

Lyme Regis Museum: Industrial Lyme Paper 0 – Generalities & Sources

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This paper sets the framework for the other papers in the Series, and brings the story up to current time and lists sources for industries not covered by other papers in this Series. Please advise Richard Bull at the Museum of corrections or additions, so that the record can be kept up to date.

Industry in Lyme Regis is the story of a self-sufficient town – nearly all the many trades and industries needed to keep the town and seaport going have been represented here over the centuries and some are making a welcome return after long absences.

A series of papers has been written to coincide with an exhibition themed “Industrial Lyme” at the Malthouse in February/March 2011. Not every industry has been covered, since for some industries that have graced our valley there is very little information. Others have already been covered in great detail in books already or about to be published. The sixteen papers are available on the Museum’s Web Site www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk/research are:

1. Lawton’s Silk Throwing Factories in Lyme Regis 1854-1874
2. The Woollen Cloth Industry in the Lim Valley
3. The Gas Industry in Lyme Regis
4. Lime and Lime Burning in the Lim Valley
5. Stone quarrying
6. The Cement Industry in Lyme Regis and Charmouth
7. Pottery and Bricks
8. Flax and Hemp Products – Oil, Cake & Textiles
9. The Coal Industry and the failed search for Coal in Lyme
10. Lace Manufacture
11. The Water Supply in the Lim Valley
12. The Axminster & Lyme Regis Light Railway – too little, too late
13. The White Rose Steam Laundry
14. Ironfounding and Stove and Range Making
15. The Lim Valley Mill Trail
16. Sewerage in the Lim Valley

a. Industries already fully covered elsewhere or where work is forthcoming

Corn and Starch Milling has been fully researched in recent years - see the following

Town Mill, Lyme Regis

Graham, A Draper, J and Watts, M 2005 *The Town Mill Lyme Regis Archaeology and History 1340-2000* Town Mill Trust Lyme Regis

The Town Mill Trust 2005 *Cheaper to re-roof than demolish: an Oral History of the Town Mill, Lyme Regis* Lyme Regis

Watts, M 2005 *A thousand years of milling – the Town Mill, Lyme Regis* Town Mill Trust Lyme Regis

The Old Mill (Gundry’s Mill, The Thatched Mill), Uplyme

Mostyn, D, in Gosling, G & Thomas, J 2004 *The Book of Uplyme* Halsgrove Tiverton

Electrical Generation in Lyme Regis

The Borough of Lyme Regis was the main provider until nationalisation and recently the Town Mill Trust have started producing hydroelectricity. For details see Martin



Roundell Green, 2006 *Electric Lyme – The coming of electricity to an English seaside town* Crewkerne

Farming – the subject of major exhibitions in Uplyme and Axminster in 2008-9, the results of which are preserved in several permanent exhibition boards, some of which occasionally tour. It is intended to summarise these boards into a paper for the Lim Valley farms during 2011.

Maritime Industry, shipbuilding, trade, fishing etc - see forthcoming book by Peter Lacey and forthcoming exhibition *Maritime Lyme* to coincide with 2011, the year of Maritime Lyme.

Education –

Lello, J 1999 *Lyme Regis Past and Present* Lello Lyme Regis. (chapter 7)

Warr, G 2007 *The School on the Hill: the history of Woodroffe School* Woodroffe Association Lyme Regis. Information about the history of the now-closed HMC school of Allhallows School, Rousdon Manor, can be found in booklets in the Curator's Office.

b. Industries where little material is available, more research is needed or activity is on-going:

Art, photography, artists and associated crafts

The countryside, coast and town of Lyme Regis have inspired many artists and continue to do so. An annual Arts Fest and the presence of many galleries selling to the public, including those at the Town Mill, supports a flourishing group of painters, photographers etc. The best source of information is the annual catalogue of the Arts Fest. Art production also supports a picture framer. For details of Lyme's early photographers see

Draper, J 2006 *Lyme's First Photographers*, Lyme Regis Museum

Baking

Traditionally there would have been many small bakers in a town like Lyme and one or two more in Uplyme. Bakers caused the great fires of Lyme in 1801 and 1844. Later Mark Lawton became a baker in the early 1870s when the bottom fell out of the silk throwing business, surviving to the turn of century as Mark Lawton & Sons, possibly baking in Millgreen at the Angel Inn, which they also ran. Recently Clive Cobb opened the *Town Mill Bakery*, first in the old miller's garage at the Town Mill, moving to premises formerly occupied by a chandlery business in Combe Street. This, a craft bakery, uses organic ingredients, and has become very popular, selling through other outlets within a thirty mile radius. There is scope for further research on bakers and baking in the valley.

Blacksmithing and Farriery

There are many drawings and photographs of Govier's blacksmith's shop which used to be in Broad Street on the Tesco site, and there are at least two sites former sites in the centre of Uplyme village where blacksmithing was undertaken. Blacksmith's and Wheelwright's Cottages on Venlake Lane in Uplyme still have the wheelwright's tyre-setting iron plate set into the forecourt. Blacksmithing also took place at the Old Factory site in Millgreen in the 1960s. Today travelling farriers provide services for horse owners. See also Paper 10, Iron Founding.

Brewing and Malting

Traditionally one of the Borough officials was a beer taster, sworn at the annual Hustings Court, to regulate the beer and brewing trades. Research is under way by the group who have restored the Malthouse, the fruits of which will appear in on-site

exhibition boards in due course. A new brewery has been set up within the Malthouse building, with John Hoskins producing Cobb Ale and other brands.

Building and linked trades

Several names are prominent amongst Lyme Regis builders over the 20th century, including *Artisan Builders, Caddy, Emmett, Lake, Quick* and *Wiscombe*. Research is underway by Ken Gollop and Graham Davies to tell the story of the building industry in Lyme Regis and the Museum has photographic resources and records from Wiscombes are currently being prepared for sending to the Dorset Record Office for archiving. One firm, being skilled in the carpentry and joinery trade, Wiscombes, even made road vehicles – the *Wiscombe Car*, actually a two-wheel horse-drawn vehicle like a governess cart or jaunting car, at their former works in Coombe Street. Many builders have left their mark in the town in the form of cast-iron goods, mainly street drainage covers and overhead WC cisterns.

Cigar and Snuff Manufacture

Coles & Co's Cigar & Fancy Snuff Manufactory advertised their products in the Dorset County Chronicle of December 10th 1846. The advertisement was full of the glowing self-praise characteristic of the period. Evidently the firm was started by Captain Coles, "late of the Portuguese Service". The products were Princeza Snuff, from a Portuguese recipe "confided" to Capt. Coles by the sole contractor approved by the Portuguese Government monopoly, O Comendador Ioae Paulo Cordeiro. Also produced were Coles "celebrated" Celebrius Snuff for head and eye disorders and his "Badajox" (sic) Mixture. Coles sold English and foreign cigars and cheroots.

The location of the business in Lyme is unknown, and there are no trade directory entries for Cole's Snuff or census entries for Capt. Coles.

Dressmaking and Tailoring

Dressmaking and tailoring features highly in trade directories of the self-sufficient Lyme community of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but all but died out with mass production and the chain-store retailing of clothing. More recently there has been resurgence, with *Co-designers Design Studio* at the Town Mill and Bell Cliff, *Nicky Kathrens* in Coombe Street and *Sublyme* in Silver Street and Muriel's Aladdin's Cave in Church Street. *Co-designers Design Studio* includes (2010) *Hilary Hihet*, Heirloom Knitwear; *Justababe* hand-knitted children's knitwear and *Silver Quayle*, bespoke fashion. *Hilary Hihet* formerly occupied a shop at the Broad Street, when she advertised:

"Hilary Highest produces English-designed handcraft garments, and is primarily known for her fabulous knitwear in classic and timeless styles, working in natural fibres like wool and linen. She places colour and texture at the centre of the design process. Designs are feminine and range from smart casual to romantic to occasion wear".

Character Warehouse Lyme Regis – ladies clothes, trading at Uplyme Road

Electric Light Bulb Filament Manufacture

British Electric Lighting Ltd (BELL Lighting) originally a north-country firm set up making electric light filaments from tungsten wire at Millgreen in the early 1950s in a purpose-built pre-fab building opposite the Dolphin Inn in the yard of the Old Factory, which finished in about 1973.

Mr & Mrs Eddie Groat ran the plant here as an escape from the rigors of Wimbledon, where the bulbs were finally assembled. The Lyme factory measured and cut the tungsten filament wire, coiled it and set it on the hangers to form the central “works” of the electric light bulb, after which the assemblies were dipped in acid to clean them and packed to be taken to Wimbledon. There the assemblies were placed inside the glass bulbs the air evacuated and the envelope sealed. The cap was added last. Helen Case worked at the Lyme factory, and recalls that the work could be fiddly, particularly with the lower wattage bulbs which used very fragile wire. When it closed, Roy Gollop took the building for net repair and boat building (see Paper 8).

Graphic Design and Signs

Creative Solutions/Hartnell Creative produce design, graphic art, signboards, printing and laminations at Uplyme Road.

Precision Waterjet – “cutting virtually any profile in any material” at Uplyme Road.

Film

Although there is no indigenous film production unit, Lyme Regis’s “quaintness” and seaport setting often leads to its use as a film set, the two most famous examples being:

The French Lieutenant’s Woman 1981, directed by Karel Reisz, screenplay by Harold Pinter based on story by John Fowles.

It’s all over the Town 1949, directed by Derek N Twist, based on the book by R F Delderfield. The film is set in a fictitious newspaper office and printing works in Lyme Regis. The Museum has a 35mm print of the film and some stills.

Fossil collection, preparation and distribution and associated cabinet making

An historic and current industry in Lyme and Charmouth, often taking place in back rooms, so that the full size of the industry is difficult to ascertain.

Mary Anning appears in the 1831/1841 census returns as a fossilist, and her father was involved making specimen cabinets, “cabinets of curiosities” being much in demand then. Mary collected and prepared fossils and sold them across Europe by “mail-order” and to customers who called, such as the Earl of Enniskillen who appears in the 1841 census staying at the Royal Lion Hotel. She employed workmen to recover material – to do the heavy work.

Today maybe 10 or more collectors are based here. What may seem to be high prices for what may appear to be casual work belies what is actually involved. Collection involves high scientific knowledge as well as un-ending patience and hard work in bad weather between tides, returning time and time again to complete extractions of some of the larger material such as vertebrate remains. Hours of painstaking work goes into preparation (cleaning, stabilising and presenting specimens) in what is a skilled, precision craft. Selling involves patience too, waiting for customer and price, or for public bodies such as museums to raise funds, as well as knowledge to be aware of what is rare or new to science. Those who think that collecting and marketing of fossil material is wrong should realise that this is the only way that new material will come forward for scientific study or public education as the public bodies do not have the staff with the time and skills to make the discoveries or to prepare material at economic cost, material that would otherwise be lost to the sea or broken up and dissipated by the general public.

The industry helps support three specialist retail shops in Lyme and one in Charmouth, a heritage centre and a museum.

See:

Tickell, C 1996 *Mary Anning of Lyme Regis* Lyme Regis Museum

Lord, A & Davis, G 2010 *Fossils of the Lower Lias of the Dorset Coast* (Chapter 2) Palaeontological Association London (gives a summary of the lives of the principal Lyme palaeontologists)

Hugh Torrens *Mary Anning* forthcoming biography.

Special exhibition in the Museum Rotunda and Geology Gallery

Forthcoming work by Stephen Locke

Preserves

Pam and Hugh Corbin started specialist jam making in Uplyme in 1990, having bought the name "*Thursday Cottage*" from a Swiss, Kurt Kunzli, who had started making home-made jams under that name at Spaxton in Somerset. From 1990 to 2002 Thursday Cottage jams were made in a former pig unit at Carswell Farm in Uplyme, employing up to 12 people in 4,000 sq ft of floor space, producing up to 1.5 tons of jam per day.

The high point was in 2001, winning the Best Speciality Food award at Great Taste Awards and no doubt this assisted the sale of the business to the well-known Messrs. Wilkin & Son of Tiptree, Essex, who have continued the brand, opening at dedicated plant at Colchester for Thursday Cottage jams.

See Gosling, G and Thomas, J 2004 *The Uplyme Book* Halsgrove Tiverton or speak to Pam Corbin of Whitty Down, Uplyme.

Corbin P, 2008 *The River Cottage Preserves Handbook* Bloomsbury 2008

Leatherwork

The Borough Hustings Court annually swore a leather sealer, an official whose task was to regulate the leather and hide industry in the town. Wanklyn's *Lyme Letters* of 1944 indicates that Lyme had a large cattle market and trade in skins in the 16th century. Boots and gloves were made here, by the cordwainers and glovers of the town, and court records contain rulings about pollution at Cobb Gate from the washing of skins. Uplyme WI's *The Story of Uplyme* mentions leather tanning at the Waterside Factory, the last woollen mill in the valley. Saddlery was an established industry in the town.

Paper cups and drinks vending machines

West Country/Lyme Regis Vending/Westcup was formerly based at Ferneberga, Uplyme Road, but is now in units at the Uplyme Road Industrial Estate, the old railway station. They market vending machines and the necessary consumables such as distinctively marked paper cups.

Printing and Publishing

Printing and publishing were well established trades in Lyme from the 1840s, produced and printed engravings, guidebooks, map, timetables and daily listings for tourists.

Dunsters ran from 1835 to mid 19th century, with a large shop on Broad Street down from the Volunteer. Examples of their work include Roland Brown's Beauties of Lyme and Mrs Buckland's drawings of the landslip, amongst many other items. Dunsters also printed the *Lyme Regis Mirror and Daily Visitor's List* in the 19th century, but when that folded the only local title named after Lyme Regis, the *Lyme Regis News*, was produced, as now, in Bridport, as a brother title to the *Bridport News*. Dunsters employed letterpress, often with very heavy embossing into the paper, but could also produce fine work.

Lyme Regis Printing Co during the 20th Century produced more prosaic items required by local businesses, such as trade cards, bags, order books, menus and auction and sale particulars. Examples in the museum include its trademark on sale particulars for 1 Combe Street from the 1950s and on a paper bag (in Shops Box).



Lymelight Books, Lyme Regis Museum and the Friends of Lyme Regis Museum – have jointly published reprints of historic books, such as Roberts, *History of the Borough of Lyme Regis*

Lyme Regis (Philpot) Museum – has published many pamphlets and booklets, sometimes in conjunction with the *Friends of Lyme Regis Museum* eg Tickell's *Mary Anning of Lyme Regis* (see fossil collecting) and various booklets by Jo Draper (see tourism).

Russell House Publishing Ltd – current specialising publishers of books on social services, child care, drug abuse etc.

Permedia Ltd – Philip Evans publishing produces a current series of weekly free newspapers.

Catherine and Laurence Anholt write, illustrate and publish children's books.

Note

The Lyme Regis News is an edition of *The Bridport News* and was never produced in Lyme Regis, whereas the Pulman's, the other paid-for local paper of long standing, is produced in Axminster. The Bridport News started in the 1860s. Earlier newspapers covering Lyme and containing interesting advertisements for sales and events in Lyme in the C18th and C19th are the Dorset County Chronicle and the Sherborne Mercury. Creeds of Broad Oak, north of Bridport, typically produced many posters and pamphlets seen in Lyme over a long period, particularly official material from the first half of the 19th century or before: they still print all sorts of local material, including books.

Restaurants, hotels and catering

The needs of many visitors are catered for by this sector, which ranges from renowned fish and chip shops to Mark Hix's Fish House, which is gaining national and international repute. Older catering establishments are recorded marked pottery, serviettes and menu cards in the Museum, as well as pottery shards which can be found on the eastern beaches washed out of the town dump. More research is needed on eating houses and not only the hotels themselves, but also the stays of famous people there, such as The Three Cups, the Royal Lion and the Alexandra, including such various people like J R R Tolkein, Dwight D Eisenhower, The Earl of Enniskillen. The fire of 1844 destroyed the George Inn, a famous coaching inn which lay between Coombe Street and Monmouth Street, facing the public garden now there. Many of the 18th Century visitors stayed in Lodging Houses, such as England's Lodging House, now the Royal Standard Inn.

Salt Production

In 774 the West Saxon King Cynwulf granted salt rights and a manor at Lyme to Sherborne Abbey, "near the west bank of the River Lim, not far from where it falls into the sea". The Museum has a copy the "Office Copy" of the Charter in the British Library. Indeed salt boiling here may have been undertaken centuries before. In northern Europe the climate is not dry or hot enough to concentrate brines to the point of crystallisation without boiling, so salterns (salt pans) were used, although sea water may have been pre-concentrated in the summer by evaporation in shallow lagoons. The pans were shallow ceramic or metal dishes heated by burning wood or charcoal. The boilers may well have striped the undercliffs and the hinterland of wood, or used the coppice system to ensure future supplies.

It is difficult to imagine the suitability of the exposed coast for the construction and operation of salterns or brining lagoons, but the tidal reaches of the River Lim may have been more extensive in ancient times. Today high ground quickly closes in on both sides of the river, but maybe the geography of the coastline was quite different

in Saxon and Norman times, with low lying land in front of the present line of cliffs where the ledges now are.

Whatever method was used the Domesday Book shows us that by 1086 salt production was well established industry with 27 workers. Lyme consisted of three manors – the land of Glastonbury Abbey lay to the east of the town, which had thirteen salt workers, paying 13s for the privilege. The King's manor under the stewardship of William Bellet had fourteen, but on the land of the Bishop of Salisbury, the holding for Sherborne Abbey to the west of the town, there were none, unlike in 774. Salt was a precious commodity, used for curing and pickling. It would have been traded well inland, no doubt using Sherborne Lane to connect with the pack horse route out of the valley.

The industry appears to have been overtaken by imports from the Loire, where boiling was not required, as ships and trade improved.

Spring Water Bottling

See Paper 11 Water Supply Industry

Tourism

Perhaps the most important industry Lyme has ever had, at least since the 18th century, and worthy of a whole study in its own right. Connected with early tourism were the Baths, such as Bennett's, Jefford's and Davey's, the Circulating Library, the Assembly Rooms and Bathing Machines, the coach service from Bath (to enable visitors to partake of the Season in Bath with a sojourn by the sea) and lodging houses. Jane Austen must be Lyme's most well-known early visitor, and her novels give some idea of what Lyme was like in her time. Later the railway and seasonal steamer services from Weymouth broadened the scope of Lyme tourism. The motor car was important from the 1920s onwards and there was an early need to provide parking places, partly met by demolition of the Assembly Rooms, now Cobb Square. Coach travel became important again between the 1930s and 1960s, with a small coach station providing regular services and trips, now the car park behind Fordham's ironmongers shop.

See:

Draper, J *Lyme Regis in the 1950s – the Golden Years* Lyme Regis Museum 2003

Draper, J 2007 *Lovely Lyme Regis in the 1930s* Lyme Regis Museum

Draper, J 2000 *Discovery Dorset: Regency Riot and Reform* Dovecote Press Wimborne

Ferry, K *Beach Huts and Bathing Machines* Shire Publications Botley

Fowles, 1991 *A Short History of Lyme Regis* Dovecote Press Wimborne

Lane, M 2003 *Jane Austen and Lyme Regis* Jane Austen Society Chawton

LSWR *What the London & South Western Railway Company does for Lyme Regis* (a paper in the Museum collection)

See also details in Paper 12 *The Axminster & Lyme Regis Light Railway*.

Woodworking and boats

Case Woodworking Ltd Uplyme Road builds cabinets in a unit at the old railway station.

Roy Gollop used to build beamy wooden boats at the Old Factory site in Millgreen
Lyme Regis Boatbuilding Academy – training courses in the manufacture of wooden boats set up in the old RAF Station on Monmouth Beach in 1997 by Cmdr Tim Gedge. An annual launch of student-built boats is held annually in December (more information is on its web site www.boatbuildingacademy.com and in an article in G Peters *Boatbuilding in Lyme: A Woodworkers Paradise* East Devon Coast & Country Winter 2010/11 (copy is in the Museum).

Gail McGarva, Wooden Boats – building of traditional wooden boats including pilot gigs and Dorset lerrets

Lyme Bay RIBS – shared ownership, training and provision of services for rigid inflatable boats, Uplyme Road (information on its web site).

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