

A Dual Economy in South Yorkshire

By DAVID G. HEY

THE Hearth Tax returns for Ladyday, 1672¹ show that the South Yorkshire parish of Ecclesfield had an economy that was doubly based upon agriculture and the working of iron and steel. It was the type of community in which a large number of craftsmen combined their labour in the workshop with the cultivation of a small farm—the type that could be found in many other areas, such as the lead-mining villages of Derbyshire, or the hamlets and villages of the clothing district of the West Riding.

The parishes of South Yorkshire had economies that ranged from the purely agricultural in the east to the semi-industrial in Sheffield and Attercliffe, where even by 1672 there was a smithy to every three households. Ecclesfield lay between the two extremes, for one household in every seven or eight had its smithy. The southern part of the parish was involved in the Sheffield cutlery trade, while the northern part was the recognized centre of a flourishing nail-making craft. The cutlers were dependent upon Sheffield factors, while the nailers were organized by the Spencer Syndicate,² which mined, smelted, and slit the iron, supervised the distribution of rods and the collection of the completed nails by its nailchapmen, and finally exported them from the inland port of Bawtry. Both the nailers and cutlers were typical craftsmen of the Domestic System.

It is often assumed that this type of community was somehow inferior to a purely agricultural one. Not so: it was an undoubted advantage to have such a dual economy. In the first place, the number of people who were too poor to pay the Hearth Tax was nowhere near as high as in some other parts of the country which were solely dependent upon agriculture. The Leicestershire returns for 1670,³ for instance, give a figure of 30·57 per cent exempt for the whole county, while figures from the Devonshire returns for 1674 suggest that the number who were too poor to pay was at least a third of the total households, while in many parishes the percentage was even higher.⁴ But in Ecclesfield only 10·4 per cent of the 308 households were granted exemption, and in Sheffield the figure was only 13·1 per cent. Some inflation of the Ecclesfield

¹ West Riding County Library, Wakefield. The smithies were recorded separately as a test-case was before the courts to see whether they should be exempt from payment.

² For the organization of the Spencer Syndicate (though not the nail-trade), see A. Raistrick and E. Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Ironmasters, 1690-1750', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* ix (Old Series), 1939, pp. 168-85.

³ *V.C.H. Leicestershire*, vol. III, pp. 170-2.

⁴ Unpublished figures kindly supplied by Professor W. G. Hoskins.

figures may be necessary, as an almshouse had been built in 1638, and there must have been a few paupers living there in 1672, but other parish records show that the poor were not yet a major problem, and the almshouse was not converted into a workhouse until a hundred years after its erection. There can be no doubt that a large number of people who would have been landless poor in other areas were able to keep above the poverty line by working long hours crouched over their anvils in their smithies, hammering the metal into the shape of a nail or a knife.

But this type of economy did not narrowly escape the spectre of poverty. They were not men who desperately turned to their craft in order to make the living that their small farm could not provide. Many cutlers and nailers were more prosperous than the husbandmen, and could occasionally rank with the yeomen. Nor should we look at this economy simply from the point of view of material standards. There was (and still is) a lot to be said for it, for a dual occupation could provide a more varied and attractive way of life, with spells in the open air on the farm providing relief from the heat and sweat of the smithy.

Certainly, such a life was not considered inferior at the time. There was no social barrier between working upon the land and working at a craft. The yeomen thought it no disgrace to apprentice their younger sons as cutlers or nailers; while the gentry invested their money in mining and counted the chapmen amongst their friends. Gerard Kirk, the gentleman tenant of Cowley Manor, for instance, appraised the inventory of Nicholas Gills, a neighbouring nailchapman who died in 1736, leaving personal estate worth £1,925.

An analysis of the 1672 Hearth Tax returns shows Ecclesfield as a typical South Yorkshire parish, with a social structure which consisted of a broadly based social pyramid tapering at the top to accommodate a few resident gentry.

TABLE I
ECCLESFIELD HEARTH TAX RETURNS, 1672*

No. of poor	% of total	1 Hearth		2 Hearths		3-5 Hearths		6-9 Hearths		10+ Hearths		Total households
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
32	10.4	126	40.9	73	23.7	66	21.4	9	2.9	2	0.6	308

* The table has been constructed in the manner suggested by Professor W. G. Hoskins in *Industry, Trade and People in Exeter, 1688-1800*.

We are working upon the assumption that a man's social and economic status is broadly and generally reflected in the number of hearths in his house. Several yeomen were included in the group that had between two and five hearths, and one in every nine or ten of the same group were men who described themselves

as nailers or cutlers. Nine of these craftsmen had two hearths (exclusive of the smithy), and seven others had three.

This evidence of the prosperity of some craftsmen is amply supported by an analysis of probate inventories.¹ Although insufficient survive for gentry estates to be analysed, there is plenty of material for us to compare the yeomen and husbandmen with the nailers and cutlers. Twenty-one yeomen left inventories that are complete enough to form a good sample from all over this large parish. They are of interest in themselves as well as for comparison with the craftsmen.

In Table II the inventories have been analysed by dividing the personal estate into three classes: (1) personal goods in the rooms for relaxation and sleeping—the house, parlours, and some chambers—and including the “purse and apparel” and the “hustlement,” or odds and ends; (2) goods in the service rooms—the kitchen, buttery, pantry, cellar, and brewhouse; (3) goods associated with the farm—crops, animals, and items in farm buildings and outhouses. This division cannot be entirely accurate as some items are lumped together and others are illegible. There is also the usual problem of occasional undervaluation and obvious omissions. The total for capital in the form of bills, bonds, debts, rents, leases, etc. has been deducted from the grand total when working out the percentages, which may be inaccurate up to 2 per cent. That is enough for our purposes.²

An inventory only valued a person's personal estate, and no record was made of real estate. If we eliminate freak results by taking a median average, John Jackson of Butterthwaite (1754) emerges as the typical yeoman, as far as personal estate goes, with goods worth £128 10s. od. There are no obvious developments as the century progresses.

In nearly every case the value of the farm goods far outweighs all the possessions in the house. The median average, both in the value of the farm goods compared with other yeomen, and in the percentage of wealth invested in farming stock compared with other possessions, is Hugh Fenton of Wadsley (1697–8) with £67 14s. 2d. worth of farm goods, amounting to 68 per cent, or two-thirds of the whole. This is not the place to analyse furniture and household possessions, but it does not seem as if these yeomen were over concerned with luxurious living conditions. This ties in with the small number of hearths recorded for some of them in 1672. Nor does the picture alter in the later inventories. The general impression is of farm-houses with a working atmosphere about them.

¹ The transcripts of Crown copyright records at the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York, appear by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

² Where no inventory date is given, the date that the will passed the Surrogate at York is given in brackets.

TABLE II

YEOMEN'S INVENTORIES FOR ECCLESFIELD PARISH, 1689-1785

Name	Date	Total Estate			Bonds etc.			1. Personal	2. Service	3. Farm
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	Goods %	Rooms %	Work Goods %
William Smith	24.1.1688/9	83	7	2	47	18	0	51.4	11.4	37.1
Edward Creswick	8.6.1692	90	1	0	44	16	0	75.4	8.8	15.4
Joseph Shaw	-10.1697	115	18	2	—	—	—	34.5	1.0	64.5
Hugh Fenton	3.2.1697/8	100	3	4	—	—	—	32.0	0.5	68.0
George Booth	8.9.1707	47	8	0	—	—	—	44.9	—	66.0
Jon. Hargreaves	(Sept. 1709)	49	6	0	—	—	—	28.5	—	71.4
John Booth	10.5.1726	1789	9	1	1704	18	7	36.5	1.2	62.4
Samuel Carr	(Feb.1726/7)	275	7	10	—	—	—	15.3	3.3	81.4
Nat. Wilkinson	(Sept. 1730)	168	15	7	—	—	—	20.1	4.7	75.2
Robert Carr	(July 1731)	199	6	6	—	—	—	15.0	6.5	78.9
Jos. Machon	-11.1731	269	19	8	—	—	—	20.4	5.9	74.9
Silvanus Roberts	(Sept. 1732)	155	4	0	—	—	—	43.9	3.9	52.9
Edward Stones	-11.1732	216	13	6	—	—	—	14.7	0.4	84.8
John Morehouse	5.6.1741	57	8	6	—	—	—	29.3	1.7	70.1
Thos. Cutbert	16.2.1743/4	77	1	0	—	—	—	35.1	3.9	59.9
John Jackson	3.4.1754	128	10	0	—	—	—	27.3	3.1	69.5
Wm. Wilkinson	15.6.1758	166	14	6	—	—	—	29.9	8.4	62.3
Jos. Dearden	16.1.1769	55	18	6	—	—	—	69.6	7.1	24.5
Barnard Royston	29.8.1781	93	17	0	80	0	0	57.1	6.0	35.7
Robert Johnson	5.12.1781	140	0	0	65	0	0	16.0	—	82.7
John Wingfield	(May 1785)	197	17	6	71	0	0	30.7	0.4	69.2

As Hugh Fenton is also only two below the median average for the total personal estate, we may quote his inventory in full as being that of a typical Ecclesfield yeoman.

INVENTORY OF HUGH FENTON OF WADSLEY, YEOMAN, 1697/8

"His purse and Apparrell: £5. 0. 0.

In the Dwelling house: 1 Range, 1 Recking, a pair of tongs, 1 tost Iron, frying pan, 1 Spitt & a pair of Racks 6.8, 3 brasse potts, 3 brass Skellets £1. 0. 0., 2 brasse panns £1. 4. 0., 1 Iron pot & pot hookes 3.0, 1 Long table & 2 formes 10.0, 3 Seild Chaires 3 buffetts 5.0, 1 Cubbord, £1.0.0.

Certaine pewter & 2 brass Candlesticks 12.0., Certain Quishions & Woollen yarn 8.0.

In the old parlour: 1 Seild bed & furniture £5.0.0., 1 Cupboard & certaine bedding in it £1.10.0., 1 bed hilling, 2 large boulsters & 2 pillowes, 2 pair of Sheets & table linnen £3.12.0, 1 long table & 2 little formes 10.0., 1 () table & 2 Chaires 10.0.

In the new parlor: 2 Chests 1 Wool Wheele & a line wheele 10.0.

In the Middle parlor: 1 Meal Ark & certain Oat meal in it £1.6.8., 1 little table & certaine Wooden Vessels 12.0., Certaine pewter, a lanthorn & a Ringe 8.4., a little Ark & a tresle a () credles & trenchers 2.6.

In the Buttery: 2 tables, 4 boards, 1 fleshkitt, certaine Earthen Vessells, 1 pair of weights 10.0.

In the Chamber over the house: 1 Seild bed & furniture £1.5.0., 1 little table & a little Ark 4.0.

In the Chamber over the parlor: 1 Seild bed & furniture to it £2.0.0., 1 Seild bed & a fether bed £1.10.0., 1 Chest & 1 Ark 10.0., Certaine Wool 6.0., 1 Window Cloath, 7 Sacks, 1 Cloath bagg & 2 baggs 10.0., 1 press & 1 great Chest £1.0.0.

In the Chamber over ye new parlor: 1 Chest 4.0., 1 parcell of Bottams £10.0.0.

In the Workhouse: Certain Working tooles & Wood there £2.0.0.

In the Smithy: Certaine Cowper ware there £5.0.0.

In the Stable: 2 Old Mares, Sadles, & other gaires £3.0.0.

In the Barne: Certaine Oates thrasht & unthrashed £5.0.0., Certaine hay £2.10.0.

A Stack of hay in the fould £2.10.0., a pease Stack £1.0.0.

In the Whainehouse: 2 Whaines, 2 Carts, 1 plow & Irons, £2.0.0.

In the Fould: 2 Bullocks, 3 Cowes £21.10.0. 4 Calves £4.0.0., 2 Swines £1.10.0. 10 Sheep £2.0.0., Manure in the fould £1.5.0., 12 horse loads of lime 12.0.

Corne Sowne on the ground £1.16.6., 1 Kimmell at Bennetts 10.0., 2 horse harrowes 6.8., Clover Seed Sown on the ground 16.0., 1 Gavelock 3.0., Certaine Pullen with forkes, Spades, stone troughs, Sives, Scuttles, forkes and all other things & hustlements in and about the house and not before prised 5.0.

TOTAL: £100.3.4.”

Just below the yeomen in the social scale came the husbandmen. The distinction between the two was not a hard-and-fast one; a few husbandmen were more wealthy than the average yeoman, but generally they were not as prosperous. If we had figures for real estate the distinction might be clearer. Many husbandmen, like Joseph Machen of Hunter House, leased their land from the Duke of Norfolk, the absentee lord of the manor. Inventories have survived in suitable form for fifteen ‘husbandmen’ and eight ‘farmers’.¹

The median average for total personal estate is the last one, Jeremiah Downing of Wadsley (1787), with £91 19s. 6d. The farm goods of the husbandmen accounted for an even greater proportion of the total estate than did those of the yeomen. Jeremiah Downing is again the median average with 72.7 per cent invested in farming, so his inventory is given in full.

INVENTORY OF JEREMIAH DOWNING OF WADSLEY, HUSBANDMAN, 1787

“House: Clock, 1 Gun, 18.0, Dresser 5.0, Pewter & Case 10.6, a Table 5.0, 2 Cuberts, fender, Grate, 5.0, Squab, 1 Range 5.0, 6 Chairs, Poker & Tongs, 10.6.

Parlour: 1 Bed, 2 Tables, 6 Chairs, 2 Couberts, £2.2.0, 1 Silver Pint, 6 Tea Spoons, Silver £1.10.0, 1 Range & Hand Board 3.0.

Chambers: 4 Beds & Bedings £2.17.0, 1 Close Press, 1 Chist of Drawers, £1.1.0, 2 Chists, 1 Glass 10/6.

Kitchin: 2 Tubs, 1 Kit, 1 Churn 10.0, 2 Pots, set, Blows, Dishes, etc. 12.0.

Laith, Stable & Outhousing: Corn to Thrash £10.10.0, Hay £10.10.0, a Stack of Hay £5.5.0, 6 Horses £9.0.0., 3 Cows £12.12.0.

¹ Marked ‘H’ or ‘F’.

Fold: 1 Waggon 1 pair of Cuts £5.12.0, 1 Cart £1.1.0, 1 Plow Harrow 10.0, Horwe Gears etc. 10.0.

Cloths and Apparel: £8.5.0.

Credit: £17.0.0.

Appraised: Titus Kent."

TABLE III
HUSBANDMEN'S INVENTORIES FOR ECCLESFIELD PARISH, 1696-1787

Name	Date	Total Estate			Bonds etc.			1. Personal	2. Service	3. Farm
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	Goods %	Rooms %	Work Goods %
John Wood	H 10.12.1696	180	12	8	8	0	0	23.1	8.7	66.5
John Nightingale	H 3.6.1697	151	12	2	58	0	0	36.2	4.2	59.6
Hy. Wilkinson	H 12.10.1700	93	3	4	—	—	—	19.3	—	80.6
George Smith	H 7.12.1704	40	11	6½	Debts of 47.19.4½			26.1	1.7	73.8
Jonathan Beet	H 4.1.1704/5	137	5	0	Debts of 19.10.0			21.7	1.9	76.4
Mark Booth	H 1.12.1709	88	9	2	—	—	—	23.8	0.4	75.2
James Twybill	H 5.1.1713/4	1070	11	4	760	0	0	16.1	4.1	79.7
Wm. Cuthbert	H 25.4.1718	271	11	6	35	1	10	29.4	7.3	62.5
Jas. Staniforth	H (July 1719)	117	16	2	19	3	4	18.2	2.4	78.8
Wm. Smith	H 30.9.1727	90	1	6	—	—	—	23.3	0.7	75.5
John Carr	F 30.10.1728	358	7	11	231	3	5	30.7	13.4	55.9
Jas. Wilkinson	F 16.5.1730	64	15	2	—	—	—	29.1	16.9	53.8
John Wood	H 30.3.1733/4	90	17	2	—	—	—	28.5	4.4	67.0
John Hives	H 23.8.1751	201	19	6	—	—	—	20.3	6.0	73.7
Richard Law	F 14.1.1760	19	13	6	7	0	0	23.1	—	76.9
Wm. Goodwin	F 23.2.1760	18	12	0	—	—	—	36.8	4.7	57.9
Jos. Machen	F 19.1.1765	156	3	0	—	—	—	22.4	5.1	72.4
Wm. Domms	F 8.3.1765	238	14	5	100	0	0	15.9	0.9	81.2
John Cutbart	H 23.10.1769	73	17	11½	Debts of 17.10.10½			20.8	0.8	80.2
Thos. Cocking	F 14.3.1776	38	6	4	—	—	—	50.0	1.3	47.4
James Foster	F 4.4.1776	84	17	4	—	—	—	28.2	2.3	69.4
Joseph Carr	H 5.3.1783	62	17	6	—	—	—	34.8	8.4	55.5
Jeremiah Downing	H -1.1787	91	19	6	17	0	0	25.3	1.3	72.7

We can now return to the craftsmen to see how they compare with those who relied solely upon farming. Probate inventories have survived for fourteen nailers. (Table IV.)

The analysis clearly shows the importance of the farm. No great capital was needed to set up a workshop, but only three nailers had no farm stock at all. The median average is represented by Robert Cawood with 39.6 per cent of his personal estate involved in farming, or Thomas Parkin with 35.1 per cent. This is not as much as with those who were solely dependent upon farming, but it is still a substantial sum. Parkin's stock consisted merely of one cow; Cawood had "1½ Acres of Wheat, £3 os. od.; 2 Acres 1 Rood of Oats, £1 5s. od.; ½ Acre of Beans, 15s. od.; 4 Acres 1 Rood of Hay, £3 15s. od.; more Hay and Straw in the Laith, 10s. 6d.; Corn in the Chamber, £2 18s. od.; 2 Cows, £8 os. od.; Manure £1 1s. od." and a few tools and sacks worth 14s. 6d. Obviously, with a farm of

TABLE IV
 NAILERS' INVENTORIES FOR ECCLESFIELD PARISH, 1694-1769

Date	Name	Part of Parish	Total Personal Estate £ s. d.	Bonds, etc. £ s. d.	Personal Goods %	Farm Goods %	Smithy Tools %
12 Oct. 1694	Edward Beet	Woodseats	53 16 10	Owes 14 13 0	28.7	71.3	—
31 Jan. 1701/2	Richard Parkin	Mortomley	80 8 3	—	18.7	81.8	—
4 Sept. 1721	John Fawley	Ecclesfield	31 19 6	—	28.1	67.2	4.3
21 Dec. 1729	Jos. Walker	Stubbing House	67 17 4	—	17.6	80.9	0.7
— Mar. 1735/6	Nicholas Gills	Chapelton	1925 0 0	1740 0 0	92.4	6.4	1.1
— Mar. 1737	Samuel Booth	White Lane Head	312 11 0	235 0 0	39.0	58.4	3.3
25 Feb. 1737/8	Jos. Smith	Potter Hill	17 17 6	—	69.4	27.7	2.7
— Feb. 1737/8	Geo. Parkin	Middleton Green	14 16 6	5 0 0	100	—	—
12 Sept. 1739	Wm. Walker	Hall Wood Head	19 10 8	—	15.8	84.2	0.1
— Sept. 1743	Thos. Parkin	Mortomley Lane End	18 4 0	11 12 6	64.3	35.1	—
— May 1744	Robt. Cawood	Ecclesfield	92 16 11	35 0 0	58.5	39.6	1.7
3 Sept. 1750	Thos. Walker	Hallfield Head	17 7 8	5 5 0	68.2	21.5	9.5
25 Oct. 1750	John Senior	Chapelton	27 11 8	—	100	—	—
28 Oct. 1769	John Booth	Grennowoodhead	34 0 4	23 10 0	100	—	—

this size, nailmaking could not be a full-time occupation but was a seasonal industry. According to William Murgatroyd,¹ the clerk at Wortley Forge, which supplied most of the rod iron, the men worked from March to August on making clasp nails for London. During the harvest nailmaking stopped, but then during the autumn flat points were made for Virginia until Martinmas, then sharp points were made for the Leeward Isles and Jamaica until it was time to till the soil again.

An analysis of the personal estate of twenty-nine cutlers reveals much the same pattern. (Table V.)

The median average for the total personal estate was valued at £35 12s. od., which almost matches the £31 19s. 6d. and £34 os. 4d. of the two typical nailers. As with the nailers, most of the cutlers were also farmers, with a median average of 39.2 per cent of personal estate involved in farming, matching the 35.1 per cent or 39.6 per cent of the nailers. The cutlers and nailmakers had very similar occupations and only the geographical position of the village or hamlet determined the branch in which they worked.

The value of the tools and goods in the cutlers' smithies provides the only contrast with the nailers, who often did not bother to record them in their inventories, or who paid scant attention to them. The most valuable only amounted to £2 10s. od. and they belonged to a nailchapman. The median average was less than 1 per cent. But the cutlers often listed their tools in great detail and the median average was 13.3 per cent of the total estate, or £5 os. od. in value.

The median average for cutlers' personal estate was Andrew Revill. His inventory is typical of the ones that survive, though no doubt the poorest nailers and cutlers left no such records.

INVENTORY OF ANDREW REVILL OF ECCLESFIELD PARISH, CUTLER, 4 JULY, 1751

"Purse & Apparel: £1.0.0.

Kitchin: Range Reckonhook toasting fork and other small things 5.0, A Clock, 9 Chairs, a Table, a Dresser 17.0, a pewther Warming pan £1.0.0.

Parlour: 8 Chairs a Table 5.0., Bed and certaine Beding £1.1.0

Buttery: 3 Barrills a Churn 2.6.

Near Chamber: 2 half headed Beds and 2 Ceild Beds £1.5.0., 2 Chests 4.0.

Far Chamber: 2 Beds and Certaine Beding 15.0., an Ark and a Chest 5.0.

Brewhouse: 3 Iron Pots 7.6., a Tub 2 Kitts flasket 4.0.

Lathe: Sertaine Horns £1.10.0., & some Hay £2.0.0.

Smithey: a pair of Bellows 10.0., an anvell and Stock Coultrough £1.10.0. a Vice, 2 pair of presses £1.1.0.

¹ G. G. Hopkinson, 'The Charcoal Iron Industry in the Sheffield Region, 1500-1775', *Hunter Archaeological Society Trans.*, VIII, 1963, p. 150.

TABLE V
CUTLERS' INVENTORIES FOR ECCLESFIELD PARISH, 1692-1789

Date	Name	Part of Parish	Total Personal Estate £ s. d.	Bonds, etc. £ s. d.	Personal Goods %	Farm Goods %	Smithy Tools %
30.11.1692	Richard Milner	Wincobank	103 19 0	26 0 0	40.0	52.6	8.1
18.11.1693	John Parkin	Southey	39 5 4	—	63.3	28.2	8.6
3.1.1693/4	Leonard Coumbe	Shiregreen	170 1 8	47 1 0	24.0	70.8	5.1
6.8.1697	Wm. Smith	Bellhouse	82 8 1	—	41.4	45.1	13.8
16.1.1702/3	Jonathan Shaw	Wadsley Br.	18 5 1	6 18 0	63.5	36.3	0.1
5.8.1703	Jos. Hobson	Wadsley	2 2 6	—	100.0	—	—
8.5.1713	Jno. Staniforth	Owlerton	25 14 0	—	51.1	39.2	8.6
24.11.1713	Jos. Eller	Wadsley Br.	39 2 2	2 0 0	10.1	73.0	17.0
20.1.1713/4	Henry Shaw	Wadsley	31 3 0	7 0 0	46.6	42.7	10.8
12.12.1726	Thos. Eyre	Grenoside	18 4 6	—	40.3	52.8	6.4
30.1.1728/9	Nathan Staniforth	Owlerton	11 15 6	—	38.8	45.8	13.3
Sep. 1730	James Holmes	Ecclesfield	30 4 2	—	66.6	34.5	—
April 1733	Jno. Trickett	Bellhouse	106 9 8	50 15 2	38.5	43.0	18.2
Feb. 1734/5	Rbt Matthewman	Wadsley	9 3 0	—	77.7	—	22.2
14.4.1735	Wm. Hawkesworth	Longley	130 2 2	48 0 0	43.3	10.3	46.4
30.5.1740	Edward Taylor	Doe Royd	278 6 10	200 18 4	61.7	18.4	20.4
13.6.1740	Jos. Millington	Wadsley	75 9 1½	10 0 0	47.7	34.9	18.0
16.2.1743/4	Josh. Hoyal	Wadsley	17 18 0	5 0 0	32.3	18.0	48.8
13.4.1744	Jno. Spencer	Ecclesfield	18 18 6	13 10 0	37.0	55.5	7.0
4.5.1745	Lee Creswell	Wadsley	8 11 0	—	61.1	—	38.8
(Jan. 1747/8)	Wm. Bennett	Wadsley	38 17 3	—	68.2	20.5	10.9
19.7.1750	John Hobson	Wadsley	39 17 6	—	35.9	48.8	15.0
4.7.1751	Andrew Revill	Wadsley?	35 12 0	—	22.2	30.9	46.6
23.8.1758	Jno. Parkin	Southey	28 5 0	—	36.4	39.3	25.0
3.4.1761	Sam Fowler	Wincobank	108 14 6	—	56.5	39.5	3.7
(July 1762)	Joseph Hobson	Wadsley	26 11 1	—	56.3	—	43.5
(Dec. 1776)	Joseph Hobson	Wadsley	153 0 7	100 6 10	19.3	71.9	9.4
26.3.1784	Wm. Mathewman	Wadsley	21 1 7	—	16.9	15.2	68.1
21.10.1789	Joseph Hobson	Owlerton	58 19 5	—	21.2	69.2	7.9

New Smithey: 2 pair of Bellows £3.0.0., 2 Anvills, 2 Stocks, 2 Coultroughs £5.0.0., 4 Vices, 1 Pressing Vice, 6 pair of Presses £2.10.0., 7 Hammers Cole Spade 8.0. 2 Cows and a Horse £8.0.0., 2 pigs £1.0.0.

Certain Huslement 5.0.

Total £35.12.0.

Phillip Tompson, Richard Carr, Isaac Slack."

Ecclesfield parish contained numerous other craftsmen, and inventories have survived for carpenters and joiners, masons, tailors, blacksmiths, cordwainers and shoemakers, turners, cooper, button makers, clothiers, and so on. Occasionally, a wheelwright like Joseph Lister of Creswick Greave (1735-6) or a carpenter such as Thomas Hobson of Burncross stand out, with personal estate totalling £190 6s. 4d. and £107 8s. od., respectively, but the majority were much poorer men who lived at a lower standard than most cutlers and nailers. The median average for nine craftsmen working with wood is only £19 2s. 6d., which compares with the £19 6s. od. median for five tailors and £18 5s. 10d. for five masons. Of these nineteen craftsmen only three had no farm stock, and the total wealth usually depended upon the size of the farm. Joseph Lister heads the list with £81 14s. 4d. of his estate involved in farming: the median average for all nineteen being £6 8s. 6d. worth of farm stock, i.e. about a third of all the goods.

But these craftsmen would also be found in the 'purely agricultural' type of economy. It is the nailers and cutlers who stand out as a distinctive group, and it was they who determined which way the economy was going to develop in the eighteenth century. The parish registers provide some interesting figures about population growth during this period.¹ Other records confirm this pattern of growth. The Hearth Tax returns listed 308 households in 1672, suggesting a population of about 1,244.² In 1743 the vicar reported at Archbishop Herring's Visitation³ that there were about 560 families in the parish, giving a total of about 2,262. By 1801, the year of the first official census, this had risen to 5,114, and fifty years later it had reached 10,005. By this time the population had increased by roughly eight times since 1672.

TABLE VI
ECCLESFIELD PARISH REGISTERS, 1670-1810

10 years ending	1670	1680	1690	1700	1710	1720	1730	1740	1750	1760	1770	1780	1790	1800	1810
Baptisms	676	647	730	684	668	732	852	907	999	1203	1347	1337	1611	1632	1726
Burials	422	447	626	640	566	535	681	547	681	702	921	890	1082	1182	1273

¹ The figures are taken from J. Eastwood, *History of the Parish of Ecclesfield*, 1862, p. 23.

² Using the multiplier of 4.04 suggested by D. V. Glass, *Population Studies*, III (4), pp. 338-74.

³ Yorkshire Archaeological Soc. Rec. Ser., LXXI.

Now, this, of course, was happening all over the country, but it seems to have started rather earlier in Ecclesfield than in most other places. The 'take-off' period seems to have been *c.* 1720 when a spurt in baptisms was not checked by a similar rise in deaths (as had usually happened before) until this new 'bulge generation' began to die off. Why should this have happened?

One can talk in general terms about increased agricultural production and medical improvements prolonging the expectation of life. This happened on a national scale, and no doubt Ecclesfield benefited from this. But apart from the introduction of the Rotherham plough, the area was far from being amongst the pioneers of new farming methods until the Marquis of Rockingham enthusiastically championed progressive ideas later in the century. In 1769 Arthur Young visited Ecclesfield and found little to enthuse over, but much to dismay him. "This is very bad husbandry," was his comment on the traditional crop rotations of wheat, clover, wheat, fallow; and wheat, oats, fallow.¹ It is unlikely that agriculture produced the conditions whereby earlier marriages became possible: it is to the other part of the dual economy that we must turn.

The nail trade was certainly expanding during the early years of the eighteenth century. The geographical location of the smithies in 1672 suggests that not more than twenty-four of them could have been used for nailmaking.² By 1707 there were thirty-seven nailers owning forty-two hearths between them,³ with several new names recorded. Chances of employment were attracting immigrants and boosting the native population.

But the main stimulus for the population rise came from within the existing community. In the parish chest is a most revealing document that was drawn up in 1733 when the nailers of South Yorkshire gathered at Ecclesfield to try to enforce the old apprenticeship regulations.⁴ One hundred and ninety-five signatures were eventually attached to the agreement, which complained of apprentices leaving after only two years' service and setting up as masters themselves. This meant that they "do frequently marry very young and inconsiderately and by that means have often a great charge of children to maintain before they scarce know how to maintain themselves." The nailers were solely concerned with the flooding of the market, for this was "very inconvenient and unprofitable to us," and the agreement seems to have had some sort of official backing from the Spencer Syndicate, for the leading organizer was in charge of the export side of their business at Bawtry. But for our present purposes, it is a most useful piece of evidence on the state of the economy.

¹ A. Young, *A Tour through the North of England*, I, pp. 136-9.

² The Hearth Tax returns are divided into the four quarters of the parish. Nailmaking was concentrated in the Grenofirth and Ecclesfield quarters. Six of the Ecclesfield smithies belonged to cutlers from Shiregreen, leaving a total of twenty-four.

³ *An Old Ecclesfield Diary*, ed. Winder, Sheffield, 1921, pp. 9-10.

⁴ Transcribed by R. Butterworth, *Hunter Archaeological Soc. Trans.*, II, 1924, pp. 114-19.

The seven-year apprenticeship had been an effective check to early marriages in the days when it could be imposed. Now, many apprentices were not staying their full term as there was plenty of opportunity of flourishing on their own, and little capital was needed to start up as a master. Earlier marriages meant more children: the static death rate implies that no disease or food shortage kept numbers down; and so more children grew up to become parents themselves. The cumulative effect was a geometrical increase in the population.

It would be interesting to find out whether other areas which were in the vanguard of the Industrial Revolution also experienced this early population rise through having a sound dual economy. Once the rise had started, the surplus labour it provided could be channelled off into the new industries, which provided the means of sustenance to maintain the growth. Professor W. H. B. Court has long since stressed the fundamental importance of the anonymous masses in getting the Industrial Revolution off the ground, and, writing about the West Midlands nailing industry, he says, "It would be impossible to understand the industrial evolution of the district, without assigning to this apparently trivial and uninteresting occupation a high place as one of the factors making for change."¹ The same is true of Ecclesfield. And just as the pioneers of industrialization in other areas usually came from a craft background, so it was here. The Walkers were typical nailer-farmers, and their new steel works at Masborough was financed by John Booth, the leading nail-chapman for the Spencer Syndicate. The iron and steel side of the dual economy was soon to become the dominant one.

¹ W. H. B. Court, *The Rise of the Midland Industries, 1600-1838*, Oxford, 1953, p. 100.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS *continued from page 107.*

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