

BURY IN THE COTTON FAMINE 1861-1864

WORK, HEALTH AND THE POOR LAW



The Dinner Hour, Wigan, by Eyre Crowe, 1874, reproduced by kind permission of Manchester Art Gallery via ArtUK

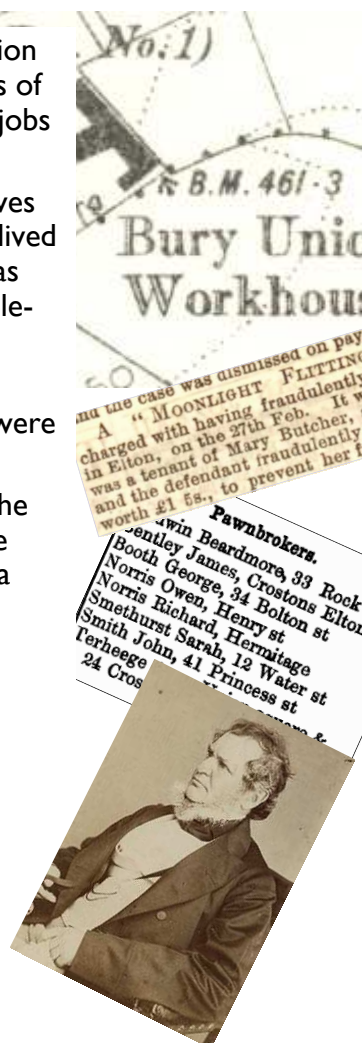
By the mid-19th century the industrial expansion of the cotton industry had produced hundreds of communities, both urban and rural, where all jobs relied on cotton.

Despite periods of plentiful work, the operatives at the sharp end of cotton textile production lived on tight budgets. Although a 60-hour week was standard, most still relied on a pattern of whole-family earning to make ends meet.

When the shortage of raw cotton caused mill closures in 1861, the Lancashire cotton mills were already in the grips of a down-turn in trade.

This booklet forms one in a series exploring the effect of the Cotton Famine of 1861-64 on the area around Bury. The research was done by a group of members of Bury U3A.

We were responding to a wider active learning initiative that started in 2018, with the umbrella title 'Cottonopolis'



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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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Population and local government

By 1860, the population of the area around Bury as shown on this map had reached over 93,000.

Ainsworth and Radcliffe, underlined on the map, were not part of Bury parish but joined Bury Poor Law Union in 1834.

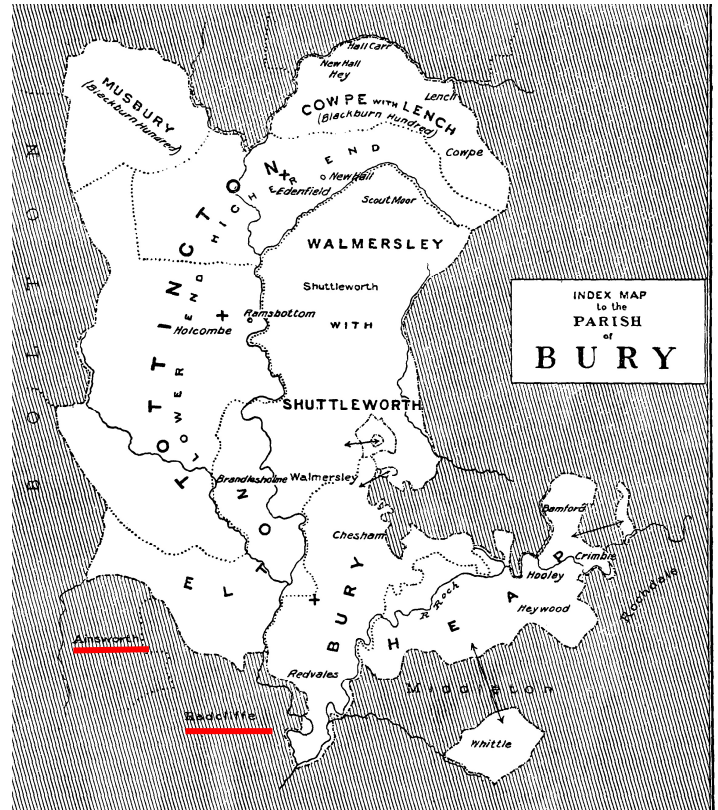
In 1860 local government consisted of the Parish Vestry Committee, the Poor Law Guardians and Overseers, and the Improvement Commissioners. The 'gentlemen' of Bury sat on these committees and oversaw the work of the parish townships, shown on the map.

Most of the land around Bury was owned by the Stanley family, the earls of Derby. In the 1850s-1860s Edward Smith Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, was a powerful politician reaching the peak of his career, which saw him become Prime Minister three times.

Between 1861-65, Lord Derby actively promoted better understanding about the problems faced by the unemployed Lancashire cotton operatives, and he supported an important relief scheme in Bury.

One result of this was that the work of Bury's Improvement Commissioners became more important, leading them to need their own offices (see *below right*).

An elected municipal council came into existence in 1876.



Source of map and population figures: British History Online (Victoria County History for Lancashire)

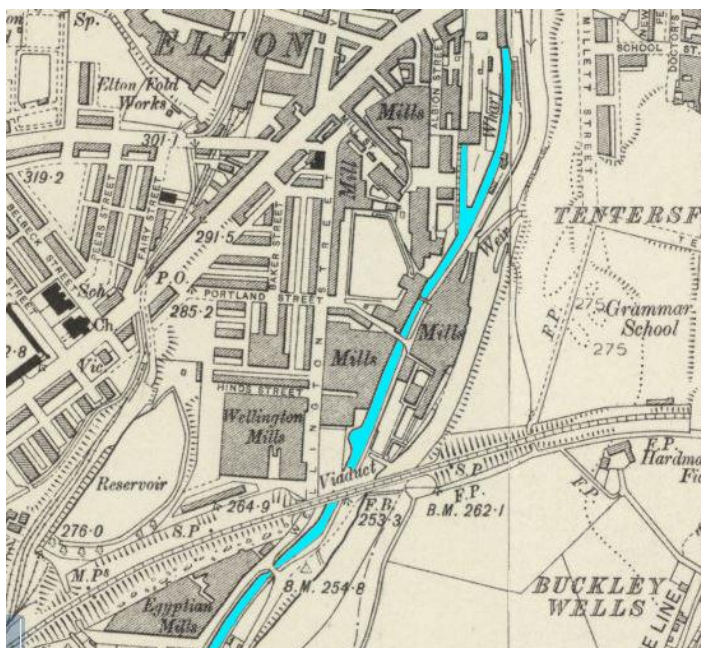
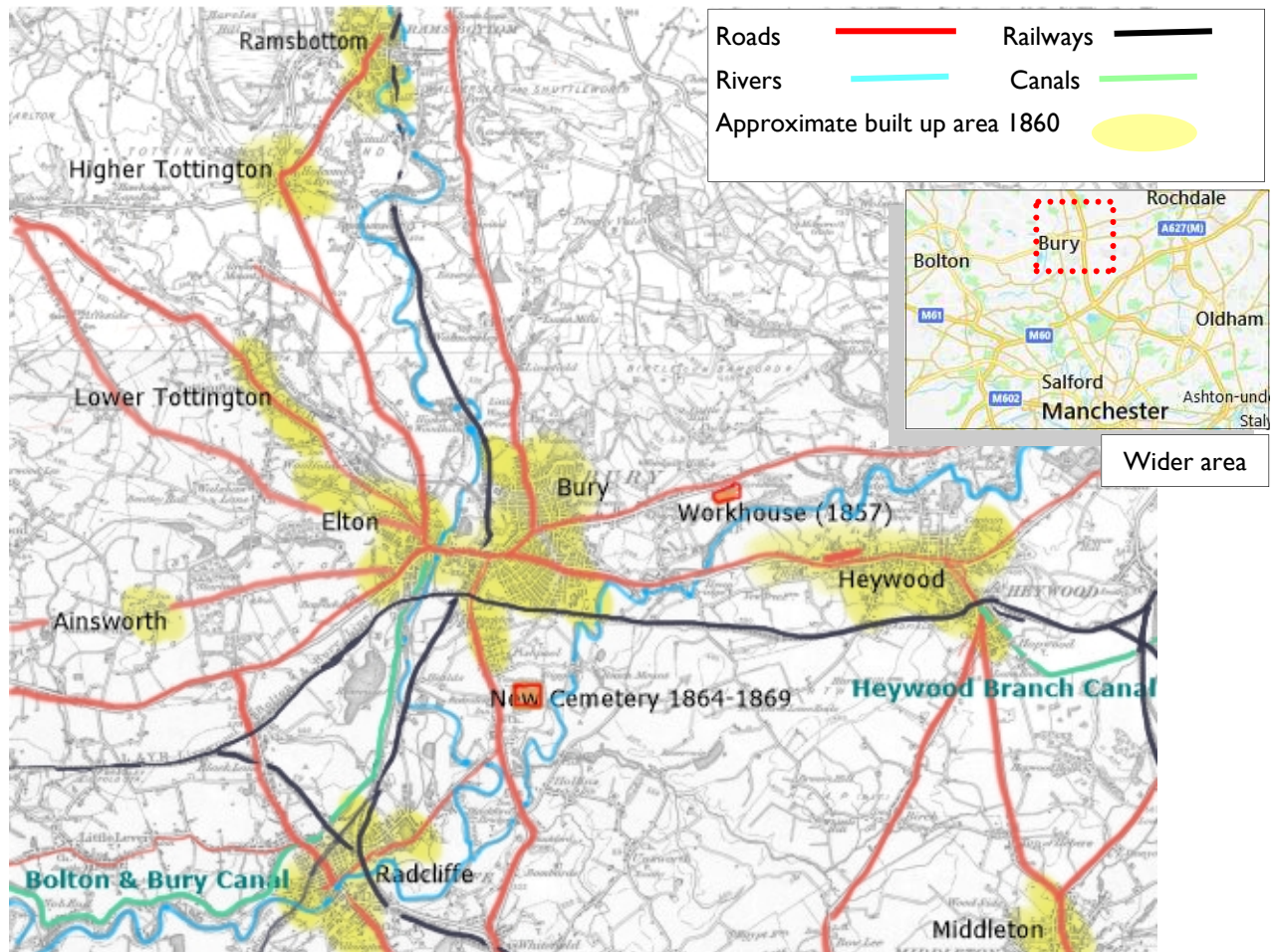


Edward Smith Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, photographed in 1865 (source: Wikipedia)



James 'Clock' Shaw: The Old Commissioners' Office, Stanley Street, Bury, courtesy Bury Art Museum via Art.uk under Creative Commons licence. Stanley Street is the Rochdale end of one of Bury's main shopping streets, now called 'The Rock'

The area in the 1860s



From dock to mill via canal: the terminus of the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal at Bury, 1881

No new mapping was done between the 1850s and 1880s in the Bury area.

That means we don't have an exact picture of the area at the start of the Cotton Famine in 1861.

The Lancashire cotton industry boomed in the 1850s. More mills and houses must have been built. This means that the built-up area was larger than that shown on the 1851 map but probably smaller than the 1880s maps.

Features such as canals, main roads and the railway network would be the same in 1861 as they are on this map.

Bury's industrial growth was based around its canal, completed 1808, and railway system, created 1846 onwards.

The Poor Law and the workhouse

The Old Poor Law

Each parish had its own way of managing poverty. Anyone who fell on hard times became the responsibility of the parish they were born in.

In each parish, householders paid a 'poor rate' based on their home's value. This raised the money needed to look after the poor.

In Bury 'poor houses' were scattered across the townships (see page 2 for township map). Occasionally a larger building was acquired and would be called a workhouse. It was often a former inn or farmhouse, not a purpose-built structure. Bury acquired a workhouse at Redvales in 1775.

Residents of the workhouse, known as paupers, might be given work such as farming or weaving. Workhouse children were placed in apprenticeships where possible.

The townships gave 'outdoor relief' to impoverished people who remained in their own homes, typically old, frail people with no family.

The population of Britain grew rapidly in the later 1700s and early 1800s, and there was much discussion about how to prevent people from relying on poor relief instead of working.



Above: workhouses at Redvales, Bury and at Radcliffe

Images from National Library of Scotland

1834: The New Poor Law

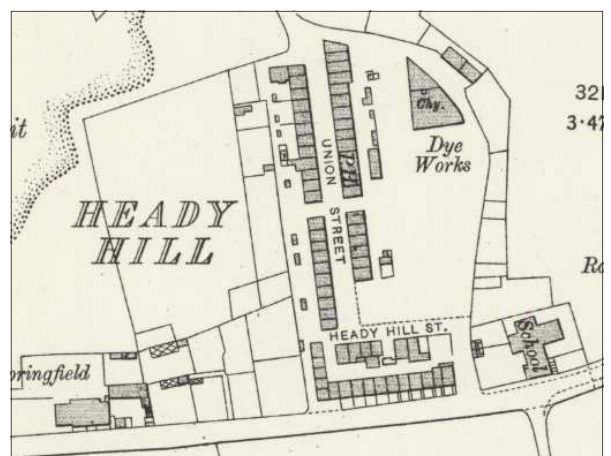
The Poor Law Amendment Act combined parishes into larger 'Poor Law Unions', often shortened to just 'Union'. The Union would have representatives, or Guardians, from all the townships.

These bigger Unions could have a large central purpose-built workhouse, and the intention was that anyone who genuinely needed poor relief should live inside its walls.

The householders of each township would continue to pay a the poor rate to support the work of the Union.

Since the work of the Union was to relieve poverty, the officials who dealt with people were called 'Relieving Officers'.

Many townships, including Bury and Rochdale, did not carry out all of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. They formed a Union, and appointed Poor Law Guardians and Relieving



Union Street, Heap, Heywood: almshouse-type poor houses built before 1844, housing 94 females in July 1855 (figures from Bury Times)

Officers, but carried on using their existing poor houses and workhouse. The Guardians also carried on giving outdoor relief where they saw fit.

A legacy of this time exists, with many towns having a 'Union Street'

Change forced on Bury in 1850

In 1850 the biggest landowner in the area, the Earl of Derby, forced the Bury Union to adopt the New Poor Law fully.

He did this by refusing to renew the leases for the poor houses that stood on his land. This included the biggest existing workhouse, at Redvales, Bury.

Lord Derby insisted that help should only be given to people inside a purpose-built workhouse, and so Bury Union had to find the funds to build one.

While the construction work was under way, the poor still had to be helped. Ironically this resulted in a few years when the outdoor relief bill was higher than usual. 3024 people were given outdoor relief in July 1855, and only 233 people were workhouse inmates (*Bury Times*).

The workhouse at Jericho to the east of Bury finally opened in 1857 and cost over £20,000, an enormous sum. It was intended to serve all the surrounding townships of Bury with the addition of Rochdale and had a capacity of 400 inmates. In January 1861, before the Cotton famine hit, it housed 290 inmates.

By December 1862 Jericho workhouse had 432 inmates but over 11,000 people were getting poor relief. The biggest unemployment crisis that had ever been seen in Lancashire had arrived in Bury. The capacity of the Bury Union Workhouse was overwhelmed. Most poor relief from September 1862 to June 1864 was funded by public charity.



Bury Union Workhouse, opened 1857



Bury Union Offices, Parsons Lane Bury, completed 1865.

Close up of crest and date stone

Photographs by Philip Platt via Flickr

Bell in the Pilkington district, 610, at an expense of £34 16s. 9d.; total relieved, 3024, at an expense of £171 10s. 10d. The number of inmates in the Heywood workhouse was 94; Radcliffe, 139; total, 233.

Outdoor relief and workhouse inmates for one week, dropping as the new workhouse opens:

July 1855 (above), December 1859 (right) with 700 fewer given outdoor relief and all inmates now in the new workhouse at Jericho

December 1862 (below left), the peak of the Cotton Famine (*Bury Times*)

General Balance, £4,194 4s. 8d. Inmates in the Jericho Workhouse, 232.

EXPENDED IN RELIEF DURING THE WEEK.

	Persons.	Amount.
Mr. Ramsbottom, Bury district...	1,272	£83 10 3
Mr. Wilcock, Pilkington district ..	509	31 0 0
Mr. Eubank, Heap district.....	520	33 3 0
Total.....	2,301	£147 13 3

	Persons.	Amount.
Mr. Ramsbottom's (Bury) district	2,971	£199 8 1
Mr. Wilcock's (Pilkington) district....	2,031	132 11 5
Mr. Brown's (Heap) district	4,379	248 18 10
Mr. Scholfield's (Tottington) district..	2,061	143 16 9
Total	11,442	£724 15 1
Balance in treasurer's hands, £5,547 19s. 2d. Inmates in Jericho workhouse, 432.		

Cotton textile workers wages

Cotton mill managers used complex calculations based on raw cotton type and price, and differences in manufacturing processes, to precisely control the quality and costs of the final products.

Each mill might be producing several product lines, so separate calculations were needed for each. Overseers worked on a commission-based system, intended to encourage them to keep the workers focused and the machines producing.

So describing how pay levels were arrived at, and what was taken home by individuals, is not exactly straightforward.

We need the accounts from a Bury mill of the 1860s to get an accurate picture, but no such archive has been identified so far.

Paid by productivity

Lancashire textile workers were paid according to productivity, not by the hour. This is also known as 'piece-work' or being paid 'by the piece'.

Mill owners fined workers if machinery stopped for any reason or if faults were found in the yarn or cloth they produced.

They were also fined workers for lateness, wasting time or leaving their machines without permission.

After 1861, many mill owners raised the fines for faults and stoppages by 400%, although workers wages were not increased.

Full-time and part-time

In 1861, a Lancashire textile worker worked 60 hours a week when in full-time work.

In the 1850s it was quite common for whole families to work in various aspects of textile making, from children of 11 or 12 years upwards.

Younger and less experienced workers often had part-time jobs, whereas their parents and older siblings worked full-time. Having as many family members as possible in some kind of work provided a reasonable living for the whole family.

SHORT TIME IN FACTORIES.—All the cotton mills in Bury are now running four days per week, and the principal employers have resolved to give notice of a reduction of ten per cent in wages. The reduction in several instances, in Bury and Heywood, will commence next week. The operatives at some of the mills have consented to the reduction.

Bury Times, October 12th 1861: 10% wage reductions

(I.) BREAD, FLOUR, AND MEAL.		
8 4 lb. loaves (32 lbs.)	5½d. pr. 4 lbs.	3 8
½ a peck of meal	1s. 8d. pr. pk.	- 10
½ a doz. (6 lbs.) flour	1s. 8d. pr. doz.	- 10
		5 4
(II.) BUTCHER'S MEAT AND BACON.		
5 lbs. of butcher's meat..	6½d. per lb.	2 8½
2 ,, of bacon	8d. ,,	1 4
		4 -½
(III.) POTATOES, MILK, AND VEGETABLES.		
2 score of potatoes	1s. per score	2 -
7 quarts of milk	3d. per quart	1 9
Vegetables	—	- 6
		4 3
(IV.) GROCERIES, COALS, &c.		
½ lb. of coffee	1s. 4d. per lb.	- 8
¼ ,, of tea	4s. ,,	1 -
3 lbs. of sugar	5d. ,,	1 3
2 ,, of rice	3d. ,,	- 6
1 lb. of butter	1s. 1d. ,,	1 1
2 lbs. of treacle.....	2½d. ,,	- 5
1½ ,, of soap.....	4d. ,,	- 6
Coals 1s., candles 6d.	—	1 6
		6 11
Rent, taxes, and water	—	4 -
Clothing	—	3 -
Sundries	—	2 5½
		30 -

Table showing expenditure in one week for a family of five working in the cotton industry, living on joint wages of 30 shillings a week

Where the wages went

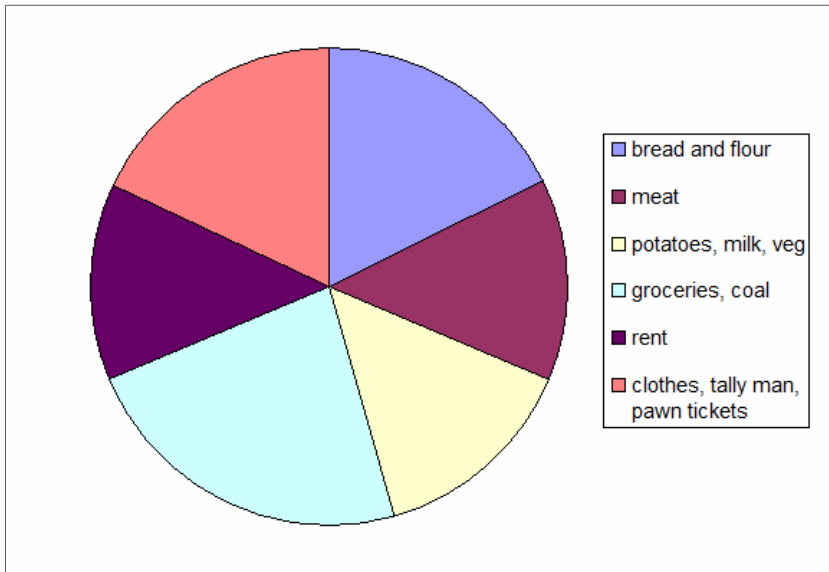


Chart based on the table of family expenditure shown on page opposite, from David Chadwick's report, 1859.

Those facing short hours or unemployment had to decide which of these areas of expenditure could be cut down.

Not reclaiming pawned goods raised ready cash, and reports of 1861-62 in Lancashire describe pawnshops brimming with household goods.

The Bury Times contains occasional reports on tally-men not being paid for good bought on weekly repayments.

The Victorians gathered statistics in a bid to make sense of their rapidly changing world. There are two surveys that help us understand cotton operatives' budgets in the 1860s

Firstly, in 1859 David Chadwick wrote an extensive paper tracking all kinds of data, aimed at showing how much the industrialised society of Manchester and Salford had changed over the last few decades.

Sadly he only (!) did this for Manchester and Salford, and there is no equivalent survey for the area around Bury.

The information he gathered may however have parallels with the lives of our local textile workers.

Secondly, in 1862 Dr. Edward Smith was employed to report to the Privy Council on the diet of cotton operatives. His work covered a sample of Lancashire families, and compared their diet in 'the good times' with what they could get to eat when the crisis was at its peak.

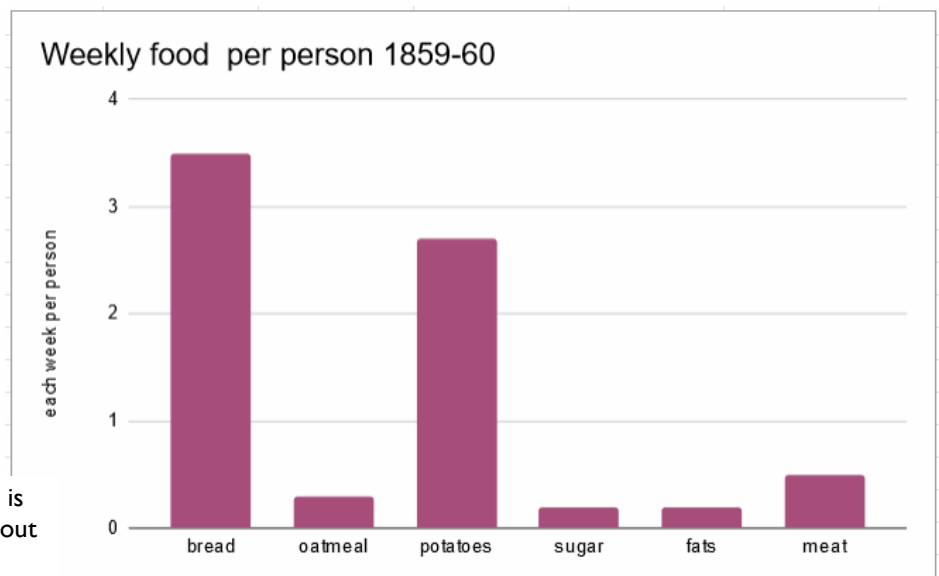
As with David Chadwick's wages survey, Edward Smith's findings may be taken as a reasonable picture of life in Bury.

David Chadwick's survey showed that if all the family worked, then bills could be paid and nobody went hungry. There might even be a very little over to save up or spend on luxuries. But the narrow margins might be eaten into by unexpected fines or illness in the family. At these times weekly survival might depend on use pawn-shops and 'tick' (shop credit) at the corner shop.

Edward Smith's survey showed that Lancashire mill workers normal diet compared well in quantities and range with the 1942 wartime ration.

Unlike the 1942 ration though, the quantity and range of food was not guaranteed. The next section explores how as times got harder during the Cotton Famine, the diet of unemployed rapidly became inadequate in range and quantity.

The Lancashire diet in the 'good times' is reminiscent of 1940s rationing, but without the tinned goods



1861: coping with short work and lay-offs

in Bury are now running four days per week, and the principal employers have resolved to give notice of a reduction of ten per cent in wages. The reduction in several instances, in Bury and Heywood, will commence next week. The

Bury Times, October 12th 1861: hours reduced to four days instead of six, then 10% wage cut added on

The cotton mill wages reported by Chadwick range from 4 shillings to 20 shillings per person for a 60 hour week.

His sample family budget was based on all family members working 60 hours. As long as this was the case, the family could keep afloat.

Before the blockade of the southern US ports in April 1861, mills were already introducing short time (see separate booklet 'the causes of the crisis').

In the Bury area by October 1861, weekly hours had been cut by a third, from 60 to 40 hours. Then wages were cut across the board by 10%.

This meant the 'example' family would have to get by on 18 shillings a week instead of 30 shillings, if the whole family remained in work.

But workers were being laid off after months of shorter hours. There was no concept of benefits or redundancy pay. If those laid off had no savings and nothing left to pawn, their only sources of help would be from charities or from the Poor Law Union. Both of these were generally seen as 'last resort', and were tinged with shame.

The number of poor relief applicants in Bury Union did not rise noticeably in 1861, so those affected by short hours or lay-offs must have economised.

Economising on food

Eliminating foods that required cooking brought the benefit of saving fuel, so meat, potatoes and home

baking could be done without.

There was already a strong tradition of shop-bought rather than home-baked bread in urban Lancashire. Bread was a major element of 'filling up', so bought bread seems to have remained a priority.

Edward Smith's survey highlighted how the affected families were very reluctant to give up sugar, especially in the form of molasses or treacle. It is likely that as the Cotton Famine's grip tightened, Bury families were reduced to a 'survival diet' of treacle or jam butties and sugary tea.

DJ Oddy classifies this as a low-income diet that prevailed up to the time of the First World War. It sated hunger but contributed to generations of malnourished, disease-prone workers.

Semi-rural communities

Compared to today, the built-up areas of Bury, Heywood and Radcliffe were much smaller in 1861. It was a short walk into open countryside, and seasonal foraging is anecdotally recorded. Nettle and dock pudding are now, ironically, served in gourmet restaurants.

Seasonal farm work was available, such the hay-making cited by the poor law guardians as the reason for fewer poor relief grants in summer 1863.

Table 3. Changes in Weekly Food Consumption per head

Group	Bread (lb)	Oatmeal (lb)	Potatoes (lb)	Sugar (lb)	Fats (lb)	Meat (lb)	Milk (pt)
<i>Single persons</i>							
"Normal" diet	12.5	2.2	6.3	1.2	0.6	1.2	1.9
Winter 1862	8.2	1.6	2.3	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.8
Percentage change	-33	-27	-64	-25	-36	-83	-58
<i>Families</i>							
"Normal" diet	7.6	0.7	6.3	0.6	0.4	1.2	2.7
Winter 1862	6.3	1.0	2.4	0.6	0.2	0.4	1.8
Percentage change	-17	+43	-62	nil	-50	-60	-33

Source: As Table 2.

Statistics gathered by Dr Edward Smith, Lancashire 1862

The quantities of food are much reduced, with the exception of sugar and oatmeal which rose slightly.

Wood Hill Cotton Mill, a rural mill hamlet

Allotments, known locally as ‘pens’, can be seen associated with the houses built and rented out by the Hutchinson family, named ‘Hutchinson’s Row’. The mill has now gone but some of the original houses remain.

1846 map from National Library of Scotland and additional information from Mark Fletcher



Satellite villages and mill hamlets appear to have always had a more rural way of life. Maps show small garden plots associated with homes in these locations, for example at Wood Hill in Elton, on the banks of the River Irwell (see above).

There are also a few instances reported of men being caught poaching rabbits, but these are the exception, and there is no mention of the occupation of those caught out. Poaching implies hunting where no permission was granted. It is possible that mill owners like Hutchinson of Wood Hill allowed small game to be taken on their land by their employees. ‘Black game’ (crows) is another ‘starvation food’ referred to in anecdotes.

Household goods

Replacing worn-out clothes or bedding could be put on hold, and spares clothes could go to the pawn-shop, soon to be followed by the chest of drawers they had been kept in.

Being reduced to the clothes they stood up in inevitably increased instances of infestation and

disease. Surveys done in 1862 showed a rise in typhus associated with the crisis-hit towns. We now know one of the main vectors for this was the body louse.

‘Popping your clogs’

Clogs were a basic necessity for getting to and from work, and standing all day on cold stone flag floors. Pawning or ‘popping’ your clogs was a sign you had come to the end.

Without clogs, you could not work even if work was offered. We now use it as a euphemism for dying. Maybe it amounted to the same, in 1861.

Bury Times 23rd December 1865:
blankets for sale at Booth’s pawnbrokers



Pawnbrokers.
Baldwin Beardmore, 33 Rock st
Bentley James, Crostons Elton
Booth George, 34 Bolton st
Norris Owen, Henry st
Norris Richard, Hermitage
Smethurst Sarah, 12 Water st
Smith John, 41 Princess st
Terhegge Ann, Union square & 24 Cross st

Whellan’s Directory 1853:
pawnbrokers in Bury

Bury on the map of 1846
More mills and buildings existed by 1860 but even the central built-up centre was within walking distance of open country



Paying the rent, or not

Rent would be hard to save on. Examples of back-rent being claimed are recorded in the Bury Times in the period 1861-65, but none seem to involve cotton operatives.

It could be that the pattern of renting among the textile communities mitigated against resorting to the courts for non-payment of rent.

The housing round mills tended to be either owned by mills themselves, or by small landlords living in the same few streets. When the crisis hit in 1861, the small landlords would be in the same trouble as their tenants, and might have been equally as dependent on charity, which would not be given if they were claiming rents.

There were accounts of harsh measures taken by small landlords in some crisis-hit towns (*Preston, Edwin Waugh*), but no evidence for this in the Bury area.

Reports do not suggest large numbers of evictions in Bury at this time. Even if an eviction case did not reach the courts, the drama of a family turned out onto the pavement would surely be taken up in the local papers, had it happened.

Mill owners who owned their own workers' housing can be shown to have deferred or even completely waived rents, for example Hutchinson of Wood Hill Mill in Elton (*Bury Times 1862*)

Anecdotal evidence suggests impoverished unemployed workers moved into shared accommodation to economise, but absence of rent-books or other sources makes this impossible to quantify.

The option of 'moonlight flitting' was the last resort for the unemployed cotton operatives and their families. It was an occupational hazard faced by landlords, and would only reach the historic record if it became an (expensive) court case. Moonlight flits seem to have been more commonplace in big cities where anonymity was easier to achieve.

Applying for Poor Relief

Every winter during normal times, a certain number of people applied to their Poor Law Guardians for assistance.

In the winter of 1861, sources across Lancashire reported more people than before applying for poor relief.

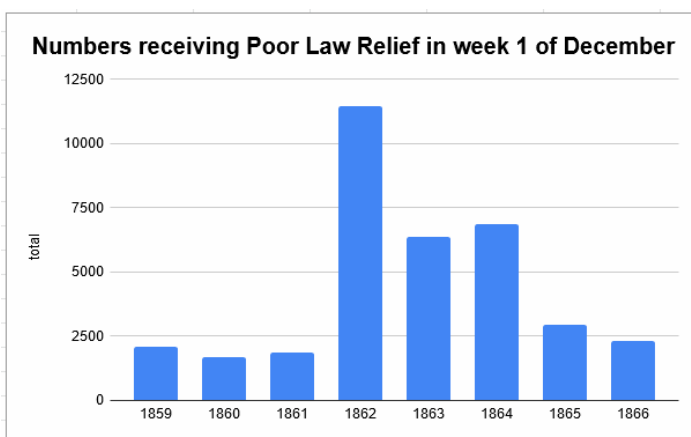
However, in Bury while the increase in people given help was about 200 more than in December 1860, it was lower than the number helped before the Cotton Famine crisis hit, in 1859 (see *graph below*). Some local crisis that we do not know about must have been taking place in 1859.

The process of getting poor relief began by registering in person at the office of the Overseer.

After registering, applicants were assessed, either by an interview in front of a panel, or by an official visitor to their home, to decide whether the applicants were 'deserving'.

The cash to pay for poor relief came from the local poor rate. The poor rate was paid by householders who either owned or rented property, and included the Poor Law Guardians themselves.

Therefore it was in the personal best interests of the Poor Law Guardians to grant poor relief to as few people as possible, to keep the poor rate low.



and the case was dismissed on payment of costs.
A "MOONLIGHT FLITTING."—Patrick Handy was charged with having fraudulently removed goods from a house in Elton, on the 27th Feb. It was stated that Thomas Manion was a tenant of Mary Butcher, and owed £3 18s. 6d. for rent, and the defendant fraudulently removed the goods, which were worth £1 5s., to prevent her from distraining for rent.—Henry

Did the Cotton Famine cause more deaths in Bury, 1861-65?

This line of enquiry began with the deaths announced in the Bury Times newspaper in January, 1862.

Looking at the same week over several years, from 1861 to 1864, provided a group of figures.

We could not locate any Medical Officer of Health summary for this period, presumably because Bury had no such officer at that time.

The limitations of these figures are obvious, namely they only represent the small number of people who paid to have death announcements placed in the local newspaper.

Nonetheless in the absence of other ways of illustrating what happened, we have worked with them.

Fewer people died in Bury during the Cotton Famine than before it

This was an unexpected result from these figures. However the numbers involved are very low, ranging from 17 to 21 deaths per sample with the lower figure being during the peak of the hardship. This can't be taken as an indication of a population trend without wider investigation.

Many more under-fives died in 1862 and 1863

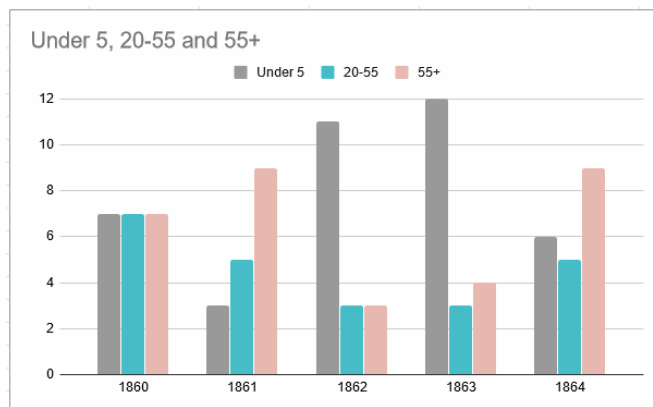
The figures for January 1863 reflect the peak of the Cotton Famine. Reported infant and child deaths reached 100% more than the pre-crisis figure.

Even though this was an age when the death of babies and children was much more commonplace, than we are used to, the winters of 1862 to 1863 stand out.

This could well have been due to infectious diseases affecting an already debilitated population. Typhus, diphtheria and scarlatina epidemics occurred nationally in 1862 and 1863.

A puzzling feature is lower number of deaths among the oldest sector of the population. Normally hardship and epidemics hit hardest among the very youngest and very oldest in a community.

To be certain of any trends, a future research project will need to work through the separate burial registers for the parish churches, listed in Bury Archives catalogue.



Taylor, of Summerseat. DIED
 Dec. 26th, aged 7 months, Mary, daughter of J. Holt, Bolton-street.
 Dec. 27th, aged 64 years, Robert Hardman, Back Garden-street.
 Dec. 27th, aged 51 years, Richard Spencer, beerseller, Clerke-street.
 Dec. 28th, aged 65 years, Alice, wife of John Hoyle, The Island.
 Dec. 30th, aged 87 years, Mr. Richard Butcher, sen., Fleet-street.
 Dec. 30th, aged 12 months, Martha, daughter of James Birchall, Edward-street.
 Dec. 31st, aged 4 months, James William, son of Thomas Horrocks, Paradise street.
 Dec. 31st, aged 11 weeks, George Henry, son of Robert Bleasdale, Buckley-street.
 Dec. 31st, aged 10 months, Thomas Russell, son of Mr. Thomas Kay, Longfield, near Bury.
 Jan. 1st, aged 70 years, Sarah, widow of the late Mr. William Hall, Spring-street.
 Jan. 2nd, aged 28 years, Ellis Schofield, Mill Brow.
 Jan. 2nd, aged 16 weeks, Thomas, son of Thos. Whiteside, Edward-street.
 Jan. 3rd, aged 11 weeks, William, son of Thos. Knight, Hardman's.
 Jan. 3rd, aged 34 years, Jane, the beloved wife of the Rev. William Whitworth, M.A., and only daughter of James Taylor, Esq., Holt Holmes Mill, Waterfoot.

this town. **DIED**
 December 23rd, aged two years, James, son of James Nolan, Rochdale Road.
 December 25th, aged eight years, John Thomas, son of Robert Diggle, Freetown.
 December 25th, aged 66 years, Robert Hutchinson, South Garden-street.
 December 26th, aged 14 weeks, Sidney Withington, son of John Scholes Walker, Esq., Silver-street.
 December 26th, aged 40 years, Jane Smith, Moorside.
 December 28th, aged four years, Richard, son of John Ogden, Fernhill.
 December 26th, aged nine months, James William, son of Mr. John Smith, Bolton-street.
 December 27th, aged 72 years, Mr. Samuel Hall, George-street.
 December 28th, aged one year, William Shaw, son of Robert Simpson, Pits o' th' Moor.
 December 28th, aged one year, Samuel Robert, son of Robert Morris, Temple Court.
 December 28th, aged 14 years, Thomas Howarth, Freetown.
 December 28th, aged 32 years, Bridget, wife of Charles Reilly, Paradise-street.
 December 29th, aged 19 months, Elizabeth, daughter of Edmund Stott, Hacking's Court.
 December 29th, aged 21 months, James, son of Wm. Brook North Back King-street.
 December 30th, in the fourth year of his age, Alfred, son of I. Arthur Bentley, Scotland Place, Ramsbottom.
 December 30th, aged 59 years, William Robinson, Freetown.
 December 30th, aged eight years, Ellen, daughter of Pat M'Manus, John-street.
 December 31st, aged seven months, John, son of J. Ogden, Bell Lane.
 January 1st, aged 61 years, Ellen, wife of James Brookshaw.
 January 1st, in his 65th year, Mr. John Horrocks, o. Holcombe.

Death Announcements from the first week in January, Bury Times. Above, January 1860 Below, January 1863

An ordinary life in detail

Family History research by Martin James, Bury U3A

Our own Bury U3A Family History Group were approached for help, and the following is an extract of the research done by Martin James into the life story of the Bridge family around the time of the Cotton Famine.

The full account can be found on the website accompanying this publication.

The trail began with the newspaper announcement of the death of Jane Ann Bridge, aged 18 months, on 18th December 1862. She was named as the daughter of Joseph Bridge of Barker Street.

From these details and with many blind alleys, Martin was able to construct a timeline.



Houses in Barker Street, Bury, as they are today. These appear to have been built in the 1850s, with long back gardens and would have been 'superior' to the older back-to-back houses of the town

The Bridge family and the Cotton Famine

- 17 June 1848: 25 year-old Joseph marries 19 year-old Sarah Nuttall at Mary the Virgin Church, Bury.
- 22nd March 1850: Sarah gives birth to daughter Alice.
- 31st March 1850: Alice is baptised at St Anne's Church, Tottington. Joseph's occupation is given as "Sawyer".
- 30th March 1851: Joseph and Sarah are living at Buckley Wells, Bury, with their baby daughter Alice
- 11th October 1852: Sarah gives birth to daughter Betsy.
- 26th December 1852. Betsy is baptised at All Saints Church, Elton. Joseph's occupation is given as "Joiner".
- 20th February 1854: Sarah gives birth to daughter Elizabeth.
- 2nd November 1856: Elizabeth is baptised at All Saints Church, Elton. Joseph's occupation is given as "Joiner".
- 1857: Sarah dies.
- 1858: Joseph Bridge marries Ann Kay (born 1832) in Bury/Tottington.

- 24th June 1859: Ann gives birth to daughter Mary Alice in Bury.
- 10th January 1860: Mary Alice is baptised at All Saints Church, Elton. Joseph's occupation is given as "Sawyer".
- 7th April 1861: Joseph, Ann and their 4 children are living (briefly) in Green Street, Radcliffe (now the site of Dunelm Mills and a car park/gipsy camp).
- June 1861: Ann gives birth to daughter Jane Ann.
- Between April 1861 and December 1862: the family moves to 7 Barker Street, Bury. 21st
- December 1862: Jane Ann dies at Barker Street, Bury, and is buried at St Anne's Church, Tottington.

December 18th, aged 18 months, Jane Ann, Bridge, Barker-street.

- 28th November 1863: Ann gives birth to son Thomas in Bury.
- 3rd July 1864: Thomas is baptised at All Saints Church, Elton. Joseph's occupation is given as "Turner".
- 1866: Joseph dies in Bury, aged 43.
- 1866-7: Ann gives birth to daughter Sarah Emily.

Sources

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