

## WORKSOP INDUSTRY

### Liquorice

John Harrison's survey of Worksop in 1636 states: 'I cannot here omit that thing wherein this town of Worksop excels all others within this realm and most noted for: I mean the store of liquorish that grows there and that of the best.' He lists seven tenants who have liquorice gardens.

Robert White's Worksop, the Dukery and Sherwood Forest, 1875, states: 'Camden's Britannia notices the fame of the town for this plant. Speed says 'In the west, near Worksop, growtheth plenty of liquorice, very delicious and good'... These gardens were principally situated on the eastern margin of the park, near the present Slack Walk. About fifty years ago the last garden of this plant was dug up, which had been planted by the person after whom the 'Brompton stock' is named'.

Liquorice means 'Sweet root' in Greek and is 50 times sweeter than sucrose. It was used to sweeten food but the industry died out around 1750 when sugar cane from abroad became plentiful and by 1832 White's Directory says that liquorice was no longer grown in Worksop.



The liquorice plant

### General Descriptions

There were four main industries in Worksop between 1832 and 1925: malting and brewing, timber including chair making, corn milling, and coal mining.

Benjamin Eddison in *The History of Worksop*, written in 1852, describes the town: 'a few chimneys of flour and other mills are the only manufacturing indications, or objects in the town to interfere with its rural appearance. The corn grinding trade is carried on extensively; the flour as well as the malt made here being much in demand at the neighbouring towns of Sheffield, Manchester and elsewhere. Since the opening of the railway and from the great demand for timber, which is so abundant in the neighbourhood, the trade in it has flourished also to a great extent'.

In 1895 Kelly's Directory states: 'The staple trade of Worksop is malting, which has been extensively carried on for several years. There are brass and iron foundries, saw mills, factories for agricultural implements, threshing machines and chemical works. There is also a very large trade carried on in flour, timber, sawing timber, railway sleepers, Windsor chairs and wood for packing cases for Sheffield cutlery'.

## Malting and Brewing

Malting had been the most important trade in the town since medieval times. The local soil is excellent for growing barley. In 1160 there was at least one malt kiln; in 1636 there were three. The kilns were built of stone with pantile roofs. The malting process is in three stages: steeping, when the barley is soaked in troughs for three days so that the grain absorbs the water; flooring, when the grain is spread over the floor for one to two weeks until it germinates; and finally, roasting in the kiln at 200 degrees F, which produces the malt. The men moved the barley from the troughs to the floor and the kiln with large wooden shovels, turning the grain several times in the process and working in very hot and dusty conditions.

John Holland wrote in his History of Worksop in 1826:

'There are a great number of malt kilns standing about in every direction. Whatever others think, to my eyes these structures are rather picturesque than unpleasing objects, partly from their general construction, but principally from the appearance of their cowls, as the wooden turn-about hoods on their roofs are termed'.



An 19<sup>th</sup> century painting of The Priory Gatehouse showing the cowls of the malt kilns in the background

In 1831 there were 40 maltsters in Worksop, paying a malt duty of £36,593. Malting increased in the town with the coming of the canal in 1777 and again with the arrival of the railway in 1849. The demand from Sheffield and Manchester turned the industry into a major concern and in 1852 John Trefall built the Clinton Maltings, which had the capacity to process 300 quarters every four days for nine months as barley was brought in by railway. Malting did not take place in the summer as the weather was too warm. Previously the old maltings had only been able to process 12 quarters every four days for three months per year before using up their stock of locally grown barley.



Clinton Malt Kilns before demolition about 1970

There were now fewer, larger companies. A map of 1860 shows 29 buildings marked as malt kilns, the thickest concentration being near to the canal between the Golden Ball Inn and Bridge Place, where there were five. There were six on Gateford Road; four on Potter St; four on Eastgate; three in Low Town; two in Abbey Street and one each on Clarence Road, Park Street , Castle Street, and Carlton Road.



A malt kiln in Bridge Place used as a shop in 2008



A malt kiln in Eastgate in 2008



Dock Road kiln about 1980



A malt kiln in Potter Street in 2008

White's Directory of 1875 describes the town: 'There are now a great number of malt kilns in the town, the cowls or hoods of which form a striking peculiarity in the scenery of the place. The amount of duty paid to the Excise for malt in the Worksop district is about £50,000 per annum.'

In 1875 Sheffield brewer Thomas Berry opened the gas-fired Station Kiln by the railway at the top of Sherwood Road. In 1876 John Preston built a new malt kiln in Eastgate beside the railway, and in 1880 William Stones built another in Gateford Road. In 1880 the malt tax of 2s 8d for every bushel of malt was repealed. This hugely increased production over the next 30 years, but by 1950 there were only four maltings left in operation, Sutcliffe's St John's Kiln, Clinton, Station, and Stones. By 1970 they had all closed.



Thomas Berry's Station Malt Kiln  
in 1965



John Preston's Malt Kiln  
on Eastgate built in 1876



Above Left: Workers at Stones' Malt Kilns in 1905



Right and Above Right:  
The remains of Stones Cannon Malt Kiln in 2008



Brewing was a natural addition to malting. Hops were grown locally in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Creswell Holme Brewery in Dock Road was built in 1864 by Robert Smith. In 1871 it became Smith and Nephew when William Allen joined his uncle in the business. The Priorwell Brewery Company was situated in Wellhouse Yards and in 1881 the two companies amalgamated to become the Worksop & Retford Brewery Company. In 1959 the firm was taken over by Tennant which in 1967 was absorbed by Whitbread, and the brewery closed in 1977. The company offices were situated in Victoria Square and are now converted into a public house.



Worksop and Retford Brewery in 1930

Worksop & Retford Brewery workers about 1910



The Brewery Offices in Victoria Square about 1910

## Timber

With much of the area being heavily forested, timber had always been an important local commodity. There were a number of saw mills which specialised in packing cases for use in the Sheffield cutlery industry. East of Priorswell Road was Benjamin Garside's woodyard which in 1840 was contracted to supply railway sleepers to the North Midland Railway line between Derby and Leeds.

Tomlinson and Smith's timber yard in Newgate Street was destroyed by fire in 1900. Warner's Sherwood Saw Mills which were in Eastgate from 1890 also burnt down in 1924. Godley & Goulding was another firm, situated between Eastgate and the railway. The firm survived a fire in 1890 but closed after another in 1951. Oates's timber yard in Eastgate continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century



Steam driven circular saw about 1900



The other photos are of Godley & Goulding's saw mill about 1950

## Chair Making

There were a number of Windsor chair makers in the town. In 1822 John Gabbitas moved from Gamston to the common at Worksop. After his death in 1839 his son Frederick and brother Henry continued the trade. Chairs were marked I Gabbitas until 1839, then E. Gabbitas for John's wife Elizabeth who ran the business. The firm took over the timber yard previously occupied by Benjamin Garside but in 1898 the business closed.

The Gilling family worked on Carlton Road from 1853 to 1916. William Gilling died in 1898 and the firm of Gilling and Gabbitas were advertised as wholesale Windsor chair makers in 1902.

Richard Allsop in Cheapside is listed as a chair maker in trade directories from 1832 to 1895, and John Stenton of Eastgate is listed from 1853 to 1872.

William Brammer had a chair factory on Eastgate which was destroyed by fire in 1890. He moved to the Priory Mill which was also destroyed by fire in 1912. Jack Kelk was the last chair maker in Worksop, and he also made cricket bats. Chairs were made from elm, yew and cherry, the most expensive selling for 18 shillings.



Left and Above:  
examples of Worksop chairs



The Priory Mill when used as a chair factory by William Bramer & Son



Jack Kelk in 1929

## Corn Milling

There were a number of mills in Worksop, using water, wind and steam. The oldest was the Priory watermill which had been there since early medieval times and is mentioned in the Priory Charter of 1160: 'near the church enclosed by its great ditch as far as Bersbrig meadow, also without the ditch, a mill, dwelling house and Buselin's meadow'. Bracebridge Mill had closed by 1750. About 1820 the leat stream to the Priory Mill was dammed to form a large mill pond called the Canch. The mill ceased operation as a watermill in 1876, largely due to the pollution of the Canch.

In 1826 there were three windmills: Cuckson's mill on the north side of the canal, which closed in 1862, one in Kilton, and one to the south of the town on the area still called Windmill Lane.



The Priory Mill with the Mill Dam in the foreground



The sluice gate of the Priory Mill in Memorial Gardens in 2008

To the west of Castle Hill was originally the site of the lord of the manor's watermill. It was powered by the river which used to run where Newcastle Avenue is now. In 1792 William Toplis and Company erected two textile mills here and the firm built Norfolk Street as millworkers' houses. Each house was for joint occupation by several families. The company went bankrupt after three years and the mills were then used for grinding corn and cutting timber. Beard's watermill is listed in trade directories from 1853 to 1925. A steam mill on Bridge Street was run by the Mapson family from 1835 to 1885.



Beard's Mill, Left: in 1910 and Right: the remaining building in 2008



The Worksop Proprietary Mill Company owned the steam mill on Gateford Road for 'grinding corn for the poorer classes at a lower rate and on more advantageous terms than has hitherto been the custom'. It was built in 1849 by James Bannister. Between 1872 and 1908 it was known as Station Mill and run by Fred Bannister. Rollers were installed in 1885. The mill closed in 1910.

The steam driven Albion flour mill was built next to the canal in 1906 and is still in operation today.

Albion Mills under construction in 1906



Albion Mills on Eastgate, about 1910



Smith's Albion Mill in 2008

## Coal Mining

In 1854 the Duke of Newcastle sank a test bore at Shireoaks, a small hamlet of 24 cottages. Eventually in 1859 a hard seam of coal was reached. The Duke's persistence not only produced coal but won him a gold medal at the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1862 'for his perseverance and success in such a great undertaking'. Initially about 60 men were employed, rising to 600 by 1871. Housing for the new workforce began on Sandy Lane where Crown Street, Creswell Street, Prospect Place and Smethurst's Row were built. This area became known as the Building Grounds as more arable land was turned into streets of houses.

Before cutting machinery was invented the only way of digging out the coal was by hand. The longwall method was used. This involved dividing the longwall face of the seam into two-man stalls which were often worked by family groups, and fathers and sons spent hours in the cramped, dimly-lit environment, breaking coal with pick and shovel before loading it into tubs. Younger sons were haulage boys and pony drivers until they had learned enough to start work in the stalls. When the tubs were full the haulage boys transported them to the main roads, where they were coupled in threes and pulled into the main haulage by pit ponies. It was essential for ventilation that the stalls advanced together, and men from neighbouring stalls helped those that were slow.

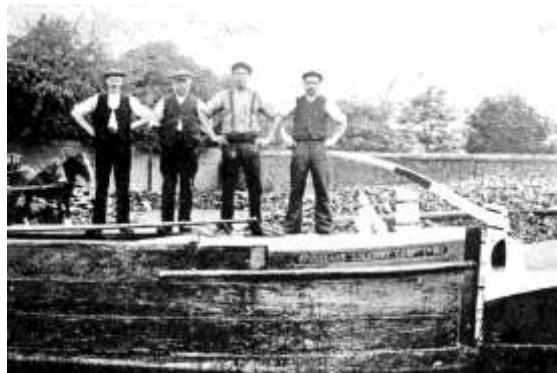


The visit of the Prince of Wales to Shireoaks Colliery  
In 1861



The railway at  
Shireoaks Colliery about 1910

A Shireoaks Colliery boat on the Chesterfield Canal about 1910. The canal was used to transport coal until 1949.



Manton Colliery, owned by the Wigan Coal & Iron Company Ltd, opened in 1898. By 1900 50% of the male workforce of Worksop worked in coal mining. This led to the expansion of housing towards the west of the town. Manton Colliery closed in 1994 with a loss of 550 jobs, the eighth pit in Bassetlaw to close since the miners' strike of 1984.



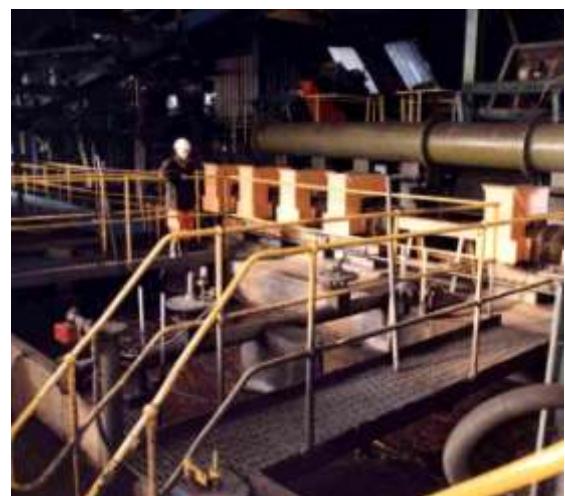
Manton Colliery about 1920



Manton Colliery about 1920



Opening of the  
pithead baths at  
Manton Colliery  
in 1932



Manton Colliery in 1960

## Other Worksop Factories

### Co-operative Wholesale Society Glass Works

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century glass was manufactured in Sandy Lane at the Co-operative Wholesale Society Glass Works which specialised in making milk bottles. The company was taken over by Rockware Glass Ltd in 1988 and closed in 2008



CWS Glassworks about 1950



### John Shaw Ltd

John Shaw Ltd of Sheffield opened in 1942 when the Sheffield factory was destroyed in an air raid. It made wire rope. Sizes ranged from 0.012 inches to 9.5 inches in diameter, the larger having a hemp core. In 1950 about 500 people worked at the wire mill. The mill is still in operation in 2008.



John Shaw's ropeworks about 1950

## Shirley Aldred Limited

Charcoal burning was a trade in Worksop in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which had probably been carried out from medieval times because of the timber available from the surrounding forests. A chemical works on Sandy Lane has been in operation since 1871 where charcoal burning has been combined with extracting wood acid and tar from timber. Shirley Aldred Limited continued production through out the 20<sup>th</sup> century, becoming Charlton-Aldred Ltd by 1991. The factory closed and was demolished in 2008.



Shirley Aldred Ltd about 1950  
before the factory expanded

## General Refractories Ltd

There were brick yards in 1851 at Haggonfields making roof and malting tiles. The Worksop Brick Company was opened in Sandy Lane in 1900. After 1911 it began to produce silica bricks, cements and furnace linings which were used in the coal mining industry. It became General Refractories in 1929. The raw materials include sand, dolomite quarried at Steetley, magnesite obtained from sea water, chrome and sulphite lye. The materials are crushed, mixed and poured into moulds and compressed under hydraulic pressure before drying in kilns. The company was merged with Hepworth Iron Company Ltd of Sheffield in 1970 and became Hepworth Plc and then also made bricks suitable for the iron and steel industry. The factory was demolished in 2008.



General Refractories Ltd about 1950

## Bicycles

Fred Hanstock began the firm of Carlton Cycles in Carlton in Lindrick in 1898. The business moved to Dock Road, Worksop in 1934. The company was taken over by Raleigh Cycles in 1960. In 1964 the building was destroyed by fire and a new factory was built on Kilton Road. At this time 300 people were employed, producing 80,000 cycles a year. The company closed in 1981.



The Ramsden Family of Carlton in Lindrick about 1910

George Vardy, a joiner, also began to make bicycles by 1891, specialising in the Dukeries models. In 1897 he moved from Bridge Place to Ryton Street.

The premises were two storeys high, 75 feet by 27 feet. The turning and fitting shop and smithy were on the ground floor where lathes and drilling machines were driven by a gas powered engine. On the first floor the bicycles were assembled. There was also an enamelling shop and a large store room.

One of the most famous owners of a cycle shop in Worksop was Charlie Parker who won many prizes for cycle racing.



Above: Charlie Parker with a display of his prizes



Right: Charlie Parker's Cycle Shop, 19 Carlton Road, Worksop. Taken in 1905.

## **Batchelors**

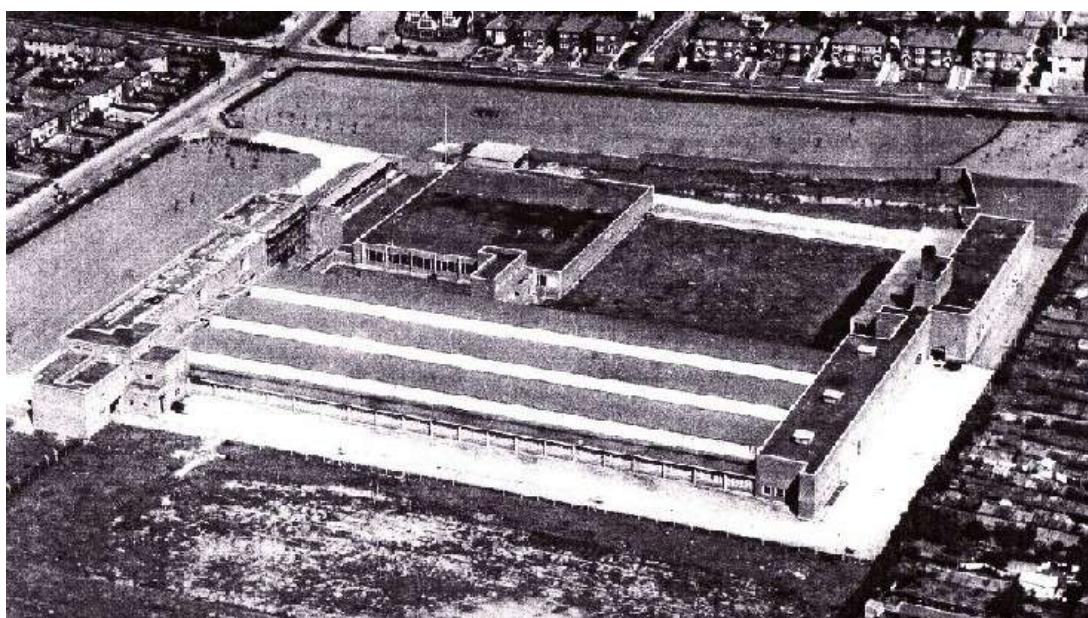
Batchelor's Peas Ltd, situated in Claylands Avenue, Gateford Road, originally produced canned and dried peas which were grown locally. By 1991 it had been taken over by Brook Bond and other products such as OXO and dried soups were also produced. It was later taken over by Unilever and lastly by Premier Foods in 2006. The canning operations closed and in 2008 the factory concentrates on dry noodles, stock cubes, dried soups and pulses.



Pea pulling in Worksop about 1910

## **Courtaulds**

The Bairnswear factory opened in 1953 in Raymoth Lane making hosiery and children's clothing. The factory was taken over by Courtaulds in the 1960s producing synthetic yarns. In the 1980's it became Meridian Knitwear closing in 2000.



Bairnswear Ltd wool spinning mill off Carlton Road in 1956