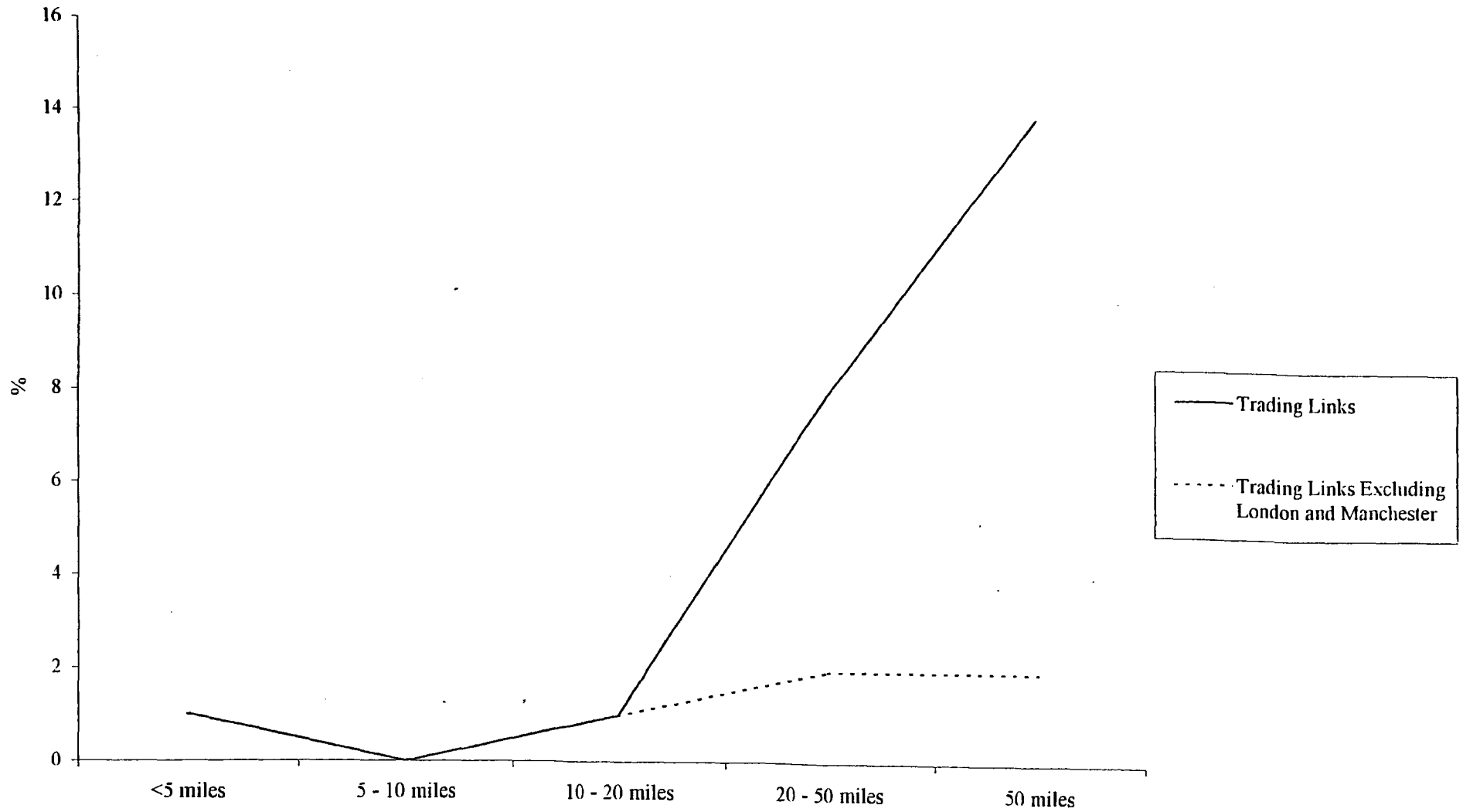


Table 8.12: Executors, Administrators and Other Links from Probate.

Symbol Sizes

- 1 event
- 5 event
- 10 event
- 25 event



London and Bristol, to the north of England and the east coast of Ireland.⁴³ The links between London, Manchester and Macclesfield are highly significant but in the scale of links. Trading was an inter-urban activity as these were the nodes where goods were collected and from which were distributed. Due to the spatial distribution of these nodes, these links could not exist at distances below 10 miles and were most common at distances greater than 20 miles.

8.3.7 Others

Forty-eight, or 7.8 per cent, of links fell into the 'Other' category. By definition, these links were random in nature, but the majority were in some legal capacity. The most common origin for Others was Sutton, with ten links. For example, in 1724 Elizabeth Hough, widow, bequeathed to her brother, John Hough, chapman, the bed 'which I brought with me from Sutton.'⁴⁴ London accounted for eight links and provided the most coherent corpus of data. For a person living in London, but having been nominated for some duty in Cheshire, the nominee then approached the bishopric of London to undertake or renounce the obligation without the inconvenience of travelling to Chester. The resultant correspondence between the bishoprics accounts for the majority of these links.⁴⁵

8.4 The Macclesfield Horse Fair Toll Book, 1619 - 1670⁴⁶

The toll book consists of 401 pages in manuscript detailing the sales of some 1534 horse and twenty-five head of cattle between 11 June 1619 and 11 June 1670,

⁴³ J. Stobart, 'County, Town and Country: Three Histories of Urban Development in Eighteenth-Century Chester', in P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland: Change, Convergence and Divergence* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 171 – 195, on Fig. 8.2, p. 181.

⁴⁴ WS 1724.

⁴⁵ For example, Francis Hooper, Doctor of Divinity, was named as a guardian in the will of Thomas Lunt, gent., WS 1734, but Hooper was living in London at the time of Lunt's death.

with a final single entry for 18 October, 1675. Although individual sales could be recorded throughout the year, the main fairs were: 11 June (St. Barnaby), 30 June and 30 October (Wakes).⁴⁷ Of these fairs, 11 June was by far the largest and attracted sellers and buyers from further afield. Because of this dominance, it was decided to concentrate the research on that one fair.

8.5 Purchasers of Horses in the 1660s

Maps 8.13 and 8.14 show the distribution of purchasers of horses at Macclesfield in the 1660s. The distribution is largely circular with concentrations of purchasers up to twenty miles from Macclesfield to the north (Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire), east (to the eastern edge of the modern Peak District National Park) and south (to Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire). To the west, the hinterland contracts to 16 miles with no purchasers identified to the west of Middlewich, Cheshire. Middlewich, as its name suggests, is roughly central in Cheshire and equidistant between Macclesfield and Chester, the site of the other horse fair in Cheshire.⁴⁸ Despite easier communications across the Cheshire plain compared with the Peak District, the presence of the Chester horse fair has had a foreshortening effect on Macclesfield's hinterland. This is despite the fairs at both locations being on different dates to avoid direct competition.

Individual purchasers have been recorded from Blackburn and Adlington in Lancashire in the north, 'Sleefield' in Yorkshire⁴⁹ to the east and Shrewsbury in

⁴⁶ CCRO LBM 1/1. For a more detailed account of this source, see my forthcoming article in the *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*.

⁴⁷ For example, on 1 September 1621, Roger Burgess sold a nag to Edward Davie.

⁴⁸ See Stobart, 'County, Town and Country', Fig. 8.3 p. 182 for comparable results for the Chester horse fair.

⁴⁹ Probably Sheffield. 11 June 1666.

Shropshire and Wolverhampton in Warwickshire to the south. These locations extend the hinterland to a distance of some forty miles.

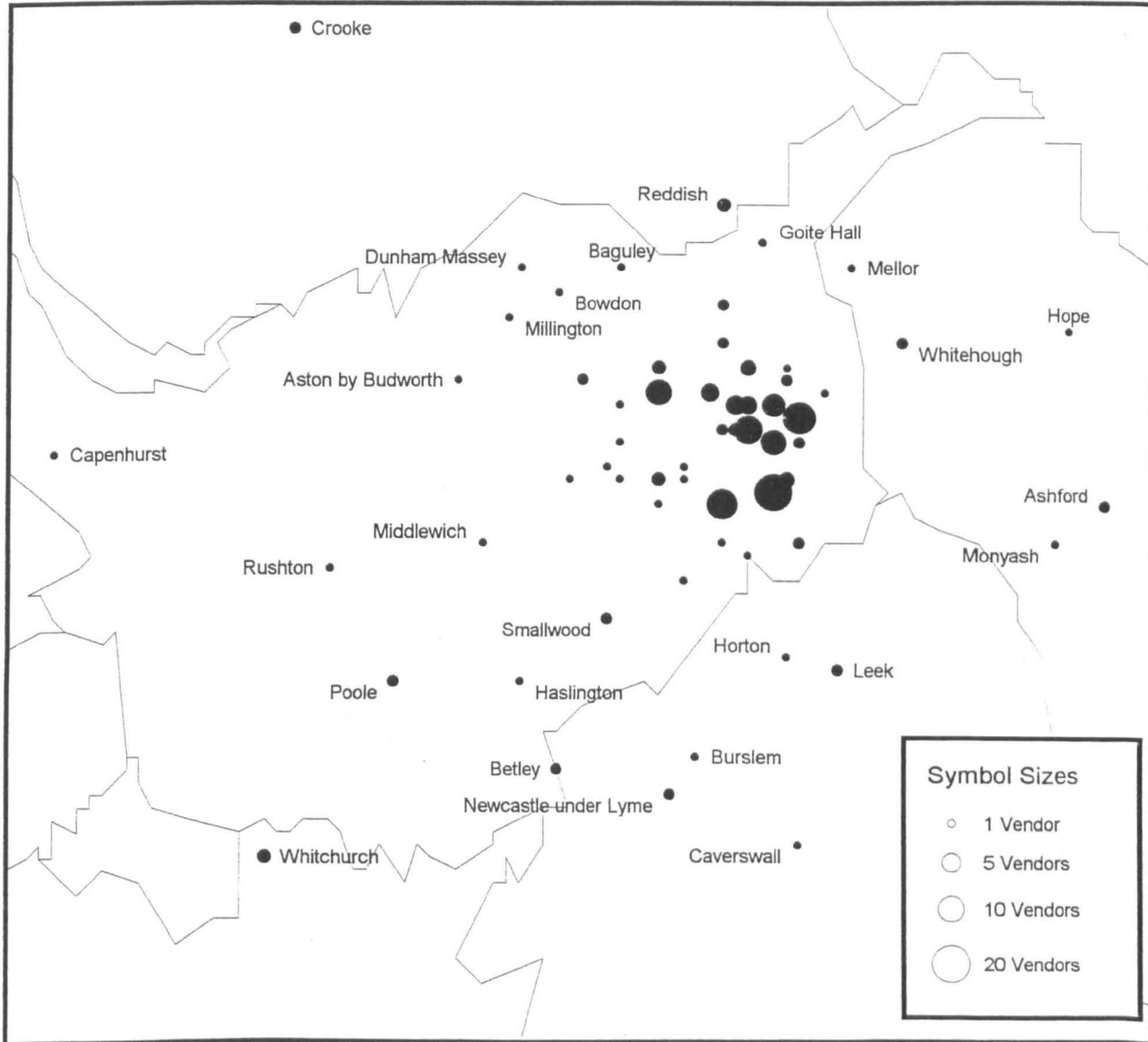
8.6 11 June Fair.⁵⁰

The place of abode of vendors and purchasers provides the strongest indicator of the extent of Macclesfield's hinterland. This can be illustrated by collecting the data from the toll book and plotting it on a map. Due to the scale of the project, it was decided to concentrate on the 11 June fair which provided the largest number of transactions and, as the largest fair held in Macclesfield, it attracted vendors and purchasers from the greatest distance.

The extent to which such matching was required varies between the fairs. In 1641 all purchasers were accounted for with a place of abode being recorded in the toll book but in 1640 none were. It was found that there were increased incidence of the place of abode being recorded for the vendor but not for the purchaser. Having identified the places of abode, the modern equivalent location was identified. Phonetic spelling, uncertainty about the county, very precise locations (e.g. names of halls and woods) and lost villages all contributed to failure to locate a number of settlements. More people were lost at this stage than at the previous stage when identifying a settlement for individuals. The results were then plotted onto the Maps 8.13 and 8.14 for the 1660s. It was decided to concentrate on this decade for several reasons. Firstly, there was increased trading activity (see Chart 8.14) which meant that the findings were more statistically robust. Secondly, the 1660s were one of the few decades for which there was a complete series for the whole decade. Thirdly, the post-Restoration

⁵⁰ See Appendix C for the methodology of using the Idealist database.

Map. 8.13: Origins of Vendors of Horses at Macclesfield Horse Fair during the 1660s:
Regional



**PAGE
NUMBERING
AS
ORIGINAL**

period displayed the greatest changes through the arrival of significant traders from significant distances. The fluctuations in both the value and volume of horses recorded in the toll book are important indicators of the vitality of Macclesfield's horse fair and indicator of the wider economic conditions within Macclesfield's hinterland. In order to identify a series of transaction dates which are common throughout the toll book, the 11 June fairs were again chosen. These fairs recorded the sales of 1106 horses, over two thirds of the contents of the whole toll book. Of these, 903 horses (89 per cent) had a sale price which can be specifically attributed to an individual horse. In a small number of cases, a value is attributed to two horses, usually a foal and mare. This did not pose a problem because the basis for this study is the total number of horses sold against total value transacted at each fair in order to get an average value.

For the 11 per cent of horses without a specifically attributable value, the majority were exchanged for another horse. In order to take these horses into account, the total value transacted for the horses was increased proportionally to the total number of horses transacted at that fair. This permits the known average value of the horses to be expanded to a cash value proportional to the total number of horses sold. It assumes that horses without a value are 'average'. In reality, all horses are not average but as the average value of horses is expected to fluctuate over time this method is intended to give these horses a value in the context of the fair in which they are sold. It also avoids discrimination against fairs with a high percentage of exchanges, as in 1655 when fifteen of twenty-three horses were without a value.

During exchanges of horses it was normal for a cash payment 'to boot' to be made to account for any difference in value between the animals. If both horses are initially assumed to be average, then the inclusion of the cash 'to boot' provides some

of the horses with a unique rather than average value. These cash sums were then added to the overall total. So, in 1668 twenty-nine horses were sold but two of these were exchanged so the toll book only recorded the absolute value of twenty-seven horses. Their total value was £97 18s 4d which provides an average value per horse of £3 12s 6d.⁵¹ Assuming that all twenty-nine horses are 'average', the total value of horses transacted at that fair was £105 2s 6d. However, £1 was paid to boot during the exchange, so this value is added which gives a total value of £106 2s 6d transacted at that fair. The average value per horse was £3 15s 6d. In all, £3408 7s worth of transactions were accountable at the 11 June fairs. Using the method described above, this value is increased to £4140 17s.

8.7 Horse Sales by Volume and Value

Chart 8.15 illustrates the fluctuations in horse sales, measured by volume and by value, for the 11 June fairs between 1619 and 1670. The series is disrupted by missing information for the mid-1630s and again in the early-1640s.⁵² The series can be divided into three periods for both value and volume: pre-Civil War, late-1640s and after 1650.

The period prior to the Civil War is characterised by small values and volumes transacted: the upper coefficient is marked by the level of twenty horses or £50 worth of horses were sold. The overall trend for horse sales, however, is upwards with key peaks in 1622, 1627, 1630 and 1632 which are mirrored by peak values in the same years. There is a clearly defined depression in both volume and value in 1628 and 1629.

⁵¹ Because of the difficulty of working in making calculations with pounds, shillings and pence, calculations were not normally worked to below 1 shilling, being 0.05 of £1. 0.025 is 6d.

⁵² Peter Edwards has found this pattern in most toll books.

This overall trend is bucked by annual swings in the value of horses sold, but the volume of horses sold remains much more constant than the values sold. This would suggest that the market was led by demand, rather than supply. Increasing demand would serve to increase horse values and keep the values transacted in a state of fluctuation. The depressed trading conditions indicated for 1628 and 1629 would suggest a low demand. Had a reduced supply met demands maintained at the levels experienced in 1627 and 1630, one would have expected to see the values transacted to be increased rather than become depressed. Chart 8.15 charts fluctuations in values which can be used to verify fluctuations in horse values.

The late-1640s saw a significant increase in both volume and value of horses sold. The most likely reason for the increases in 1645 and 1646 would be in the form of a 'peace dividend' as horses were demobilised from military service and returned to agricultural and economic use. 1647 and 1648 saw reduced horse sales compared with 1646 although still significantly higher levels than in 1645 and in the pre-Civil War years. 1649 saw another peak year in both value and volume. However it should be noted that in 1649 although 95 per cent of the value of 1646 was transacted, only 60 per cent of the volume of horses were sold.

The delay between the end of the Civil War and the peak of 1649 would suggest that the horses for sale in 1649 were the three-year-old offspring of horses which had been put to breed at the end of hostilities. This would be the first major input into the market of horses since the 'peace dividend'. The intervening years would have permitted the accumulation of capital necessary for horse purchases or for the economy to recover from the disruption of the Civil War years. In either scenario, the demand for horses had increased at a greater rate than the supply when compared

with the situation in 1646. This resulted in higher horse values which helped to maintain the levels of capital accompanying the sales.

From 1650 the demand for horses appears to have been largely satisfied and the values and volumes sold revert to patterns which are similar to, but not as low as, the pre-Civil War years. The main difference is that the twenty sales/£50 figures which were the upper co-efficient of the pre-Civil War years became the lower co-efficient of the post-1650 period. These years were characterised by a general upwards trend in both value and volume transacted with peaks followed by periods of slower trade. As in the pre-War years, volumes and values normally moved together.

Charts 8.16, 8.17 and 8.18 show fluctuations in the prices being paid for horses at the 11 June fairs. Chart 8.19 combines all of the data together. In all cases, values are available for a series to the mid-1630s and then resume after 1645. A small series of data also exists for the four years prior to the disruption caused by the Civil War. It is assumed that the lower horse prices reflect horses bought as workhorses, e.g. as packhorses. Similarly, the higher horse prices would reflect the upper end of the market e.g. saddle horses. In this case, the horse becomes a status symbol, rather than a purely economic asset, and fashion will also become a factor in determining the type of horse chosen. As such, this end of the market will see prices inflated by non-economic factors, but will also see more rapid depreciations when adverse economic conditions make the purchase of luxury items unviable.

Throughout the period as a whole, it was normally possible to purchase a horse at or below £2 (in sixteen out of twenty-six years), but the market was subject to extreme fluctuations in prices. This is most noticeable in the period before the mid-1630s: between 1620 and 1621 the price collapsed about £2 15s. The following years (1622 and 1623) saw prices rise almost to the 1620 level before repeating the same

crash, although this time the crash took place over four years. 1628 again saw the price recover almost to the 1620 and 1622 levels followed by another collapse and a gradual recovery over four years until the series ends.

These severe fluctuations in values must have made any form of long term economic planning impossible. The extremely adverse agricultural conditions experienced in the mid-1620s follows the second peak (1623). If the adverse agricultural conditions being experienced at the time were having an adverse effect on the number of horses available for sale in that year, due perhaps to disease resulting from the poor weather conditions and a lack of fodder and feed, which would force up the price of horses and so discourage all purchasers except for those who really needed to purchase in that year. However, the 11 June fair preceded the harvest for that year and so although contemporaries may have been expecting a poor harvest, the horse fair appears to have experienced business as usual. The continued and prolonged collapse in the value of horses at the lower end of the market may well reflect the economic conditions following the disastrous harvest of 1623. Unlike the modern haulier, the early modern packman or carrier could not reduce his running costs simply by taking assets off the road: horses do not cease to consume fodder (fuel) when they stop working. The only option open to the packman or carrier would have been to sell his beasts (possibly not an option if all packmen and carriers would be facing the same economic hardships) or to slaughter the beasts, which may have been a more attractive option in the face of rising food prices. In either case, the packman or carrier's wage earning capacity once economic conditions recovered would be reduced, as would his capacity to buy more horses.

Chart 8.15: Value and Volume of Horses Sold at the 11 June fairs, 1619 – 1670.

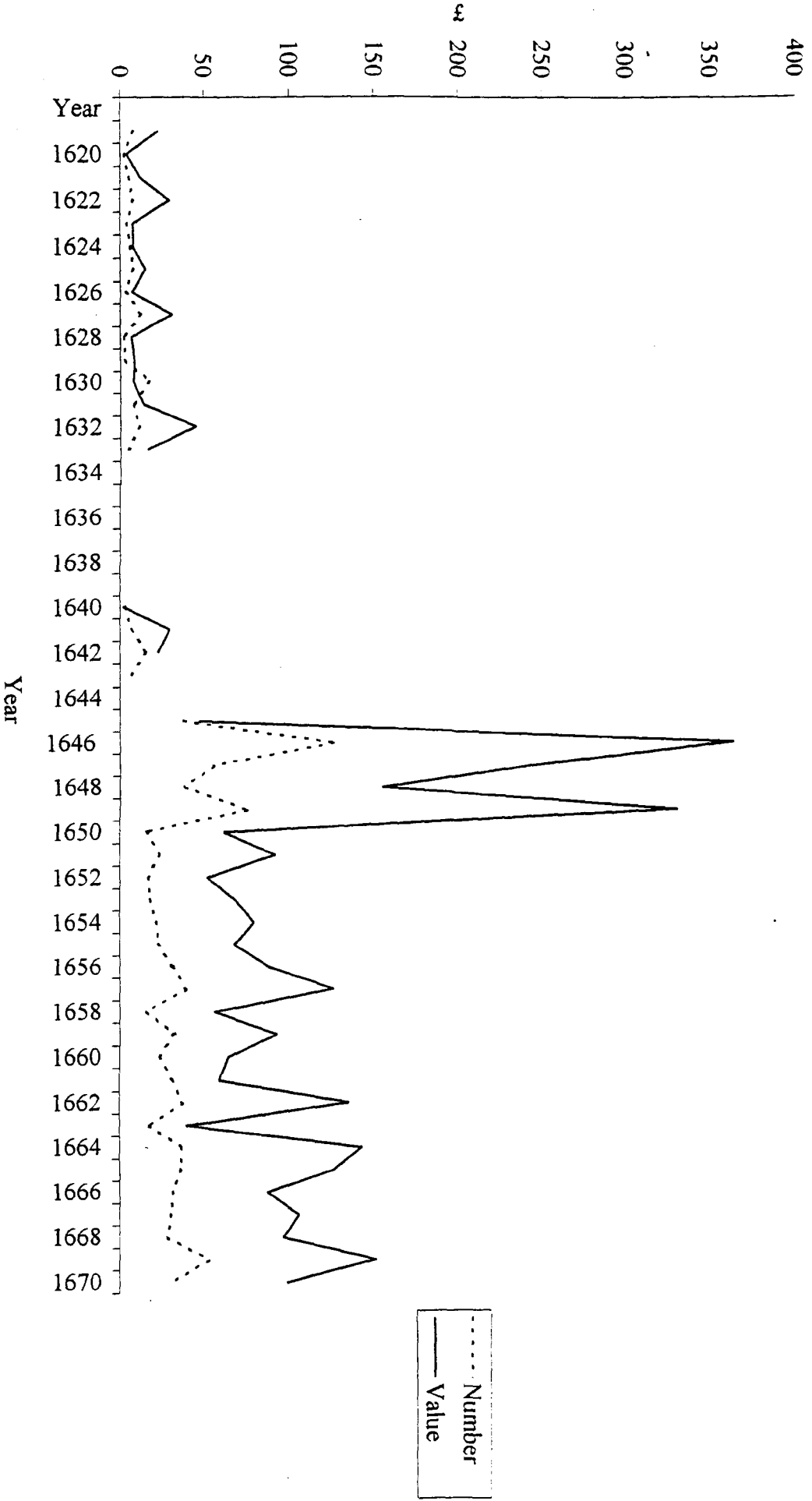


Chart 8.16: Low Prices of Horses at the 11 June Fairs, 1619 – 1670.



Chart 8.17: Mean Prices of Horses at the 11 June Fairs, 1619 – 1670.

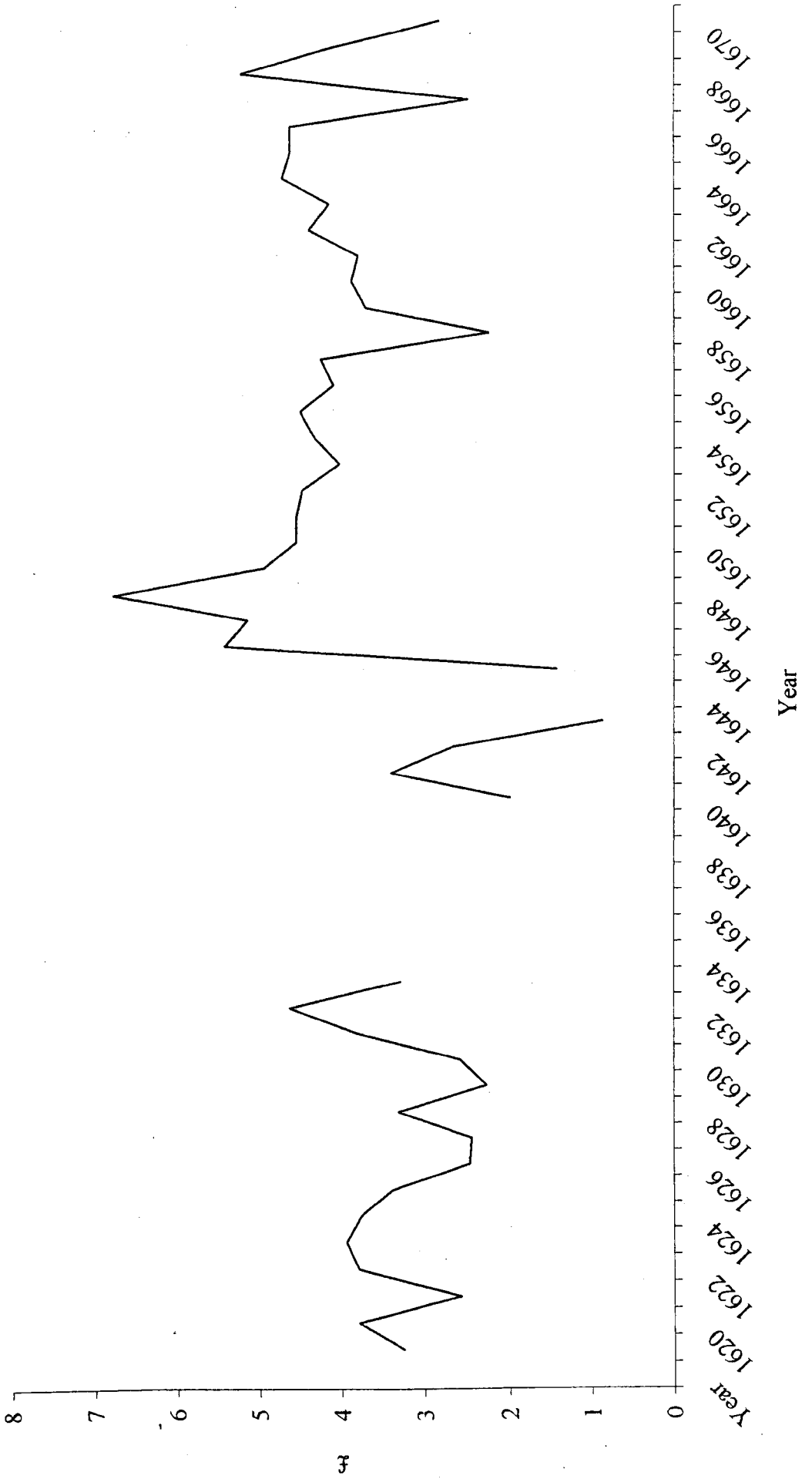


Chart 8.18: High Prices of Horses at the 11 June Fairs, 1619 – 1670.

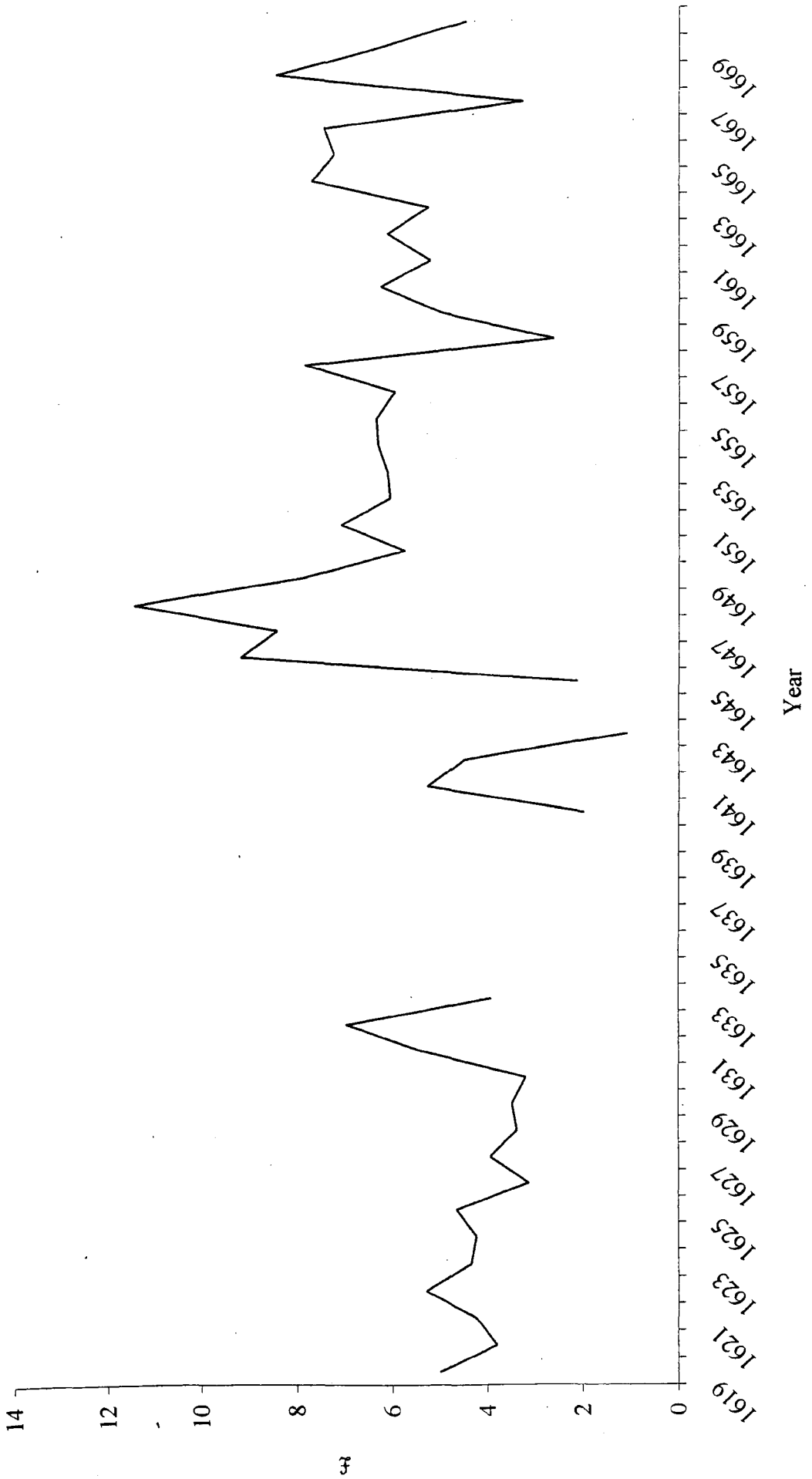
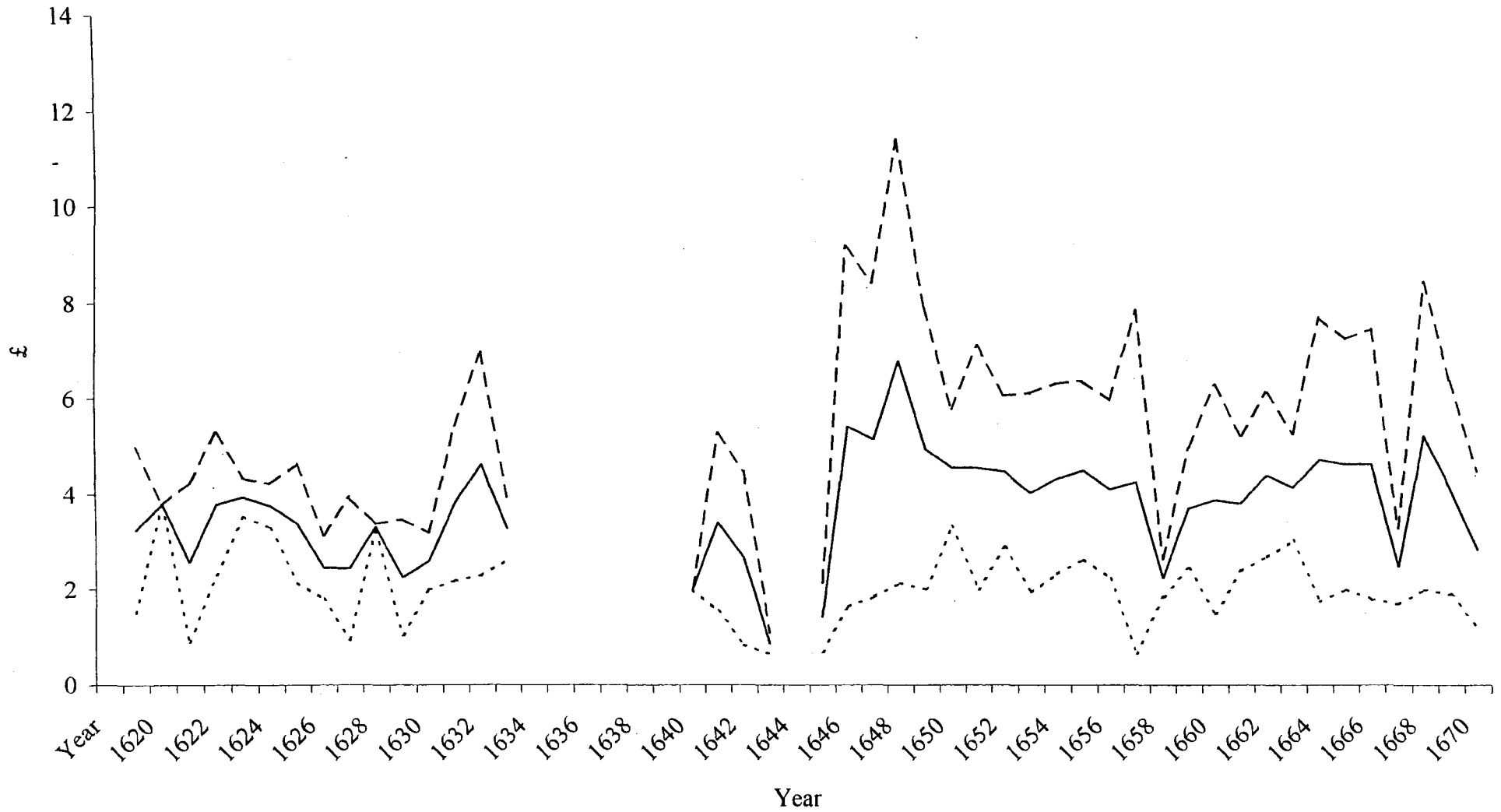


Chart 8.19: Combined Price Fluctuations of Horse Prices at the 11 June Fairs, 1619 – 1670.



These severe fluctuations in values must have made any form of long term economic planning impossible. The extremely adverse agricultural conditions experienced in the mid-1620s follows the second peak (1623). If the adverse agricultural conditions being experienced at the time were having an adverse effect on the number of horses available for sale in that year, due perhaps to disease resulting from the poor weather conditions and a lack of fodder and feed, which would force up the price of horses and so discourage all purchasers except for those who really needed to purchase in that year. However, the 11 June fair preceded the harvest for that year and so although contemporaries may have been expecting a poor harvest, the horse fair appears to have experienced business as usual. The continued and prolonged collapse in the value of horses at the lower end of the market may well reflect the economic conditions following the disastrous harvest of 1623. Unlike the modern haulier, the early modern packman or carrier could not reduce his running costs simply by taking assets off the road: horses do not cease to consume fodder (fuel) when they stop working. The only option open to the packman or carrier would have been to sell his beasts (possibly not an option if all packmen and carriers would be facing the same economic hardships) or to slaughter the beasts, which may have been a more attractive option in the face of rising food prices. In either case, the packman or carrier's wage earning capacity once economic conditions recovered would be reduced, as would his capacity to buy more horses.

The series of data for the years immediately prior to the Civil War show a steady decline in prices. When the data resumes in 1645, the price closely matches the situation in 1643 and reverses the decline in prices. By 1648, the low price exceeds £2 and from that year the early-1630s pattern of fluctuating prices resumes. However, in this later series of data, the swings between peaks and troughs are noticeably less

severe.⁵³ For example, the peak in 1626 matches the peak of 1650 at about £3 5s but the collapse following 1650 was some £1 5s (to £2) while the collapse following 1626 was almost £2 5s to just above the £1 level. The explanation for the reduction in fluctuations in horse prices may be the activities of chapmen from Yorkshire from 1650 (and later from Nottinghamshire) who moved horses over larger distances to overcome local shortages and therefore stabilise prices.

The highest prices paid for horses were characterised by less fluctuation than the lowest price. This would suggest that overall, the effects of fashion were of limited impact in influencing horse prices overall. The period up to 1630 was characterised by a fluctuating, but overall downwards, trend in price. The early-1630s saw a short term but highly significant recovery in price before the price collapsed again towards the level of 1629. The short series of data preceding the Civil War differs from the data series which had preceded it because the high price shows a significant recovery from a value below anything experienced in the 1620s to amongst the highest values of the 1620s before collapsing to an even lower level.

The post-Civil War series begins near the low of 1643 and rapidly recovers. This could be seen as part of the post-Civil War economic recovery. The prices experienced from 1646 to 1649 were the highest ever experienced. These suggest that demand was exceeding supply and continued until an equilibrium was established. This coincided with the arrival of Yorkshire chapmen bring horses from 1650. Thereafter, horse prices remained largely stable at around the £6 10s level, about £2 higher than the early-1630s series.⁵⁴

The mean price displays a pattern which resembles the low price throughout the 1620s until the high price begins to recover after 1630. Thereafter, the mean price

⁵³ The noticeable exception is 1657 when the price fell to below £1.

⁵⁴ Although collapses in price are noticed in 1656 and 1665.

displays remarkable similarity with the high price for the remainder of the period, in particular the recovery and collapse in prices immediately prior to the Civil War, the recovery in the late-1640s and the extreme fluctuations from 1668.

The information provided by these charts shows that despite the disruption caused by the Civil War and the recovery of the late-1640s there were steadily improving trading conditions across the middle two quarters of the seventeenth century.⁵⁵ Trade in horses, both in terms of volume of horses sold and values of cash transacted, were rising. The mean price of horses rose by about £1 between the mid-1630s and after the Civil War. Yet at the upper end of the market, this increase was around £2. This would indicate an overall increase in the quality of horses available. It is more difficult to determine a comparable change in trends for the lower end of the market due to the extreme fluctuations in prices for the years before the mid-1630s. For the post-Civil War years this situation stabilised with prices fluctuating between £1 10s and £2 in half of these years.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most significant change was the increased stability in prices from *circa* 1650, which coincides with the arrival of the Yorkshire chapmen. Their arrival coincided with the stabilisation of the upper market values at a level above the average increase. Were these external traders responsible for bringing in breeding stock of a higher calibre than was to be found locally? The geographical distribution of purchasers in the 1660s shows a strong bias towards the Peak District, an area where many packmen lived. Here, sturdy working horses were required for the carriage trade rather than fine saddle mounts.

Edwards has identified a decline in the traditional horse fairs due to changes in trading patterns in the late-sixteenth century and early-seventeenth century. The

⁵⁵ If only because of the absence of information to determine what was happening.

⁵⁶ In thirteen of twenty-five years.

evidence from Macclesfield is that the 11 June fair was strong and healthy and continuing to grow. The only doubt for its future is that all of the figures for 1670 are lower than those for 1669. However this is not out of character with the overall trend and the values for 1670 are, in most cases, higher than for 1668.

8.8 The Horse Fair and the Professional Trader

It has long been established that certain areas of England developed reputations for providing types of horse with specific qualities. One of these areas is the Peak Forest which would explain the large number of sales of horses from that area. These sales were, however, mainly carried out by individuals selling single horses. From the mid-1650s a new type of horse trader appears in Macclesfield, concerned with multiple sales at key fairs, mainly 11 and 30 June. These horse traders are easily identified by the long distances they travelled which made multiple sales essential if the journey was to be economically viable (this would include visiting several fairs), and they made return trips were year after year.

The arrival of these professionals from the mid-1650s was not without precedent. Nottinghamshire's trading connections with Macclesfield did not begin in the 1650s. In the first recorded fair in 1619 Richard Rye of Cossall, Nottinghamshire, vouched at a sale. Eight years later, Reginald Slack, also from Cossall, sold two mares for a total of £7 6s 8d. Cossall is to the west of Nottingham and so geographically removed from the Newark connection, although a Gawicknall Barrett from Farneton, Nottinghamshire, sold a bay mare in June 1633. These sales may have been the embryonic moves to establish a trading connection with Macclesfield, but lacked the favourable economic conditions of the Interregnum and Restoration to succeed. At a fair provisionally dated 11 June 1640, one William Sparlock of Stretton upon [blank],

Warwickshire, bought two black nags and one bay nag totalling £8 11s 8d from three individuals. Sparlock may have been an anomaly as he represents an isolated example of a multiple purchaser. He also differs from the later professionals by purchasing, rather than selling, horses, and did not return to Macclesfield. Professional horse traders who visited Macclesfield originated from either Nottinghamshire or Yorkshire with one example from Lincolnshire.

Eighteen Nottinghamshire horse traders have been identified as trading at the horse fair from the mid-1650s to the end of the toll book. They range from William Baddison, chapman (sometimes yeoman) of Edingley, Nottinghamshire, who sold eight horses at his first appearance in 1656 and thereafter was a regular attender of the 11 June fairs, to Edward Willson of Stoke, Nottinghamshire, who made a single appearance and sale on 11 June 1657.

As a whole, the Nottinghamshire traders appear to have come to Macclesfield for each 11 June fair as a collective body.⁵⁷ The impression given from the toll book is that the Nottinghamshire traders all targeted this particular horse fair. The exact nature of the relationship between individual traders is unknown, so it is not possible to say whether they were acting individually or as some form of body, or indeed as combination of both. The nature of their relationship and the nature of the horse trade in Nottinghamshire are beyond the scope of this dissertation and beyond the scope of the sources used, but it is clear that some of the horse traders travelling to Macclesfield did co-operate. John Hall of Edingley, Nottinghamshire, sold one horse on 12 June 1654 but vouched for four sales, two of which are positively identified as being by Nottinghamshire traders. William Baddison also vouched for a number of

⁵⁷ The only non-11 June transactions occurred on 1 November 1669 when William Mosse of Newark, Nottinghamshire, chapman, exchanged one dun nag for one bay mare and 20s and Christopher Parkinson of Farneton, Notts., sold a bay filly. Both were vouched by Henry Gerton indicating a

sales, as did the partnership of John Oldfield and Henry Grastie/Gerton. The traders came from a small number of places; Edingley, Thoroton, East Stoke, Farnsfield, Sibthorpe, Farneton, Hallam and Newark on Trent. All of these locations fall within a ten mile radius to the south and west of Newark which suggests a horse breeding area in Nottinghamshire. (See Map 8.14) Two thirds of the traders (twelve) appear at only one fair, although they could make multiple sales at that fair. This is in marked contrast with the more general pattern of sales by local traders who would bring individual horses to the fair for sale. Whether these Nottinghamshire traders represent junior partners or employees of a larger concern or if they were trading in their own right is unclear.

It is clear from the compact geographical origin of these Nottinghamshire traders, made a well established trading route in the mid-1650s which flourished in 1670. The fair at Macclesfield acted as an entrepôt through which the horses were disbursed around Macclesfield's hinterland, rather than being for use in Macclesfield itself. Macclesfield's horse-supplying hinterland extended sixty-seven miles to the south east into the heart of England.⁵⁸

As with the Nottinghamshire traders, those from Yorkshire also appear before the 1650s in small numbers. On 1 July 1622, John Bowland of Doncaster, haberdasher, sold a black mare for 8s. This is the sole record of a horse sale on that date, although there is reference to a market having been held on that day 'Tolls, all charges discharged 53s 1d'. The presence of a market coupled with the lowest price for any horse would suggest that Bowland had taken a train of packhorses to Macclesfield for the market and had been forced to dispose of a horse which was

knowledge of pre-existing trade arrangement. Parkinson and a possible kinsman, John Parkinson, sold horses at the 11 June 1670 fair but the three men do not appear again after these two fairs.

⁵⁸ Following a modern route from Newark through Mansfield, Chesterfield, Bakewell and Buxton to Macclesfield.

surplus to requirement or incapable of making the return journey. Other Yorkshiremen are recorded from Wakefield, Kirkheaton, Sheffield and Huddersfield. The proximity of these towns to the northern and eastern edge of the Peak District suggests that these men were involved in the packhorse trade and the presence of a horse fair in Macclesfield provided a convenient place to acquire or dispose of horses according to demand.

Twenty-four traders have been identified from Yorkshire. Fifteen of the traders only accounted for one transaction. Large traders are to be found but they are smaller in scale than the likes of William Baddison. Two horse traders, William Duffin and William Lugger or Logger account for almost half of the sixty-five horses sold.⁵⁹ Duffin is the only horse trader to make repeated transactions at the horse fair, on 11 June fairs in 1664, 1665, 1667 and 1669. Lugger's transactions were made on 11 June and 30 June 1664.

The Yorkshire horse traders came from seventeen places of abode, although one of these, Sleafeld, may be the result of a misunderstanding for Sheffield by the clerk.⁶⁰ The most common was Fouldbey as the home of five dealers and accounting for over half of the transactions (thirty-four out of sixty-five). Unfortunately, attempts to identify the location of these sixteen or seventeen locations have been less successful than for the Nottinghamshire locations. Warmfeld, the home of two traders, has been identified as Warmfield between Wakefield and Pontfract. Nearby are Woodhouse, which may be Handserth Woodhouse, and Crofton which may be Croston. These are in the vicinity with the more readily identifiable towns, like

⁵⁹ William Duffin of Wamefield and of Crosten, both Yorks., chapman and yeoman made twenty-five transactions; William Lugger or Logger of Purstall, Yorks., chapman and yeoman made six transactions.

⁶⁰ 11 June 1666. See n. 49.

Sheffield, Leeds, Huddersfield and Doncaster. As with Nottinghamshire, it has been possible to identify the location of a horse-producing region, 'Fouldbey'.

Charles Day, chapman, of 'Barson', Lincolnshire, made one visit to the horse fair, on 11 June 1662.⁶¹ There he sold ten horses in individual sales for a total price of £41 5s.⁶² All of his sales were vouched for by the partnership of Henry Grastie and James Oldfield. The toll book records a total of thirty-six transactions at that fair, which includes three exchanges making a total of thirty-nine horses in all. Excluding those horses exchanged, one sale for which no price is recorded and Day's ten sales, the remaining twenty-two horses sold for £87 8s 4d and 38 nobles.⁶³ Day's contribution to the fair is that he provided 25 per cent of all horses transacted and accounted for 40 per cent of all payments. That Grastie and Oldfield provided their services to him would suggest a professional operation with prior planning. This fair is unusual in that there are no other identifiable professional horse traders in action there. If Day was operating in his own right, it is curious that he does not return to Macclesfield. He clearly dominated the day's trading, both in terms of stock traded and capital received.

8.9 The Horse Fair and Women

Incidents of women being involved in, or referred to during, transactions are few and far between. Only twenty-two are named, 0.5 per cent of a possible 4500 individuals. This is not to suggest that women were not involved in the horse trade or did not make use of horses. A husband or father may have made a purchase on behalf of his wife or daughter which would not be identified as the purpose of the animal is

⁶¹ Also spelt Bartson and Barneston in different entries for the same fair, and presumably by the same clerk.

⁶² Average price of £4 2s 6d per horse.

⁶³ £100 1s 8d

never recorded. The marital status of a man is never recorded, but can occasionally be inferred by the presence in the same transaction of his son or wife. Similarly, it can be expected that women would have access to horses even if the purchase was made by a male as the head of the household and main income provider, perhaps in the same way as a modern one car family.

Of the twenty-two transactions, widows are predominant (eleven) followed by those without any descriptor, and presumably 'sole' (six), four wives and a single 'Mrs' without a named husband. All of the transactions were for individual animals except that engaged in by Martha Mottershead of Macclesfield, widow,⁶⁴ who, on 11 April 1661, sold three horses totalling £13 to Raphe and John Finney of Alderly Edge.⁶⁵ By changing the criteria of this cohort individual transactions to individual horses, the predominance of widows increases from eleven out of twenty-two transactions (50 per cent) to thirteen out of twenty-four horses (54 per cent). Sales (twelve, or 55 per cent) predominate over purchases (nine) with one unclear transaction. Again, if the horses were counted rather than transactions, fourteen out of twenty-four are sold (58 per cent) which only increases the predominance of sales. No women occur as vouchers. The place of residence of eighteen women was recorded. Macclesfield predominates with four entries⁶⁶ with another five being close by.⁶⁷ Although this is a small sample from which to draw definitive conclusions, this trend is directly opposed to that shown by Macclesfield men who play a minor role in the

⁶⁴ Probably the same Martha Mottershead whose estate was proved in WS 1686. There is no probate record for a Mottershead dying around 1660.

⁶⁵ The other multiple transaction is Katherine Hough, wife of John Hough, of Ludgate who sold one cow and one colt for £3 2s 6d on 20 Nov 1626. For the purposes of this section, horses are dealt with in isolation.

⁶⁶ These are Martha Mottershead (11 April 1661) and Elizabeth Dale (30 June 1651) both 'of Macclesfield'. Katherine Hough, wife of John, of Ludgate on 20 Nov 1626 has been included as Ludgate, Macclesfield. On 11 August 1626, Katherine Day, widow, bought a mare jointly with John Higginbotham of Macclesfield, tailor. Day was included as such a purchase was unlikely unless she was able to make use of the horse which would suggest living in Macclesfield.

⁶⁷ One each from Gawsworth, Mobberley, Bollington, Prestbury and Wildboardclough.

purchase or sale of horses. Most of the remaining females lived within Cheshire. The two transactions indicating the greatest distance travelled are also the last two transactions, both on 11 June 1669, which may be indicative of the fair's growing hinterland. On that day, Mary Chantler of Sutton, Warwickshire, bought a bay mare for £4 12s 2d. At that price, the mare was of above average value which may reflect Chantler's social status. The purpose of the horse can only be guessed at, but the value would suggest a saddle horse, rather than a pack horse, perhaps to continue a journey to or from Warwickshire. The other transaction that day was by Katherine Snellson of Rushton Snellson, Staffordshire, widow, who sold a black mare to Robert Snellson of Rushton James, Staffordshire, yeoman for 53s. A journey of some twenty or thirty miles to sell a relatively inexpensive horse between two parties who are neighbours and possibly in-laws and therefore prearranged the sale may seem excessive but it may be indicative of the desire to establish security of ownership of such an essential economic asset.

Almost all purchases were made by widows or sole women, i.e. those who were independent of men. The predominance of widows selling horses, and in particular some expensive animals, may indicate that they were recently widowed and were selling horses in order to settle debts or perhaps to rationalise their possessions in the light of their new situation.⁶⁸

8.10 1672 Stallage Court Payments⁶⁹

As was shown in the Introduction, A.H. Rodgers and A.D. Dyer attempted to determine the extent of a town's hinterland by plotting the locations from which

⁶⁸ For example, on 31 June 1653 Anne Brown of Prestbury, widow, sold a bay filly for £5 6s 8d, on 11 June 1653 Anne Orme, widow, sold a bay mare for £4 13s 4d and on 11 April 1661 Martha Mottershead sold three horses including one bay horse for £7.

⁶⁹ Macc. Coll. B/II/10. See also chapter 3 for discussion of this material about the market.

people travelled to make use of a town's facilities. In both cases, inner and outer zones were found. None of these zones were symmetrical due to natural geographical features, ease of communications and the location of other towns.⁷⁰ The purpose of this section is to produce comparable results from similar sources in order to determine the extent of similar hinterland around Macclesfield.

The stallage court for 1672 sat on 24 February of that year in front of Henry Barber, mayor. Stallage payments were made for the right to erect a stall at Macclesfield's market. Payments were made according to the size of the stall. So, for example, James Daniel of Stockport paid 2d per day for a stall with a two-yard frontage. Stallage was not due by freemen of Macclesfield so this record only lists non-freemen and 'foreigners'. This allows a reconstruction of the extent of Macclesfield market's hinterland. Similar records have been found only for the early-eighteenth century, by which time there were no 'foreign' stallholders.⁷¹ This prevents a comparison over time of the fluctuation of this particular hinterland. Fifty payments were recorded. Of these, three payments came from Macclesfield people and the abode of six went unrecorded. Of the remainder, the places of abode of twenty-eight stallholders (together with three from Macclesfield) have been plotted onto Map 8.20. A goose-egg drawn around those stallholders captured twenty seven stallholders within 14 miles of Macclesfield.

The goose-egg is elliptical in shape with Macclesfield's position skewed to the south east. The centre of the goose-egg is in fact about 5 miles to the north west of Macclesfield, in between Mottram St Andrew and Alderley Edge. Two geographical features of the region can explain the unusual position of the focal node, Macclesfield, in this goose-egg. Firstly, the sparsely populated Peak District would have reduced the

⁷⁰ See Map 1.2.

⁷¹ See chapter 3.

likelihood of any potential stallholders originating in this region. The effect of this is that Macclesfield, on the edge of the Peak District, is on the eastern edge of the goose-egg. Secondly, the large population around the Stockport/Manchester area draws the goose-egg northwards. Stockport provides the highest number of stallholders (five), which, together with one each from nearby Withington and Cheadle Hulme, accounts for a quarter of the stallholders. A similar pattern is shown to the south and west, albeit in a more limited form. Congleton's four stallholders were the second most numerous group and marked the southernmost extent of the goose-egg.⁷² Knutsford, with only one stallholder, marked the westernmost extent of the goose-egg.

As one would expect from the findings earlier in this chapter, Macclesfield's internodal links were to: Macclesfield, Stockport, Knutsford, and Congleton. Despite the predominance of these towns on the periphery of the goose-egg, over half of the stallholders came from rural communities within the goose-egg. This again supports the earlier findings of a strong relationship between Macclesfield and its rural hinterland, in this case up to about 10 miles in radius, although this was significantly foreshortened to the east by the sparsely populated Peak District. The occupation of only seven stallholders was recorded on 24 February 1672, six butchers and one shoemaker.⁷³ The place of abode of four of the six butchers and the shoemaker have been identified and plotted on Map 8.21. The butchers were located within a radius of 5 miles of Macclesfield market, at Siddington, Bollington and Macclesfield itself. This may well reflect the distances over which cattle could be economically driven 'on the hoof' for Macclesfield's market. Although contemporaries noted the great distances over which livestock were driven to London, it was a far greater market and

⁷² Following further stallage payments on 2 March, a note listed remaining areas due by five unnamed Congleton men. Even if these arrears were due by the four listed on 24 February, it would suggest that the figure of four Congleton stall holders was an underestimate, being at least five and possibly as high as nine.

noted for its higher prices which were able to bear the cost incurred in travel over greater distances. In comparison, Macclesfield was a smaller market and able to meet at least part of its food supply locally, as is shown by the presence of a local butcher.

The one shoemaker came from Congleton where one would expect to find higher order occupations. Although one example should not be taken as representative of all the stallholders, one would expect to find that those coming from further afield and especially from urban locations would be vendors of manufactured, non-perishable goods which could bear the time and cost of travel. The hinterland supplying Macclesfield's market was clearly small compared with that of executors, administrators or suppliers of high value non-perishable goods like silk. Even the suppliers of horses by the 1670s were travelling greater distances. Markets, however, supplied more routine goods and were held at regular intervals throughout the country. It is significant that three other market towns marked the extent of Macclesfield's hinterland.

8.13 Conclusion

Within this dissertation a number of assumptions were made regarding the position of a town in the wider economic and political nation. The political element of this has been discussed in chapter 3. The economic element included the assumptions that a town could not exist or be studied in a vacuum, and that within this structure multiple hinterlands existed. The nature of these hinterlands was dependant upon the source material examined. These hinterlands were not fixed but varied over time. Christaller would argue that these hinterlands changed over the seasons, but the

⁷³ The later stallage payments show a wider variety of goods for sale, including linen.

information available to us in this study does not permit conclusions to be drawn at the seasonal level.

In the case of seventeenth and early-eighteenth century Macclesfield, it is clear that hinterlands existed on multiple levels even within the same source material. Both the hose fair toll book and the administrators and executors from the probate files showed a distinctly local sphere of influence and a much wider national sphere. Although the stallage court book established a hinterland at the local level, if such commercial activities were combined with those of the silk button industry as discussed in chapter 6, then again a local and national hinterland is identified. Change over time and its effects on the local economy is best illustrated through the arrival of horse dealers from Nottinghamshire and elsewhere from the 1650s. By tying the local economy into the national, stock was improved and prices stabilised.

So, what we see is a town moving from being of purely local importance in the commercial, political and administrative spheres, to one which is becoming more closely integrated into the economy national. This process would undoubtedly be accelerated later in the eighteenth century through the arrival of turnpikes, canal and railways.

Jon Stobart described Macclesfield as ‘local rural contacts were paired with a range of more distant urban links, including a high proportion of contacts with towns more than 50 miles away’.⁷⁴ This suggests a town with two hinterlands, one local and regional within east Cheshire, and another national. This view is supported by the finding of the executors and administrators, in which 75 per cent were located in the town and 90 per cent within twenty miles, but there were still links to London, Bristol, Oxford and Bangor.

⁷⁴ Stobart, ‘Regional Structure’, pp. 60 – 1.

Other sources reflect this inner hinterland. Most of the evidence of land tenure and all but two debts were located within a radius of 10 miles. The purchasers at the horse fair and those registered in the stallage book show a hinterland with a slightly larger radius, 16 and 14 miles respectively, but these were more effected by geography. The horse fair hinterland was shortened in the wet by the presence of Chester, the other known horse fair in Cheshire while the centre of the 'goose-egg' of the market traders was skewed to the north and west by the absence of traders from the sparsely populated Pennines. So, depending upon the direction and source examined, Macclesfield had an inner hinterland of up to 20 miles.

The findings for legacies and trade reflect a wider hinterland. The 'pull' of Manchester and London are shown in Chart 8.11. As expected, the number of legacies drops beyond the immediate area of Macclesfield, but then increase over greater distances. This pattern is not repeated with the trading links. Trade is internodal and the absence of nodes in the immediately vicinity of Macclesfield, due to the special distribution necessary to sustain markets and fairs. Internodal links were established over medium distances, to Halifax, Shrewsbury and Worcester as well as London and Manchester.

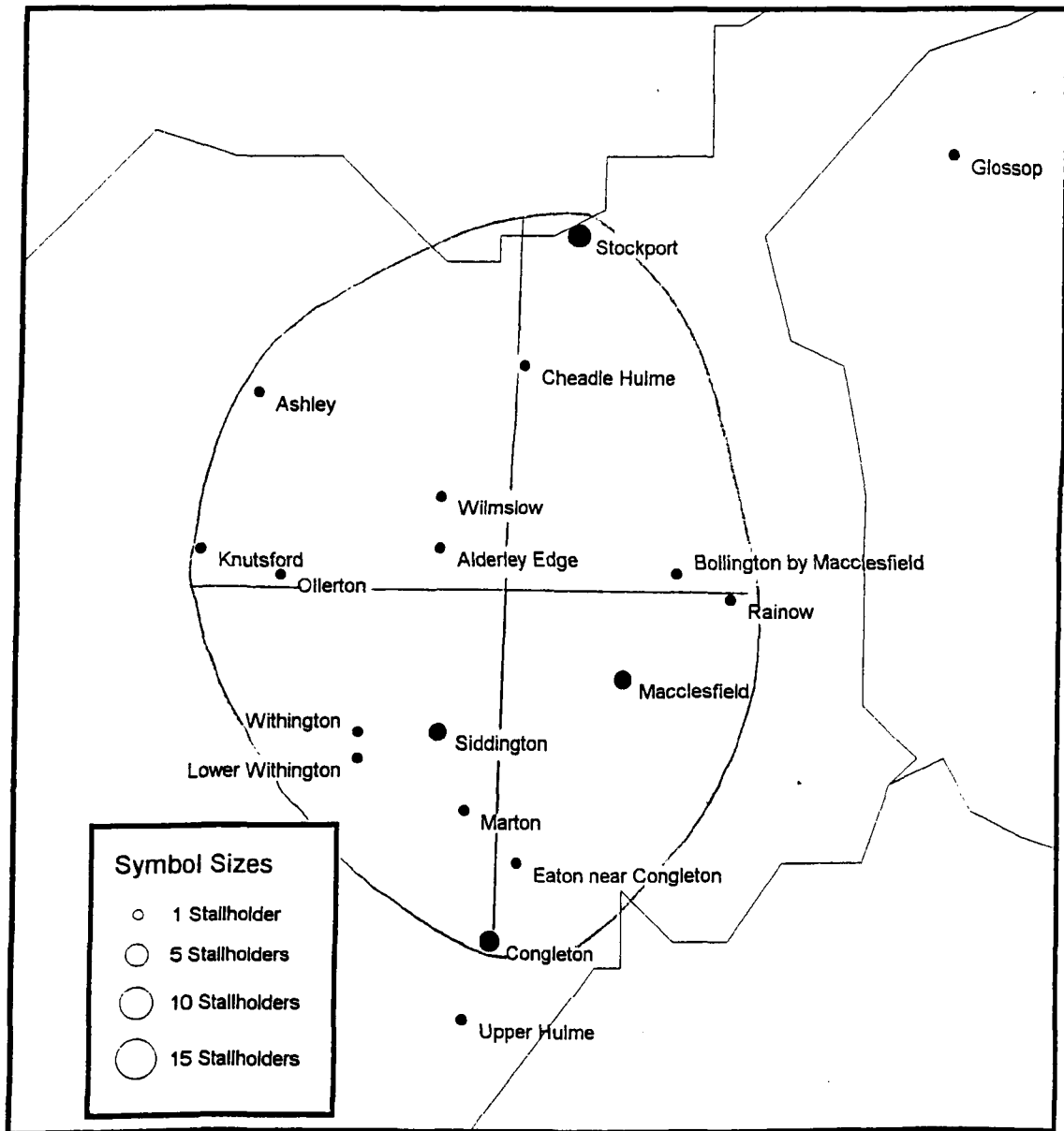
The horse fair toll book represents another type of hinterland not normally seen, that of 'islands' like Nottingham without any direct connect between the island and Macclesfield. These links serve only to use Macclesfield to sell their goods. The toll book also serves to identify changes in trading conditions, for example the establishment of an integrated trading network in the 1650s and its impact on stabilising horse prices, and the 'peace dividend' following the end of the civil war. This allows the hinterland to be assessed not just as a geographical entity, but also in economic and social terms.

One aspect of Macclesfield's hinterland which has not been fully examined is the international dimension. Through the Levant Company, West Country Woollens were exported via London to the modern-day Turkey and Syria for silk.⁷⁵ This silk was distributed to Spitalfields and Macclesfield. This chapter has established the link between Macclesfield and London. Further research would place Macclesfield fully in the context of an international hinterland.

⁷⁵ See for example R. Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1967)

Map 8.20: 'Foreign' and Non-Freemen Stallholders at Macclesfield Market,

1672



Map 8.21: 'Foreign and Non-Freemen Stallholders with Specified Occupations at Macclesfield Market, 1672

(Black = Butchers; Grey = Shoemaker)

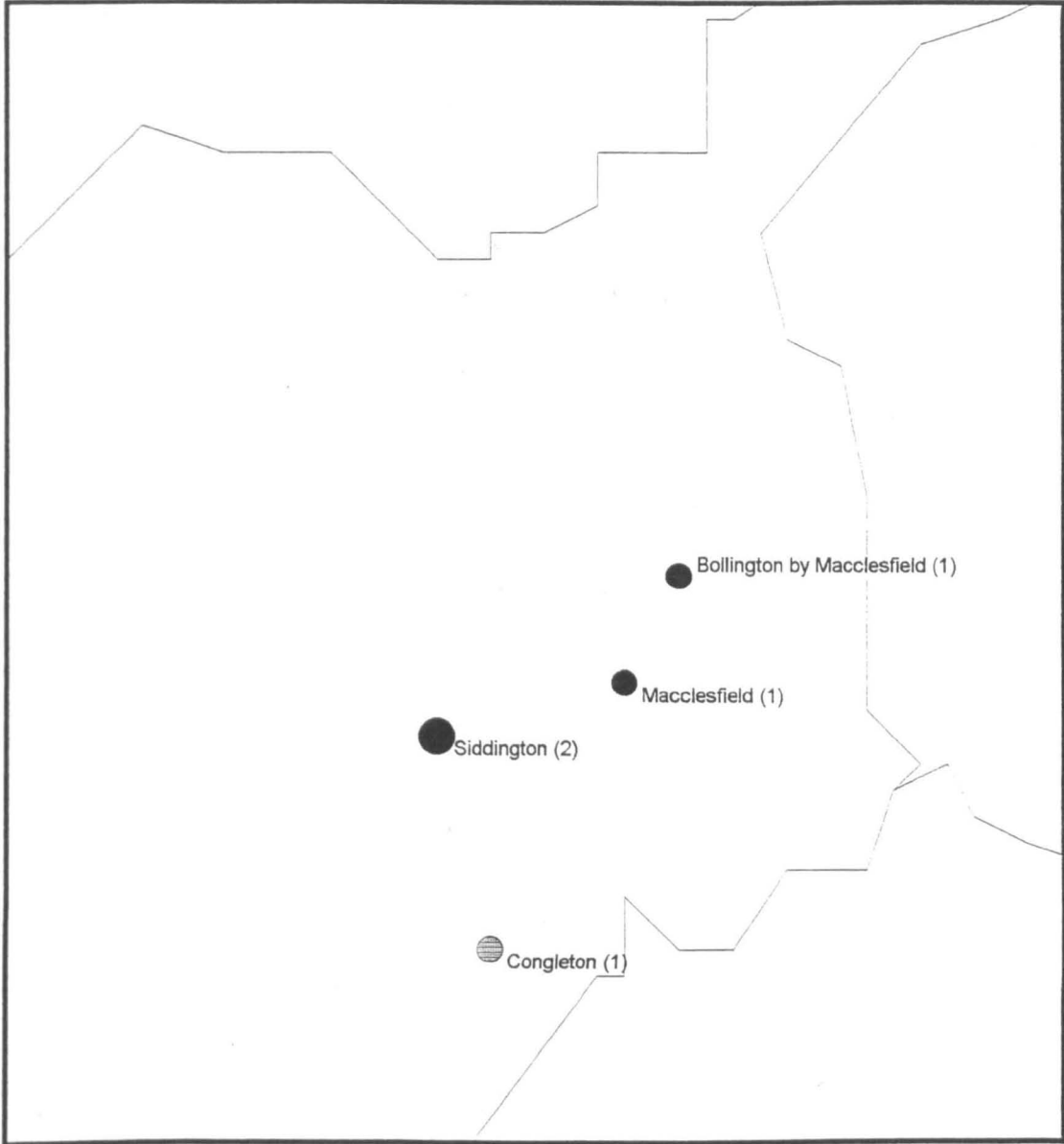


Table 8.22: Incidents of Links from Macclesfield by Category.

Town	Land	Executor/ Administrator	Appraiser	Debt	Legacy	Trade	Other	Total
Adlington	2	5	1	2	6	0	5	21
Altringham	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Ashford	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ashton	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Bangor	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Batley	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	8
Bollington	9	7	2	0	7	0	1	26
Bristol	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Broken Cross	9	0	1	0	1	0	0	11
Buglawton	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
Burslam	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Buxton	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Cambridge	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Castleton	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Chester	0	18	0	0	3	0	0	21
Chesterfield	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Chorley	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Congleton	2	5	3	0	8	0	0	18
Crooke	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Derby	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Didsbury	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dodleston	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dublin	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
Eccles	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Frodsham	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Gawsworth	1	16	0	0	10	0	1	28
Halifax	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Hampshire	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Henbury	5	4	0	2	8	1	0	18
Hope	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hurdesfield	11	11	3	1	18	0	3	47
Knutsford	1	4	0	0	5	0	0	10
Langley	0	2	0	0	4	0	1	7
Liverpool	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	144
London	3	2	0	0	19	12	8	44
Londonderry	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Manchester	2	9	0	0	20	6	2	39
Middlewich	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	4
Mobberley	5	1	0	0	10	0	2	18
Monyash	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mottram St Andrew	2	5	0	2	5	0	0	14
Nantwich	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	5
Newcastle	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
Northampton	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
North Road	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Northwich	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Peover	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Prestbury	2	7	0	0	1	0	2	12
Preston	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ribchester	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Rainow	11	14	1	5	12	1	1	45
Sheffield	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Shrewsbury	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sutton	20	17	2	2	32	1	10	84
Siddington	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
Stockport	0	1	0	1	10	0	1	23
Tatton	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Taxal	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Tithington	2	5	3	0	4	0	2	16
Thelwell	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Up Holland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Warrington	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
Whitchurch	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Wrexham	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wildboarclough	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Winkle	3	0	0	1	4	0	1	9
Worcester	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	103	162	16	18	240	26	48	623

Chapter 9: Conclusion

In the Introduction, I termed Macclesfield a ‘middle-ranking town’.¹ This was based upon population size and economic change from market town to proto-industrial town and onto a factory town. Macclesfield would never become one of the demographic or economic phenomenons of early modern England. Yet this initial statement does little to highlight a town which rode out the ‘century of revolution’ without undue disturbance. When Macclesfield did loose its corporation for a decade, it occurred during the period of Plumb’s growth of political stability, and occurred due to internal division.²

Around 1600, Macclesfield was enjoying its newfound freedom from magnate dominance, and would receive two royal charters in the space of a decade. The town would be afflicted by a visitation of the plague, as a clerk thoughtfully entered into the parish register to explain the increased mortality rate, unlike his successor ninety years later who failed to account for (or perhaps was unable to) another mortality crisis. The first mention of silk in Macclesfield occurred in the 1570s, thirty years before the death of Nicholas Blacklache, silkman, left the first testamentary evidence.³ It is tempting to speculate that Blacklache was one of the entrepreneurs who brought silk to Macclesfield which has characterised the town over the subsequent 400 years, even if today silk is only remembered through the heritage industry and the football team.

Testamentary evidence about Macclesfield in these early years is extremely limited and therefore it is difficult to gain a comprehensive picture. Certainly the

¹ See p. 1.

² C. Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603 – 1714* (Milton Keynes, 1980); J.H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675 – 1725* (London, 1967).

³ WS 1606.

earliest chapmen, like Blacklache and Stephen Rowe, recorded trade goods and agricultural valuations within a third of each other.⁴ These people were able to combine agriculture, either through under-employment in the grazing uplands or unemployment during the growing and fallow seasons of the arable lowlands, with proto-industry. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to describe them as yeomen or husbandmen (terms which I have identified as social with little financial definition⁵) who were able to occupy idle hands and spare capital with silk. These were Joan Thirsk's 'projectors' when, in the late sixteenth century, 'Everyone [was] with a scheme' which was 'capable of being realised through industry and ingenuity. It was not an unobtainable dream like the commonweal.'⁶ Their efforts were realised and their inventories recorded estates valued at £70 and £170.

But Macclesfield was not just a silk town. It was not a greenfield site developed as a silk production centre which attracted service industries to it. Rather, it was an established town going back to Anglo-Saxon England. As we have seen in chapter 7, Macclesfield had an established leather industry. This clearly demonstrates the need to examine more closely the 'lesser industries' which are often overwhelmed by the vibrancy, novelty and wealth of the new industries, of which Macclesfield's silk button industry was one. As well as agriculture, silk and leather, early-seventeenth century probate files show that there were brickmakers, glaziers, butchers, grocers and woollen textile production. These are just the occupations for which there is sufficient surviving information to discuss in chapter 7. There is testamentary evidence for other occupations, but in insufficient quality to analyse

⁴ Stephen Rowe, chapman, WS 1617.

⁵ See p. 137.

⁶ J. Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988), p. 1.

adequately, and there are other occupation which is can be safely assumed could be found in Macclesfield.

By 1740, Macclesfield was a vastly different town, although a part of this impression is due to the increased array of sources available. The population was about 5000 with perhaps 1000 households. The town had been spared further plague visitations and avoided the scourge of major urban conflagrations so prevalent in early modern towns. Silk still predominated although it was undergoing changes from buttons to cloth. Decline in absolute numbers of probate files in the eighteenth century makes it difficult to make direct comparisons with the late seventeenth century peak in probate, but it would appear that economic diversification of individuals was declining as the opportunities to profit from specialisation increased. At the same time, the prosperity of a wider array of 'other', often new, service industries grew and it can be speculated that the variety of occupations continued to develop. This wealth is best identified through drawing comparisons with the two Hearth Tax returns and probate files, which showed more large and larger houses based upon the number of hearths. The same sources also point to a polarised society deeply divided by poverty with high levels of Hearth Tax exemptions and low numbers of hearths when compared with other English towns.

Yet the history of Macclesfield is not linear. The number of probate files peak in the period 1670 to 1690. This period coincided with a peak in prosperity for the silk button industry and with the commencement of urban improvement schemes. These several schemes give the impression of a corporation which was driving forward urban improvement, and in many cases far exceeded both the timing and scale of their projects when compared to other, and in many cases more 'superior', towns and cities. This three-way coincidence is striking, but would not be maintained. *Circa* 1730 the

corporation acknowledged the need for economic diversification away from buttons and a decade later acknowledged that it was financially unable to maintain the paved streets. These indicate that declining financial resources would retard further urban improvement projects in the late-eighteenth century as the population continued to grow.

As well as these chronological change there were significant other issues which characterised Macclesfield, the most important being the horse fair. This provides a strange dichotomy between an event which occurred in the town, and from which the town undoubtedly benefited from accommodation, fees and stabling, yet the townspeople appear to have had very few dealing with the fair except as officers. As the only source of internal trade with a toll book by which to measure commercial activity, we are fortuitous as it indicates that Macclesfield became integrated into a national horse trading network in the 1650s, a century earlier than Granger and Elliott found for the grain trade.

Macclesfield has been shown to have existed with links on a regional and national scale which shows a town integrated into national life through links to major towns in England, Wales and Ireland, although not into Scotland. On a much more localised scale, Macclesfield has been shown to have a hinterland with a radius of up to twenty miles, depending upon the source consulted and the effects of geography. In this area was the majority of the town's credit, legacies, land tenure, purchasers of horses and market stall holders. Furthermore, there were 'islands' of hinterlands scattered about England which supplied the horse fair.

Such sources permit Macclesfield to be seen as a regional influence. The idea of a town's hinterland is not a new one, yet it has usually been viewed from the perspective of just one hinterland. Macclesfield has been shown to have many

depending upon the sources used. The Stallage Court Book shows a circle of market traders around Macclesfield extending about five miles, although constrained by the presence of other market towns and geography, especially the sparsely populated Peak District. Links identified from trade and the place of abode of executors and administrators have identified wider, national links as far as London. This link to London is especially symbolic as it was through here that silk transited *en route* to Macclesfield. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, this link can be expanded to take Macclesfield's connections initially to the Near East, and later in the eighteenth century to the Far East, placing this east Cheshire town at the end of a truly global trade network.

What is missing from this view of Macclesfield is the national political perspective. Social and commercial links existed to London, Dublin and Bristol, but Macclesfield did not influence national affairs. There was no Member of Parliament, for example. But this did not prevent the insecurity and instability of the later Stuart monarchs from interfering with corporate affairs. These, however, were rode out by Macclesfield seemingly without concern: David Eastwood's 'victory of the localities over the centre'.⁷ The heightened tensions and insecurity of the Hanoverian Succession undoubtedly placed strains upon pre-existing tensions within corporate politics. During the 1716 corporate elections, the system collapsed under these strains, yet this was due to internal fractures rather than as a direct consequence of the Hanoverian-Jacobite struggle.

Macclesfield has been laced as one of the seventy largest towns in England and fourth in south Lancashire and Cheshire although it failed to maintain this

⁷ D. Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700 – 1870* (London, 1997), p. 16.

position as the eighteenth century progressed. Despite a relatively large population, as far as most English towns are concerned, Macclesfield remained distinctly agrarian in nature. Most probate files show some evidence of livestock or land tenure, even if there is no evidence of direct farming. Baptism and marriage patterns from the parish registers displayed a seasonality so fixed to the agricultural cycle that it is difficult to conceive that Macclesfield was urban in the modern sense, that is to say, removed from nature. In this respect, Macclesfield was rural. But if Macclesfield was rural, then to what extent could it be described as a 'silk town'? Probate is skewed towards the wealthy and male while the parish registers recorded very few occupations, therefore it has not been possible to determine what percentage of the population derived their income from silk, and in any case, many of these would have had multiple sources of income. If you take the accepted division of early modern English towns into ports, industry or leisure, then Macclesfield must fall into the industrial division, and this is due to silk. But this silk industry sat on top of an older, agriculture-based market town. The extent to which Macclesfield, and similar towns, were dependent upon their proto-industry or retained their market town character is not generally discussed in text books, but I would argue that Macclesfield remained a market town with the silk industry adding an additional layer on top.

Macclesfield's importance, and therefore this dissertation's contribution to our knowledge of early modern English towns, is of a provincial town which was fully integrated into English economic (at least for the silk and horse trades), commercial, social and political life. This does not mean that Macclesfield mirrored every other English town, but displayed its own character within a wider national picture, at least as far as consumer goods are concerned. Also, in the late-seventeenth century, its corporation possessed sufficient financial resources and motivation to undertake

significant urban improvement projects aimed at improving the quality of life of the townspeople. In this respect, Macclesfield was at the forefront of the movement.

Appendix A: Transcription of the 1261 Charter¹

Edward, the eldest son of Henry III, sends greetings to all the important persons of the realm and to his faithful subjects. Know that WE have granted and by this charter have confirmed for us and our heirs to the Burgesses of Macclesfield that the town of Macclesfield may be a free Borough and that the Burgesses may have a Merchant Guild with all the rights belonging to such a guild. They shall not have to pay, anywhere in Cheshire, tolls on roads, bridges, ferries or fords, stall rents in any market, a tax on any bulk of goods or any other duties except on salt from the Wiches. They may pasture their beasts in the Forest and use wood from the Forest to maintain their houses and hedges except that they must not feed their pigs in the Forest at the time when there are acorns for these are for our pigs. The Burgesses may not be sued or judges outside their Borough and if any of them come under our jurisdiction he shall not pay more than twelve pence bail before judgement and only a reasonable fine after judgement according to the nature of the offence. Only excepting when the crime is such that it be tried at our own Court at Chester.

The Burgesses are to pay one-twentieth of their grain to us when it is ground at our mill. They may choose their leader themselves provided that We or our bailiff give counsel and assent. The Burgesses are to pay twelve pence per year for their Burgages (which frees them from all manor dues). They can give, sell or mortgage their burgages as they please, except to religious houses. The bake-house is still ours and any bread made for sale should be baked there,

Given before seven witnesses at Guildford on May 29th, 1261.

¹ C.S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester, 1961), pp. 8-9.

Appendix B: Bekon Idealist Database

The software used for compiling the database was Bekon Idealist. This was adopted for the *VCH Cheshire* project as it had been successfully used on the *VCH Middlesex* project. With Idealist, it is possible to create user-defined records. The layout shown below was adopted from the *VCH Middlesex* project.

Number: a specific file number for this data source. For the probate inventories this ran between 1 and 1106.

Parish: if for Macclesfield (MACC) this was left blank.²

Also: for a second 'parish' mentioned, usually Macclesfield Forest. This was later left blank as other places could be found through a word search.

Source CCRO's classification.

Source Dates: left blank as wills, inventories, granting of probate and similar occurred on different dates.

Year: left blank as this concurred with the Source, but could become easily confused, as in the Source Date

Text: beginning with the deceased's name and occupation/s and/or status descriptor/s. Next came a list of the documents contained in the file followed by the contents of the documents.

Also: for additional details pertaining to the file.

² Macclesfield was not a parish throughout the period under review.

Appendix C: Determining Geographical Origin of Vendors

To compile the data the place of abode of vendors and purchasers attending the 11 June fairs were listed. Where no abode was recorded, the surname of the vendor or purchaser was used in a word search to identify a suitable match with a person in a similar period with a place of abode. Although the likelihood of these factors being reproduced are slight and multiple records of common christian/surname groups would cast doubt on the statistical accuracy of the search, the search did deliver results with an acceptable degree of confidence. Thus, Thomas Hall bought a mare for 52s 6d on 11 June 1646. The only other Thomas Hall in the database, described as being of Taxall, Cheshire, bought a bay colt for £3 2s 8d on 3 October 1647. An even closer match occurred on 11 June 1646 when Joseph Berresford of Middleton bought a bay mare for £4 6s 8d. In the very next entry he is simply recorded as Joseph Berresford when he purchased another mare.

Appendix D: Locating Evidence of Horses in the Idealist Database

Using the Idealist database, word searches were carried out to identify horses in wills or inventories. This focused on 'horse', 'mule', 'mare', 'gelding', 'colt' and 'nag'. The word search function contains an option for 'contains a word starting with'. This function allowed for plurals to be searched for at the same, i.e. 'horse' and 'horses'. As 'nag' occurred in a numbers of options (nag, nag, nagge, nags, nagges) these variations could also be searched at the same time. During this word search, it became apparent that incidents of horse furniture in the inventory, for example saddles, did not always match to the number of horses recorded there. Adam Mottershead, alderman, possessed one gelding and one bay nag, but only one saddle between them and no mention of any other furniture.³ Conversely, William Swindells, yeoman, possessed two carts with wheels and two harrows (£5) and horse trees and other 'gear' (£1) but no horses at all.⁴ A second word search was carried out to identify saddles, bridles and spurs. Another word search function for 'contains a word containing' allowed 'saddle' to be extended to 'saddles' and also 'side-saddle' which would indicate female activity.

³ WS 1634. The horses and saddle were valued at £7.

⁴ WS 1703.

Appendix E: Grocery Goods of Thomas Rathbone, Grocer, WI 1735.

Flax and Hemp	£3 10s
Garry	3s
Sweat Soap	£1
Ball Soap	3s
Tobacco	£2
Liquors	10s
Hops	10s
Currants and Raisins	£1
Rare Sugars	£1 10s
Loaf and Powder Sugar	10s
Oils	£1
Manchester Goods	£1
Pins	10s
Fan Mounts	£1
Treacle	£2
Sweat Meats	£1
Seeds	£1
Thread and Yarn	£1
Buttons, pegs and thimbles	3s
Spectacles and Necklaces	4s
Piccles and Snuff	10s
Cord and Paper	10s
Combs and Wax	10s
Sand and Resin	4s
Spanish Juice issuing glass	8s
Sago and Blows	5s
Pepper and Ginger	£1
Nutmeg, Cloves and Mace	£1
Shoemakers Gum and Rice	6s
Brimstone and Fullers Earth	10s
Shot Chalk and Raddle	£1 6s
Glue and Gunpowder	10s
Odd things	10s
Sugar Candy	10s
Cork, Pack thread and Ropes	£1
Whisketts and Beeswax	2s
Thrums, Mops and Cowtyes	5s
Pipes and Candles	£1
Honey	3s
Pepper and Salt	8s
White and Red Lead	3s
Lamp Black	2s
Wheat	8s

Appendix F: Mayors of Macclesfield, 1600 – 1740.

<u>1600 Sir Edward Fitton</u>	<u>1646 Urian Dean</u>
<u>1601 Sir Edward Fitton</u>	<u>1647 Thomas Parsons</u>
1602 Thomas Stapleton, senior	<u>1648 William Rowe</u>
1603 William Rowe	<u>1649 Anthony Booth</u>
<u>1604 William Rowe</u>	1650 Henry Davy
1605 William Burgess	1651 Samuel Blacklach
1606 Sir Urian Legh of Adlington	<u>1652 James Pickford, senior</u>
1607 George Lowe	1653 James Barber
1608 Edward Broster	<u>1654 Lancelot Bostock</u>
<u>1609 William Burgess</u>	<u>1655 James Pickford, junior</u>
1610 James Smethurst	<u>1656 William Rowe</u>
1611 William Parsons	<u>1657 Urian Deane</u>
1612 George Orme	<u>1658 Samuel Blacklach</u>
1613 Roger Rowe	<u>1659 Henry Davy</u>
1614 Edward Fitton esq, of Gawsorth	1660 William Rowe
<u>1615 Sir Urian Legh of Adlington</u>	1661 Thomas Dean
1616 Adam Mottershead	<u>1662 Thomas Parsons</u>
1617 William Davy	<u>1663 Samuel Blacklach</u>
1618 William Swettenham	1664 Edward Johnson
<u>1619 George Orme, senior</u>	<u>1665 Henry Davy</u>
1620 John Brundreth, junior	<u>1666 William Rowe</u>
<u>1621 Roger Rowe</u>	<u>1667 Anthony Booth</u>
<u>1622 George Lowe</u>	1668 William Birtles
<u>1623 Sir Urian Legh of Adlington</u>	1669 William Lunt
<u>1624 William Parsons</u>	<u>1670 Edward Johnson</u>
<u>1625 William Swettenham, esq,</u>	1671 Edward Wood
1626 James Pickford	1672 Henry Barber
1627 Thomas Fletcher	<u>1673 William Rowe</u>
<u>1628 William Burgess</u>	<u>1674 Anthony Booth of Ridge</u>
1629 Roger Bancroft	<u>1675 William Lunt</u>
1630 Edward Birtles dd 30 Jan 1630/1	<u>1676 Edward Wood</u>
<u>William Burgess</u>	<u>1677 Henry Barber</u>
1631 Randle Barlow	1678 Thomas Rowe
1632 Richard Dean	1679 Adam Mottershead
<u>1633 William Parsons dd 28 July 1634</u>	<u>1680 Anthony Booth</u>
<u>Roger Bancroft</u>	1681 Thomas Rode
<u>1634 James Pickford</u>	<u>1682 Urian Dean</u>
1635 Thomas Legh, esq, of Ridge	1683 Joshua Booth
1636 Urian Dean	1684 Samuel Watson
<u>1637 Sir Edward Fitton, bart</u>	<u>1685 William Rowe</u>
1638 Lancelot Bostock	1686 Samuel Mottershead
1639 William Rowe	1687 John Hollinshead
1640 Anthony Booth	1688 John Blagge
<u>1641 James Pickford</u>	1689 Peter Wright
1642 Francis Ashurst	1690 Thomas Wright
1643 William Watson	1691 Thomas Lunt
1644 Anthony Booth	1692 Thomas Thornly dd 20 Nov 1692
1645 James Pickford, junior	<u>William Rowe</u>

1693 John Houghton	1717
1694 Philip Andrew	1718
1695 Richard Johnson	1719
1696 Edward Cherry	1720
1697 John Sherwin	1721
1698 Richard Worthington	1722
1699 Richard Burgess	1723
1700 John Houghton, jnr	1724
1701 Ralph Poole	<u>1725 Richard Johnson</u>
1702 Josiah Barber	1726 Joseph Eccles
1703 Stephen Philips	1727 Thomas Brocklehurst
1704 John Hawkins	<u>1728 John Barber</u>
1705 William Clayton	1729 Samuel Harryman
1706 William Booth	1730 John Hawkins, junr
1707 Rowe Dean	<u>1731 John Hawkins, senr</u>
1708 Philip Thomson	<u>1732 John Glover</u>
1709 Jasper Hulley	1733 William Warsop
1710 Richard Johnson	<u>1734 William Clayton</u>
1711 John Barber	1735 John Brocklehurst
1712 Samuel Eccles	1736 John Stafford
1713 Thomas Lowe	1737 William Blagg
1714 John Glover	1738 Francis Nicholson
1715 Roger Boulton	1739 Thomas Braddock
1716	1740 Samuel Glover

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