

Part 2

Bygone Businesses

- 1. The Butcher, The Baker and ...**
- 2. From Blacksmith to Hardware Store;
Farrier, Wheelwright, Carpenter**
- 3. Cobbler, Draper and Glover**
- 4. Financial Institutions – the Banks**
- 5. Grocer Stores and General Post Office**
- 6. Quarrying – main C19 village industry**
- 7. Social Club to Village Hall:
celebrations and fun activities**

B is for Butcher

One butcher, one baker (and several visiting bakers' vans) but where was a candlestick-maker? (Instead, *Eggy Cabble* supplied lamps, paraffin etc from his horse-and-cart delivery business, run from his ironmongery shop in High Street, near the cross-roads.)



(photo courtesy of Methodist Chapel Centenary display)

This picture (of the Frampton family?) was taken outside the **Butchers**, certainly before the days of Health and Safety (!) as meat was exposed to the road dust and any passing person or animal. Probably, few suffered...

A Butcher first operated out of what is now *Bank House* (before Nat West took it over). In the early part of the century it was owned by *Framptons*, *Loveridges*, then *Bill Griffen*.

The business thrived: it employed other skilled butchers, such as *Harry Butt* who also worked as slaughter man in a building at the back. Later, *George Sharp* worked there and helped prepare customers' cuts which were then delivered by pedal cycle and later by van.

Conveniently nearby was the Sutton's piggery.

Marwood Brown remembers: *In the mid-'30s, I earned a grand 2 shillings every Saturday for doing the deliveries, by peddling to each customer's house to hand out the orders. On the front of the bike was the traditional large, rectangular metal frame to hold the basket of deliveries. The old bikes were very heavy - especially going uphill !*

He was very jealous when, later, his younger brother earned half-a-crown (two shillings and sixpence in old money!). It was a good Saturday job for a school boy.

After the war, Trevor Cook recalls: *I could get 5/- for the morning and if you stayed on till the afternoon to help scrub down it was possible to double that!*

The butchery business was later bought by *Sinclairs*. A butcher was still working there till 2004, although in latter years the 'butchery' section became a small counter at the back of the general store. An extension in the front was added, but the original slaughter area with side access still stands.

The whole shop was renamed and is now known as **Keinton Stores** which continues to thrive. It again stocks local meats, this time from Home Farm in Kingweston.

Census returns show:

1841 there was one butcher, a Charles Rowland then aged 40.

1881 the butcher is James Pike aged 66, from E Pennard.

1894 Uriah Frampton took over as the only village butcher

Many families kept their own pig in the garden and probably helped each other with the killing, salting and smoking.

And Baker:

The photo below shows the bakery as part of the structure of Three Old Castles Inn, in the '30s, when *Harry Preston* (in the white suit) owned the bakery from 1936-56. He is flanked by *Reg Llewelyn, Reg Lukens, Alec Cook and Mrs Preston*.

The bakery was extended in '42. Mr Preston lived opposite in (currently) *Beggar's Roost*, where he later lodged his assistants while he moved to *Castle House*, next to the bakery. Later, he had new motorised vans to deliver fresh baked bread daily to the surrounding villages.



(Photo from Trevor Cook)

John and Jean Allen arrived in the village in 1952 and worked for Preston for four years before taking over the business.

Below is the updated fleet of vans which took deliveries house to house in many villages, from Butleigh in the north, to the Cadburys and Babcary in the south, from Cary to Somerton, also supplying the shops in those areas as well as Millfield School and fulfilling orders for other specific functions.

It was a very competitive market as other bakeries were also doing deliveries, including Chubbs of Street, the Bakery at Charlton and at Lovington, Furze in Somerton and, also, the Co-op from Street. Keinton was the great survivor – it must have been the quality of the bread!



Four modern vans owned by Allen's in the '60s

Surprisingly, no baker is listed in the 1841 census – perhaps many housewives baked at home.

In 1859 Trade Directory

William Haker is master baker, from Somerton till '81 aged 62, with Henry House 19 and Clement Brooks 15 as assistants.

In 1891 James Batt, aged 39 from Houghton, Hants living at Castle Ho owned the bakery - employing Fred Ford 22, of Hetch Wilt's assis. : also Fred Nicholson 16 yrs. from E. Lydford, plus two boys Will Jones 14 (London) and Alf Locke only 13 years from Somerton.

Keinton bakery has great continuity in its bakers - James Batt, Harry Preston and John Allen each served more than 30years.

When the Allens took over, the dough was still made with water pumped from a well at the bottom of the rear orchard, or, in dry summers, shared from the Preston's well next door. Mains tap water didn't arrive in Keinton till the late 60s.

The ovens were still coke-fired, though oil-fired ones were soon installed.

Bread-making changed a great deal as mechanization increased and new strains of wheat were available.

John Allen remembers: *With coke ovens, there was stoking to be done at night and slow dough to be prepared, using the stronger Canadian wheat. By the late '60s new mixing machines enabled quick doughs to be prepared with flours now grown in Britain. Even so the mixing took 8-10 mins and used 15 gallons of water to a sack of flour – while the supermarkets eked out dough with 18 gallons of flour to the sack (all mixed in just one minute!): it was wetter and when baked, lighter, so more loaves could be made per sack. Sacks were still made of quality cotton and were often re-cycled into aprons or even pillow cases.*

Son *Jonathon Allen* took over the business in the '90s and...



...using new electric ovens.

Some housewives baked their own, in small ovens in the recess of an old fireplace. How many village homes, now, have a bread oven (often blocked off) in a traditional fireplace?

John Allen also recalls: *Many housewives didn't have large enough ovens for the Christmas roast. I used to cook up to 70 turkeys, geese and chickens on Christmas morning. All done by 1 o'clock! And I never muddled them up...*

We also did whole pig roasts for summer B-B-Qs. A special pan was made for the job and we'd cook the pig then it would be spitted at the grounds where the special occasion was held.

One good turn deserves another... after moving to Keinton from nearby Chilthorne, local gypsies would often drop in to see John out of respect for his blacksmith father - who shod their horses in return for help with herbal treatments not only for horses but for neighbours as well.

Sadly there was a severe fire in the bakery in the '90s, so re-building and re-equipping - with electric ovens - was necessary.

After running the bakery from 1956-94 the Allen family sold up to our very own 'Elvis' alias *Tim Basset*. In addition to the traditional items, fresh sandwiches, pies and pasties heated in a micro and the installation of a coffee machine served passing trade as well as village needs.

From '07 *Sebastian* took over but, reluctantly, the Keinton Bakery finally closed in the recession, 2008.



Exterior, 2008

B is also for Blacksmith

Once upon a time there was a blacksmith's forge. Every village needed one. Since *Weyland* the smithy of the Viking gods (and *Vulcan* the Roman god before him) any smith working in a noisy forge using black metals and hell-fires must always have seemed mysterious and awe-inspiring, the very stuff of legends perhaps.

But *Stan Colmer*, the last blacksmith in Keinton was no fearsome character. With fewer working horses need shoe-ing and the general decline in the need for such skills, he opened a **Hardware** shop and, like his successor *Mr Silk*, was always known to have what you wanted! This enterprise, also closed - on 12th September, 1995.



(photo courtesy John Matthews)

Blacksmiths also worked as **Farriers** – as at the village cross-roads. Scattered around the ‘forge-shed’ grounds there are dozens of horse-shoes and cast off pieces of metal. The work of the **Smithy** and the **Farrier** often overlapped. As children, present villagers can remember going to the Blacksmith's Forge to watch horses being shod there. The smell of the shoe being applied to the horses' hoof was quite pungent!

The **Forge** still stands, now used as a shed, in the grounds of *Fairmeade*, High Street. Older beams were recycled in the construction and the date 1930 carved to record the new usage. The original flooring is still in place: huge stone shield-slabs, nearly 10 cm thick and approximately 1m by 1.5 metre. It was enough to take the weight and fierce heat of the workings of a forge and its anvil.

Blacksmiths have worked in Keinton for centuries.

In the 1841 national census George Baily is listed as the sole village blacksmith.

Fifty years later, there are more: Thomas Stark and sons Ernest and Edmund

And of course there is another reminder of working horses: a huge water trough for the horses, made of stone slabs from the nearby quarry, found in the orchards off Row Lane, now preserved at the adjacent Westfield House.



Stone horse trough

Wheel-making was a dramatic affair and local children remember watching with great interest.

Marwood Brown remembers in the '30s and 40s:-
First, the wheelwright made a large wooden wheel and spokes. This was placed on a huge stone wheel of the same size, usually embedded in the ground.

In the forge, the farrier would have prepared the metal rim to surround and 'bond' the wooden wheel to give it extra strength and durability. It was a tricky business! Hot metal touching dry wood could cause the wood to smoulder. So there was lots of water to splash about to cool the wood and shrink the metal, so as to get a tight fit on the wheel!

The photo (below left), shows a demonstration of a 'bonding process' when an iron ring was placed around the wooden wheel for strength.



Left, is the forge workshop at the corner of Combe Hill Rd /Castle St. as it was when *Joseph and son Eddy Paul* worked in the carpenter's shop next to the wheelwright's forge.

(photo from Mrs Barbara Adams, nee Paul)



The corner of Castle Street and Coombe Hill (shown in the photo above) was the site of the **Farrier**, remembered in the name of the bungalow on the site.

Next to it was **Wheelwright Jo Paul** (married to *Ida Grant*) and their son **Eddy** (married to *May Pullinger*, from Dorset then Charlton Mackerel, where her father worked for the *Thrings* family, the 'Lords of the Manor'). Eddy was also a carpenter, cart-maker and coffin-maker with a wry sense of humour. In this period, carts were often highly decorated, colourful and a real work of art! Eddy worked closely with stoneworker *Harry Cabble* on many building jobs in the village.

The photo can be contrasted with the watercolour below (by Richard Smith, courtesy of *Mr and Mrs Stocker*) which shows the forge workshop at the corner of Combe Hill Rd /Castle St. with Joseph and son, Eddie Paul.



The stone wheel for bonding can be clearly seen to the left. Rumour has it that when the workshop was closed, it was removed to Charlton.

One of Eddy's many tasks was as coffin-maker and undertaker. Below, wearing a sober suit and bowler hat, Eddy and May pose outside their home, *Myrtle Cottage* (still standing, near the cross-roads, on Castle Street) just behind their workshop. In 1966, business ended, as both children had married and moved away.



(photo, courtesy of *Mrs Barbara Adams, nee Paul*)

Myrtle Cottage remains to this day, built at right-angles to the High Street – as were many of the earlier village homes.

The modern positioning seems to favour a front-on rather than side-on approach. Such positioning seems to have nothing to do with the relationship to the sun - for light or warmth, but seems to have been favoured, particularly by larger homes where an adjacent yard or garden/plot may have allowed better access to the road for carts etc.

C is for Cobblers..

... the current name of a house on the corner of Row Lane and High Street. Another name, another memory. What's the story?

On the opposite side of the High Street is where *Edwin Brown* started his shoemaker and repair shop, from the 1890s (now, Jasmine Cottage). *Edwin Brown* was also an outworker for **Clarks of Street**, so, once a week he walked into Street to fetch the uppers and soles which he then, on returning home, stitched together to be exchanged for further work the following week.

His son, *Samuel James Brown* attended Keinton School and continued the business till joining the army in WWI. On his return he also set up a saddlery business in Castle Street, just a short distance from the cross-roads. He married *Ida Culling* in 1919 and traded as *S.J.Brown* in High Street, now, *Cobblers*.

Ida ran the retail outlet selling new shoes, haberdashery, toiletries, household requirements, first aid items, and small toys e.g. Matchbox toy cars and other commodities if requested. Anything to oblige! The shoe range included fashion shoes for ladies as well as working shoes for both men and women.

Sam's son *Marwood*, who watched and learned something of both trades as a young boy, remembers the work clearly:-

"Sometimes I would help mend the harness. We had to stuff the collars with felt flocking to pad it out to be comfortable for the horses who had such loads to pull. The flock got every where and caused lots of sneezing. You'd have to wear masks these days!"

As regards the shoe repairs:-

“We mended the whole range of footwear. The quarrymen had only one pair of boots and worked a 5½ day week. Often they would bring in the boots, still wet with mud, mid-day on Saturday and we would have to finish them all that evening for them to be collected and used on Monday morning. There was no working on Sundays! I used to help out by putting in the hob nails. As for prices, in the 1930s ladies shoes cost 1/6d for heels, 5/- for soles!”

Clark’ outworkers typically used workshops at home, working with their own tools and wearing protective aprons, *as in this photo from Clark’s museum*. Marwood Brown remembers his father’s workshop at the rear of the family home.



photo, Clarks Museum

Above, in keeping with many homes of this period, the long gardens for fruit and veg often contained a pig sty at the bottom and the family privy. This one (right) still stands in Row Lane, behind the house called *Cobblers*.



Strong workingmens' boots like these were also used in the lead mines..



Metal tipped toes and soles gave necessary protection



Another style of metal heels-and-sole can be seen in the example (right), dug up in a Keinton garden!

The census for 1841 lists three separate households with shoemakers identified : James Whitecombe aged 60, Thomas Coate, 56, and Isaac White aged 40.

Forty years later, there was William Lambert aged 73 living in Castle Street.

Young Will Higdon is listed as bootmaker, aged 9 from (E Pennard.) working in Queen Street

In 1891, John Webb 35 from Pitney, and Thomas Selwood 50, Kingweston worked as a shoemakers.

In '97 Edwin Brown is listed in the Trade Directory

D is for Drapers, Dressmakers and other stitchers.

A linen-draper is recorded in 1625 and a peddler in 1796.
By 1830 a linen-draper and grocer is again mentioned.
Census returns for these trades show changing trends:

*In 1841: 16 male tailors in Keinton, 3 young female
dressmakers, 1 young furrier*

*By '59 Morle Bros opened only John Dark is listed tailor, and
Mr William Chaffey, tailor, had a draper's store, Keinton Shop.*

In 1851, Benjamin Chaffrey at Keinton Shop, next to The Three Old Castles, is general Factor from Dorset, with brother *George* next door as wool stapler and *James Dix*, tailor-in-shop, from Shepton Mallet. The front continues to have extensive small glass-paned, Georgian-style bow windows.

It is still recorded as a **drapery/tailor in '91**. In the 1950s, a drapers and wool outlet is remembered. The premises later became a B+B with a café, and then a private residence.



*In '71, Mrs Dorothy Chalker opened a drapers haberdashery in
Prospect Place. High Street at the other end of the village, with
daughters Isabella and Annie*

By 1881 no tailors at all....

Why did male tailors disappear after 1881? Was it the readymade clothes at the corner drapers? Or increased competition from women workers, while the men went into higher paid jobs?

1881 6 young female dressmakers, 3 seamstresses single/widowed, and 2 plain sewers both over 70 years

1891. Jacob Walter is Draper (Keinton Shop?) while in the village 9 young women worked as dressmakers and 2 older ones as seamstresses.

In 1881, on the corner of High Street and Combe Hill Road, was a **Drapers** owned by *John Dark* whose daughter, *Georgina*, was a **machinist** (using a Singer perhaps?). In addition, *Caroline Perry* (53, from Puddimore) is listed as a 'shopkeeper', selling Berlin Wools... for decorative work.

The main **Drapers** at the crossroads, *RM Smith*, is remembered during the '20s+30s for fabric and ready-mades.

In the next decades it became *Leonard Hughs* (who, with several families, were evacuated from London at this time). The shop sold ready-made clothes, often bankrupt stock, bed-linen and other household necessities. Many travelling salesmen bought supplies here. The shop closed in the '60s.

By 1891, Draper/Milliners, Prospect Place with *Jacob Watts* + *George Masters* (later *Annie* till '35). Hats were important:

No-one went out without one! Workingmen wore flat caps and perhaps a trilby for Church occasions (with a borrowed suit for funerals or weddings), business owners might prefer bowlers. But, no-one remembers top hats in the village!

In the early '60s the **Haberdashery**, in the Prospect Place complex, became '**Babett**', run by *Mrs Barbara Cox* together with her sister-in-law, *Betty*.

Recently, in the undercroft of the Village Hall, some old Singer machines were found. These were once proudly made in the Somerset town of Shepton Mallet. One such machine was bought by the village school in 1931 and used by the older girls in their Needlecraft classes – their work was highly praised in Inspectors' reports and shown off to parents on Open Days!



Any original 'Singers', treadle or electric left in the village?

In Somerset, gloving was a very prevalent cottage industry, similar in style of operation to Clark's outwork practices, but involving women. It was such a significant part of the rural economy, the local Yeovil football team is nicknamed Glovers!

In the censusglovers are rarely mentioned!

Perhaps this was because it was part-time 'outwork' from the local factories, so maybe it didn't 'count', or perhaps women didn't declare it in the census or Trade Directories. After all, it wasn't regular work and was done in the home, by many housewives and also unmarried women. It was employment that was much needed as it brought extra income and helped to supplement the men's often meagre wages from other jobs – so it made an important contribution to the family budget.

Next to *Cobblers* (then called Rawene) *Mrs Maud Culling*, mother of *Ida Brown*, co-ordinated the gloving outworkers. Later, *Miss Doris Cook* carried on this work (from the now named *Stone Mason's Cottage*). It was a 'cottage industry'.

"Ready-cut glove backs and palms came from Yeovil, Martock and West Camel. Some were to be hand-stitched, using square-top needles, sharpened to penetrate the leather. The needles and strong cotton were usually provided. The backs had decorative stitching to complete. Some gloves were machined.

Most of the gloves were of fine leather which were later lined with fabric and completed in the factories. The worst were the 'lambies'. These were made from sheepskin with wool on the insides. They were much thicker, more difficult and slower to stitch. The wool spread itself everywhere! The delicate kid gloves were sewn by specialist workers.

Glove-making was a painstaking job needing nimble fingers and a lot of patience - especially when there was a deadline to meet! Women took a dozen gloves a week or as many as they could manage. They were paid on collection. It was just 'pin money'. Mothers put it aside for extras and were proud to be able to put money away so they could buy treats for the family....

Gloves were an important mark of social status. Funeral favours (as noted in diaries from the C18th) included the giving of hatbands to chief mourners and a plentiful distribution of gloves to other members of the community - 'shammey' for men, 'white lamb' for women. Often as many as 50 pairs were ordered from the local shopkeeper who then distributed them to the selected villagers! But this custom seems to have modified during the C19th.

It was flexible work – and very sociable!



(from Village archive)

Like hats, gloves were an essential part of outdoor clothing. At funerals, it had long been the custom for the family to present the *priest* with a pair of gloves and/or silk hat-band. Funerals were depressingly frequent in an era when disease was not well understood or treated.... Priests' wives are known to have made dresses out of the large number of their husband's collected hat-bands!

Other sources of income for women included certain female-only occupations. The Keinton census also records

1841 Jane Lamb, upholstress

1851 staw-bonnet maker and (R)mitter

1861 Lucy Chalker, stay-maker

Finally, for men - as it needed great strength

1851 Thom Gard, High Ham

1861 Will Lambert, Shepton both mattress makers

F for Financial Institutions

Somerton had banks in the '20s, but, in Keinton, *Lloyds* opened in '35 in Castle St, and *Nat West* in High Street after WW2 (in what is currently **Bank House**) on Thursday mornings. The *Nat West* cashier was officially escorted on her journeys for security! The Banks were much used by the other businesses to draw wages/ bank takings.

The photo below shows the **Lloyds** sign outside the *Griffin's* house (called **Ebenezer Cottage**), where the front room served as the Bank until about 1981 when it moved across the road to where the Hair Salon now stands.

When the current owners were renovating the house, a large niche was found, in the thickness of the front wall.
Could this have been for the safe?



(photo, courtesy of Trevor Cook)

Lloyds Bank was first to close in Dec 1991, followed by **Nat West** in Feb 1992. Since then we have plenty of choices to use banks in Somerton, Cary, Street, or Yeovil.

The two banks in the village helped the local economy.

Kath Cross remembers:

It was very convenient. I used to draw the wages from the Bank to pay the quarry workers when I kept accounts for the quarry run by Percy Cook, where my father also worked.



(photo, courtesy Trevor Cook)

Above, is **Nat West**. The bank closed at mid-day and within two hours it was stripped of all fixtures and fittings. Nothing left to remind us that it had ever existed. Vanished for ever!

Gone, but not quite forgotten, for the building is called **Bank House**. So, we can pause and think: names of buildings in the village are part of the jigsaw of past and present a constant reminder!

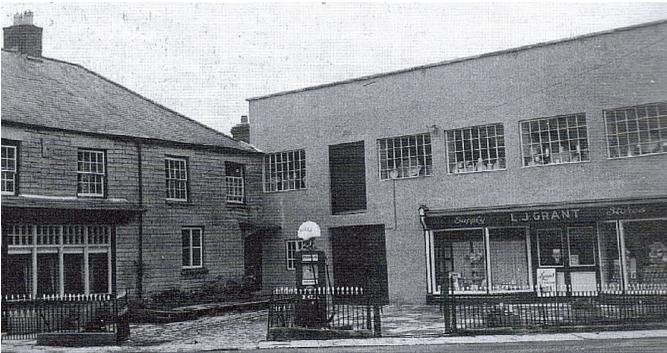
Right, is the very last customer, *Mr. Geof Dabbinet, Kingweston Postmaster*, drawing money from the very last serving cashier, *Fiona Wilson* on 27th Feb 1992,



(taken by John Matthew)

And now, G for Grocers, General Stores and GPO

There have been several such shops in different decades, at different locations around the village. The largest and longest-lasting was the grocer/butcher on the corner of Queens/Castle Street from 1937 until 1960, when it was destroyed by fire. This was first owned by *Elkins, Grant*, then *Lockwood*. At the time of WWII *Frank Miller* drove the delivery van, *Tom Bridge* and *Don Cook* were assistants. Opposite the same courtyard was one of many ‘drinking holes’ – houses which sold their own cider from the front room.



Nearby, close to the diagonally opposite corner, was *Eggie Cable's Ironmongery* which specialised in lamps, paraffin, pots+pans and anything else which could be piled onto the cart which *Eggie* drove around the nearby villages.



(‘Doing the rounds’: photo from *Roy and Megan Cable*)

Other stores in **Castle Street** included *Harry Tate's Confectionary* shop (since called Dunselin!), conveniently close to the Temperance Hall and opposite the old chapel.

Queen's Street also had businesses: a hairdresser opposite Webb's hauliers, and further down, Ridewood's farm shop

According to the census:

*In 1861 Elijah and John Chalker were working at the
Corner Shop*

By 1871 joined by Mrs Clara Chalker + John Inr

*In 1881 BIRTHIA Chalker (73 yrs) and Caleb Bailey worked
in the expanding grocery*

*By 1891, Frank Pitman and Maud were assistants, while
Oliver and Jane Chalker were now the owners.*

*In 1891 Alf Cabble is listed as **Oilman**. While William
Lukins operated as **Coal merchant**.*

Keinton also had a general *post-office* and, for much of the last 150 years, a post-mistress or -master. This was situated in a number of different homes, in Castle Street.

From 1871 we had a sub-postmaster, John Grant.

*In 1881 the census shows Robert and Jane Brooks owning a
Post Office and Sores*

Then, as now, **General Stores + Post Office** were often combined – as with *Miss Ella Brooks* who married postal worker *Mr Pattemore* – who, together, worked from their home next to the old Lloyds Bank, until the early '60s (*Danesborough*).

Further along, on the opposite side of the road, *Alf Rumler* also married his assistant, *Lillian Thomas*, who together ran **Castle Stores** which later absorbed the early Post Office.



More recently, *Adrian Miller* '82-92, and finally the *Fieldings* bought the business - which lasted till the summer of 2008 when then current owners, Geoff and Lisa, were sadly hit in the latest round of GPO cuts and closures – so, Keinton lost its own Post Office for good.



Geoff and Lisa, the last owners of the Post Office in Keinton 2008

Q for the Quarries (extracts from the Victoria County History)

Origins and Extent: Although there are hints of Roman quarrying, the first modern record of a quarry is in **1580**, on land belonging to the **Hospital of St John's**, in Wells. It was first let to one John Harrington for 21 years, and subsequently, in 1606, to Sir Thomas Neale, for 40 years.

However, in **1610** the quarries were sold, together with other lands, for a total of £5 9s 0d – which was slightly more than the whole of the rest of the estate.

At a similar period, another area of pasture came to be called *Pits Close* while, in 1639, parts of old *West Field* became known as *Little Quarpits* and *Great Quar*.

In the early C17th there were at least 2 quarries. In 1696, the death of a mason or stonecutter is recorded (who also appears to have kept an ale-house in his front room).

In addition, **field names** such as *Harpits*, *Hallstones*, *Pit Mead*, *Quar Close*, *North Stepstones* and *PolletsPits* all indicate further areas of quarrying around the village.

In the late C18th the largest quarry, *Stepstones*, lay to the north. The (*Rev*) *Dauncey* family had two further quarries in 1789 – one by the new turnpike road and the other in a common field to the south.

By 1780s the stone was sent as far as Salisbury, for internal/external paving and gravestones.

By 1791 extensive quarrying was taking place on other arable land in many fields. The stone was easily lifted in slabs up to 15 by 30 feet (approx 5 x 10 metres) which made it ideal for paving - if properly dried it was frost resistant, smooth and needed no dressing, but didn't polish well.

Impact: The 1810 Enclosure show many new quarries.
Employment patterns changed rapidly.

*1801 40 people were engaged in trade/craft
while only 18 in full-time agriculture.*

Families were starting up new enterprises and while new families moved into the village - which led to a considerable expansion of the population, local businesses and the general prosperity of the village – there were also old village family names which came to the fore:

1802 Families who had members employed as stone workers:
e.g. **Chalker, Culling, Harris**

1831 Owners included **John Dyke** (of *Three Castles Inn*) who held *Keinton Quarry* of Rev GB Tuson, as successor to his father together with a Mr Lucas.
15 families had members as stone workers.

1841 64 stone cutters, 5 stone merchants.

Cullings family *leased* 40 acres from the Rector, in the south of the parish.

1851 **John Harris** (employed 16 men + **Thomas Culling** 10, **William Culling** 8).

John Dyke described himself as headstone cutter

1861 **Robert Bailey** supplied paving to Weston Supermare Board of Health, also Salisbury town and Keinton - at 6¾d per foot.

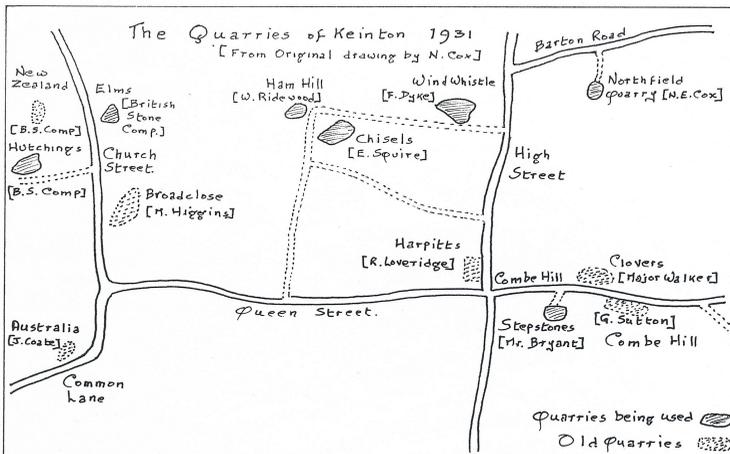
Additional merchants included **Mary Chalker**&sons, **Reynolds** bros., **John Chalker** at *The Corner Ho*, **Culling** bros. *Church St*, and **Seymour** bros.
Sutton is listed as monumental mason.

also 94 stoneworkers and marble sawyers

[’66 **Oliver Chalker** named stone *cutter*, ’72 *merchant*, and then, ’83 *Quarry owner*, in *Castle St, Nora Villa*].

1871 Further, **John Chalker** named stone merchant at *Prospect Place* (with George and Joseph).

- 1881 consolidation into 2 principal quarries:
Combe Hill and Keinton Quarry
 6 other quarry owners along both sides of Queen St.
 (now using cranes).
- 1891 14 quarries output 5,500 tons (3 largest of 1,500 owned
 by **Walter Sheppard**).
Alfred Matcham sold Shepherd Matcham's Quarry by
 churchyard (formerly Caffrey's).
- 1901 about 120 men involved in quarries as owners, cutters,
 carters, hauliers, apprentices.
 Owners continue e.g. **Silas Bailey Westfield Ho**,
O Chalker, Brooks, Dyke; George Cox mon.mason.
- Outside interests: British Stone Co, **James Cox Yeovil depot**,
 1907 *Hardstones* on High Street closed...
 1910 ... becomes *United Stone Firm* (5 Qu + limekiln).
 1914 only 3 businesses: many pits now dumps(e.g.for Clarks)
 1939 only **Cox** remained as owners, also with business as
monumental masons.
- 1945 *Lake-View Qu* between school/current Village Hall,
 owner **Pearce** -> **Nigel Cox**



Map of Quarries drawn by Colin Myles-Hook

The quarries and the 'stonemen'...

In the late C19th Keinton had up to 18 quarries and over half the working population of the village was employed in the quarries in a variety of jobs – from labourers, stone cutters, carters, merchants, managers and owners.

Mr Colin Myles-Hook reported Maurice Tincknell's inter-war description: *Quarrying was hard. First, the ground had to be cleared before any stone could be got out of the ground. After the Great War men were paid 1/- (3p) for clearing each 'score' (a score was a trench about 6 metres long x ½ metre wide x ½ metre deep). It was heavy work, done manually with a pick and shovel. Such labourers would earn up to 15/- (45p) a week.*

In C20th while some quarries remained in the hands of local families larger organisations, like the London-based *British Stone Company*, also had a stake in quarries around Keinton.



Carting the stone out for distribution by rail....

All work in the quarries was very hard and not well-paid. Kath Cross remembers wages were similar to agricultural labourers but without the benefits of a tithe cottage, or the perks of farm milk and occasional meat!

Kath recalls: *My father, Bob Wilcox, worked at the Chalker quarry, till about 1912, for a weekly wage of £2 or 3 (there was a bonus for lifting over a 100 tons!). It was common practice that part of the wage had to be spent on groceries from the quarry owner's shop (which was in the front room of Nora Villa, now Sheridan House on Castle Street, the Chalker home). Later there was a large grocer's at the crossroads, run by John Chalker (another branch of the family). But coal was bought from Ridewood's, an independent business in the village.*

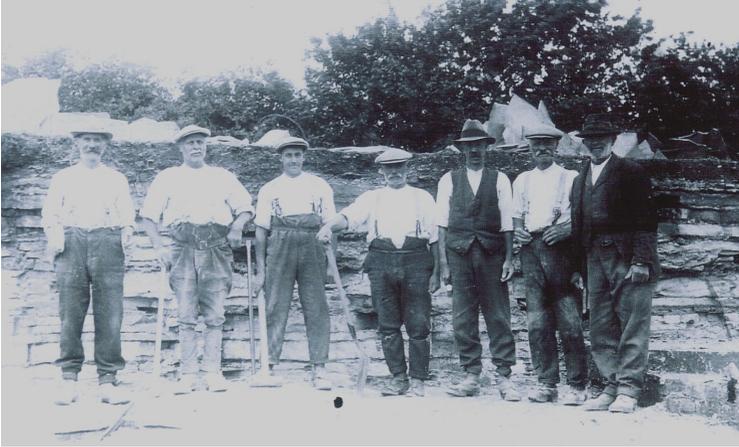
Official wages, for 1876, can be seen from this list

RESOLUTIONS
PASSED BY THE
STONE CUTTERS
OF
KEINTON & NEIGHBOURING
VILLAGES,
At a Meeting held at KEINTON,
The 5th day of July,
To come into operation the
1st DAY OF AUGUST, 1876.

1st—Hewn Stone	3½d. per foot.
Do. Steps	4d. "
2nd—Bunch Stone	2½d. "
3rd—Pointed Stone	2½d. "
Do. Steps	2½d. "
4th—Moulding Steps	1/- "
5th—6-in. Pointed Kerb	4d. "
4-in Do.	3½d. "
6th—Buddled Stone	1½d. "
Do. Street Work	1½d. "
7th—Buddled Steps	6½d. "
Do. Slabs	6d. "
Out Work, 3/- per day.	

There was a clear hierarchy in the quarry jobs: from the labourers at the bottom to hauliers, stone cutters and masons, finally foreman.

(photo, courtesy of Trevor Cook)



Already by the 1930s, most quarries were only shallow ones, lifting low grade stone for the new fashion for crazy paving and decorative garden walls. Good quality stone for house building was becoming rarer: much was used only for road building. During the war, quarries began to close as men were called up. Chance reopened one:

Janet Pearce recalls: *In the '50s, land along the north side of Church Lane was owned by me and my husband (who worked part-time at Clarks). One day he had dug up a couple of large slabs in the garden and leaned them against the wall while continuing some work. A passing stranger saw them and asked if they were for sale. It turned out that he had a centre in Surrey selling stone items, while a friend in Bridport had a haulage business, so, quarrying began! At first it was all done by hand and it was very hard work. At one time 13 men were employed there, before being sold on to one of the workers, Nigel Cox, Charlton, who still owns it, though (by 2009) it is nearly quarried out.*

Stages of general quarry's workings



Paving slabs, building stone, then crusher



Finally, rear 'wall' shows quarry infill.

Monumental masons were often a separate business though it could also be part of the wider family business, as in the *Cox family*, who operated from *Prospect House* on High Street. Their house, with its carved portico, 1910, was a show piece for their skills. On one side was the workshop and a small forge, from which the anvil was stolen, (believed to be gypsies).



(photo R courtesy Trevor Cook)

Charles Wellington, Reg Ateyo, Harry Paul, and Roy Cox.



Quarrying Families: The Chalkers.

Oliver Chalker was a remarkable man in many ways and may be considered Keinton's second 'famous son'. He was a successful quarry owner, ran a shop, was a leading Methodist and helped buy the land on which the Chapel was built. His parents, *William and Bithia*, and all 3 main branches of the family were in quarrying, while one built up the grocery business. A brief look at the bare details of the family members shows the life spans and variety of opportunities available to some villagers at that time.

Several stories are told about Oliver Chalker:

- * that he could claim to have played with the famous actor, Henry Irving, who was born and grew up in the village;
- * that he saw the last London stage coach pass through the village, between Taunton and Salisbury
- * that he led a strict, austere life and, in letters to his brothers often complained of degeneracies within the village – especially at the *Mason's Arms!*
- * that, as seen on the Chapel memorial plaque, he was a regular reader and preacher at Chapel
- * that he was immensely strong and could wheel 12½ cwt at the age of 90, and was considered the strongest man in Britain for his age!



* Oliver's family and siblings reveal many social trends

Oliver 1839-1941 *quarry owner (102 yrs)*
m 1862 *1st wife* cousin Matilda 1840 - 1867
(mother Harris, grandmother Coate)
Florence b 65 m Frank Pitman *grocer*
Owen b 67, d 67
m 1868 *2nd wife* Jane Hooper 1858 – 1943
69 Rose
73 Olivia, m ?Pollard *minister* London
75 Beatrice ?
78 Thirza m went to Denver, USA
78 Oliver *officer in Salvation Army*
81 William *sheep farmer in Australia*

Jehu 1841 *stone mason in Keinton*
married twice m 1 Matilda, m 2 Amelia
1870s child left for *Milwaukee, Wisconsin,*

Herbert 1847 left for *St Paul's Milwaukee*

Emma m Frank Pitman *grocer*

* Oliver's cousins

Harriet m cousin Joseph Chalker *stone merchant*
50 Japheth and '53 Rebeckah
54 Daniel *stone mason*

John m Eileen Moody *master grocer*
43 John *left to farm in S Africa*
45 Ellen *moved to Shepton Mallet*
48 Elizabeth *moved to Berkshire*
49 Emily m Caleb Bailey -> *S Africa*
51 Thomas, *missionary in S Africa*

George m cousin Lavinia Chalker
50 Lavinia and '52 Celia
54 Cyrus, *mason in Minneapolis*
58 Ada *to Melbourne*
60 Susana
63 John, *poet in Putney*
65 Robert, *mason in Minneapolis*
71 Mabel, *teacher at Keinton school*
73 Victor, *to S Africa, then USA*

It must have been difficult for big families to find work locally: economic depressions caused many to emigrate and take up a range of very different occupations abroad

Bithia, the mother of Oliver Chalker, was also active in the village and is believed to have started the *Band of Hope* which had an important part in village festivals. To join, members had to take a test (including the values of drinking milk) and swear to forego alcohol. But as most social events took place through church organizations, joining was very popular.



Founder Chalkers under the Band of Hope Banner

Oliver Chalker's grand-daughter, *Dorethy Pollard* (herself over 100 years old, in 2009) remembers coming back to the village, to visit, with her parents. Her main memories are of being with lots of cousins at family celebrations and Christmases!

As a minister's daughter, it meant the family had frequent moves to many different cities, as they followed postings around the Methodist circuit. Her education was therefore 'variable', but she successfully trained as a *science* teacher – rare for a *women* in the interwar period. Following a family liking for foreign travel, she found herself in East Africa during the war as assistant in a science laboratory! After de-mob she returned to teach in a variety of towns in England, from Yorkshire to London.

Quarrying Families: Squires-Willcoxes

The *Squire* family are identified as buying 44 acres in 1673 (possibly on Church Lane) and listed in the 1841 census as working in agriculture. As quarrying expanded, they adapted to the new opportunities, whilst keeping alive their farming roots.

Kath Cross (nee Willcox) remembers that *Grandma Maria Squires* had to fetch the cows for milking before her mother, *Edith* - with *Kath* - left for school each day, while *Grandpa Samuel* worked in a deep-quarry off Coombe Lane towards Charlton Adam. The stone was for houses and roads. Their sons Harry, Ernest, Albert and Walter (only 12) all went into quarrying - the youngest, Ralf, became a gardener at King Weston House.

The *Wilcox* family are also listed in 1841 and 3 sons were already working as quarry men: *Grandpa Cornelius* as a mason as was his son, *Bob Wilcox*, born 1883. In that same year Keinton Parish School (which had become a National School) was re-branded as a Board School. But, as free schooling didn't become available till 1890s and money was tight, Bob delayed attending and then left school at 12, to be apprenticed in **Chalker's quarry** in '95. However, wages were better on the new railway being built, so he left to be a plate-layer as the line advanced towards Keinton, from 1903. On the opening of the line in '07, Bob returned to the quarries as a stone-cutter till the outbreak of war. It was on this wage that he married *Edith Squires*...

Along with many other villagers, Bob joined up in 1915 but was invalided out in 1916 with a serious arm injury. In took until 1923 for the army pension to come through. However, he managed to get work driving new machinery in **Kings Quarry** (Rt of Charlton Mackerell Lane, *King Weston* land) and later, foreman.

With no insurance policies, what happens to a quarryman after a severe injury? Fortunately, there were still many different jobs available connected with the quarries. Despite his arm injury, *Bob Willcox* was able to drive the new lorries used for transporting and distributing the stone to local markets.

In the '20/30s composite stone became fashionable so there was less demand for natural stone. It was a long standing tradition in the village to try to have more than one source of income or interest to help the family through the bad times. So, while working the quarries, the family's land in Church Lane allowed them to grow a little extra food as well, to feed the growing number of mouths....

During WW2 work was available at the **Long Sutton deep quarry**, also for dry stone walling and crazy paving (fashionable in '30s). It was owned by **Bird Bros** - charabanc and haulier company in Yeovil. (There was also a charabanc company who parked their vehicles at the eastern edge of the village off Castle Street.)

Uncle Stephen's father-in-law drove the steam *Foden* 'flatbed lorry' to carry stone away.



*British Stone Company
steam vehicle*

Bob was a member of the local **Home Guard** and, having had experience of weaponry in the Great War, he was asked to house the only automatic machine gun, at home, and look after the ammunition (which he buried, for safety).

But there were some benefits from his war work. As Bob also drove the quarry lorries, the family received a petrol allowance to enable him to get to work from Keinton. This meant that he was sometimes able to fill up the motorbike and side car he had bought and, so take the family for occasional outings...

After the war, wages in the quarries rose to a grand total of £6-7 per 6-day wk. Bob's daughter, *Kath*, also worked and did accounts for *King's Quarry*, later for Percy Cooks, for whom she collected wages from *Lloyds Bank*, which still operated in Keinton. Later, Bob became foreman at the quarry till his retirement.

By this time, Bob had acquired an old Riley car and, despite his permanent arm injury, was able to drive it as the gears didn't require manual change! Kath remembers going on picnics with neighbours *Baker Preston*, who also had a Riley!

S: From old Social Club ...

Every picture tells a story! Would you have guessed that this was once the social centre of our cheery village?

After the second world war, in our land not yet 'fit for heroes', it was decided that a social club would be a welcome addition. Some ingenious local lads remembered unused huts standing woefully on Salisbury Plain. Negotiations were concluded and two huts collected and proudly re-erected on Combe Hill Lane.



It stood, regenerated and fulfilling a valuable role, with a membership of 50-60 men, offering billiards, darts, skittles and, later, fun for the whole family including whist drives, tennis leagues, jumble sales and other fund raising activities.

Post-war Social Hut committee members included *Captain Howes, Stuart Coats, Veronica Beal, Harry Cabble...* who helped to organise a vibrant programme.

Weekly Dances (at only 6d a go) were very popular, with local bands playing the current hit tunes. Keinton had its own dance band, including *Roy Cabble* on sax. *Bingo* was another favourite, on Wednesday evenings, with caller, *Lionel Atyeo* However, there was no mains water nor flushing loo – just an Elson 'bucket-in-the ground' - which most people avoided!

Community Life in Keinton

The 1953 Coronation of Elizabeth II was celebrated with street parties, bunting and champagne, but the Silver and Golden jubilees didn't generate so much interest.

During the '50-60s activities for village youth were organized at the Wednesday evening **Youth Club**, held in the old **Bible Christian Chapel** on Castle Street and run by *Mr. Arthur Clements*. *Dick Hayfield*, *Methodist Minister* also helped out, together with *Brian Sutton* as a coordinator. This took over from the usual mixed girls and boys Church youth groups, for those over 13, with table tennis, darts and singalongs. Occasional concerts and plays were also given. *Janet Pearce* revived Thursday evening *Youth Clubs* for 9-14, 14-16 yrs in the '60s with pool, darts, TV, crisps and drinks, but found no-one to take over.

Sports

For many years the main sports ground was the field behind the corner of Church Lane and Queen's Road. This was the site of the village football team – *Chaired by H.P.Salters*, where *Douglas* and '*Big Len*' *Beale* (keeper at Weymouth '57-61) were heroes. Len was a Kingweston cricketer too, with an award from Squire Dickinson.

From the period between the wars, meeting places for village events included the **Social Club Hut** on Combe Hill Road, **Church Rooms** in Chistle lane, and the **School buildings** itself as well as the **Methodist Chapel basement**. Finally, after the de-consecration of the **Bible Christian Society Hall** and the **Temperance Hall** opposite, even more space was available - but burdensome to maintain, so became private residences. This situation continued till there was a fire in a building elsewhere but similar to the Keinton Social Hut ...so, all such buildings were condemned and, in 1992, therefore demolished.

The Temperance Hall used as surgery, concert hall and all sorts.



Having had the **Social Hut** and **Church Rooms** declared ‘unfit’ it was vital to find new premises. A site was offered by local farmer *John Sutton* near the Social Hut off Combe Hill Road and by *George Chinnock* off Chistles Lane. Because of extensive landfill after quarrying on the Combe Hill site, Chistles Lane was eventually selected (where bedrock was found at around 8’) at the cost of £20,000.

A grant from the District Council and monies from the sale of the Church Rooms, kick-started a huge fund-raising effort throughout the village. These included Barn Dances in John Sutton’s barn, bridge evenings, jumble sales, auctions and all sorts. A self-build approach was adopted and slowly the new Village Hall rose from the ground. After much effort, the current village hall, built just beyond the remaining quarry off Chistles Lane, was completed in 1998.

It was opened in the same year - with a dedicated doctor’s room, bar, kitchen, toilets and large hall area (plus basement). It was soon well-used by clubs as well as by fitness and hobby groups and hosts the monthly Parish Council meeting. A few organizations preferred to continue meeting in the School or the Methodist Chapel basement.

... To the new Village Hall



Further additional facilities were added as demand – and money- allowed. By 2004, the adjacent **Skateboard Park** had been erected for the tweens and teens and, in 2008, the **Happy Tracks** toddler play area was opened – after taking only 18 months to raise all the money needed and install the equipment. This was thanks to some very hard-working mums who, to raise funds, began an annual Village Day to show case local clubs and activities.



*Happy Tracks ToddlerPark, with
Skatepark in background*

Recent **Village Day** events have included groups such as ... brownies and sea scouts.



..the school choir get ready to perform



....and kids (and adults) had a go at milking!



For the green-fingered, there was a plant competition (left) being set out by one of the Village Day founders, *Sue Graham*.



While inflatable slides (right) gave even the youngest villagers plenty to remember!

A new venture, in 2008, for older villagers, was a monthly **Lunch Club**, cooked by a stalwart team including: *Beverly Goodall, Jane Adams, Anthea Walton, Maxine Shawcross ...*

...and enjoyed by growing numbers of eager villagers especially the Christmas Special



The Hall also hosts all-day breakfast to raise money for the **Three Charities Day**, and the newly revived **Harvest Home** supper.



Other Christmas events include carols under the Christmas Tree on the High Street, followed by punch and pies in the Quarry Inn, also appreciated by...



*... Old Kentonians: John Parker, Janet Pearce,
Mary Matthews and Graham Cox!*

The current Sports Field (east end of the village) was developed after the building of the Village Hall. Thanks to *Alan Cox* and *Cllr Allen* who (literally) pursued the contract to purchase the field (driving to Wilts to get a signature from an elusive land owner!) the field was won for village use. Tennis facilities, youth football teams, kids play area with zip-slide and a pavilion all promote sport and a healthy life style.

A continued amount of care and regular events for fund-raising from a team led by *Janet Pearce*, is lavished on the hard-won field and, in 2008, it won an award for the Best Kept village sports-field!!



A dedicated Committee includes *Alan Cox* and *Ian Matthews*;
Other members (back row) include: *Janet Pearce*, *Jill Anderson*,
Andy Graham, *Dawn Melluish*