5: Growers and dealers to the 1860s

(a) The teazle market at the Leeds inns

There is little direct information about the operation of the teazle supply trade in the West Riding before the start of the nineteenth century, and the most detailed and comprehensive evidence is found after 1830. This suggests though, that up to about 1830, when local teazle dealers first began to be recorded in the commercial directories at Huddersfield, the principal, and probably the only outlet of the supply trade was Leeds. During the domestic period in the woollen industry, and into the factory era, Leeds, as the main centre of the broadcloth trade, was itself the leading consumer of teazles. In addition, its geographical position made it the gateway to much of the rest of the industrial districts. Although through the mid-Victorian period its importance as a consuming centre went down, its general role as a hub of communications by road, water and rail serving the wider woollen manufacturing area meant that it remained the chief entrepôt of the teazle commerce. In the twentieth century it was, therefore, still the more significant of the two main centres, with the larger number of merchants up to the 1960s when the drastic changes that affected the trade in its final period reduced its importance, leaving Huddersfield as the location of the last of the traditional teazle merchants.

The commercial directories show that in the first three decades of the nineteenth century there were one or two local teazle dealers in business at any one time in Leeds. However, a series of directory entries of the 1830s and 1840s shows that the primary supply trade serving the Leeds market was then in the hands of a very large number of individual growers and dealers who came in person to Leeds from the growing places of the West of England and Yorkshire, in many cases probably once a year, to sell their teazles, mostly direct to the consumers. The venue or location of this trade consisted mainly of a number of inns in the streets of the older commercial centre of the town.

It is likely that the Leeds teazle market in this form had a long history, going back into the century, and indeed centuries, before. It has already been suggested that prior to the introduction of teazle growing into Yorkshire, the place the dealers came from would have been the West of England, especially Somerset. Before the great expansion in teazle consumption in Yorkshire in the eighteenth century, the number of these dealers making the journey across country along the waterways with their teazles was probably small, perhaps in single figures, though there was in all likelihood a fluctuation in their numbers from one year to another, according to the state of the crop or the conditions of the market. As the demand rose the number of dealers also undoubtedly rose, or possibly, also the amounts brought by the individual dealers increased, though there was fairly certainly an upper limit to the extent to which any one dealer of this kind would have committed himself to in this notoriously speculative business.

Once teazle growing had been introduced into Yorkshire around the 1760s, it is evident that a rapidly increasing number of dealers from the Yorkshire growing villages was also drawn into the Leeds trade, the greater proximity perhaps encouraging more small-scale growers and dealers to become involved personally. By at least 1810, by which time the Yorkshire pack had become the teazle count followed in the Leeds woollen trade, the number of Yorkshire dealers must already have exceeded that of the dealers coming to the Leeds inns from the West of England. That was certainly the case in 1830, according to the earliest and probably the most representative of the three lists of dealers expected to attend at the Leeds inns in different years, published in the commercial directories. In 1830, out of seventy-seven dealers attending at the inns, the larger number, forty-seven, were from the Yorkshire growing district, the other thirty being from the West of England, twenty-two from Somerset, five from Gloucestershire and three from Worcestershire. In

1834, the position was reversed, with thirty-six of the sixty-seven listed dealers originating in the West of England, thirty-three from Somerset and three from Gloucestershire, with the remaining thirty-one being Yorkshire dealers, mostly from the growing districts. In 1839, though, the Yorkshire dealers who were expected to put in an attendance at the inns were again in the majority, twenty-four as compared with eighteen West of England dealers, of whom fifteen travelled from Somerset and three from Gloucestershire. There is also an indication that in 1789, a Shropshire teazle dealer, who may have been purely a middleman, perhaps from somewhere like Bewdley, as Shropshire is not known to have been a growing county, was in Leeds, so that it is possible that at various times, dealers from that county, too, were selling teazles in Leeds.

The role of inns in traditional commercial life is well-known, and in the mid-1720s, Defoe had observed the part played by the inns along the sides of the street, in the running of the business of the twice-weekly Briggate open-air cloth markets in Leeds, around which much of the activity in the Leeds woollen trade revolved. It is likely that then, as was the case one hundred years later, the inns were also used by the members of a variety of trades and businesses, including the teazle dealers. Each of these groups used the inns according to the rhythm and pattern of its own affairs, and according to its own requirements. The time when the teazle market traditionally became active each year was about March, when the previous year's crop had been cut and dried, and made up into stavs, which was usually a winter-time occupation in the growing places, and when travel was reviving after the winter, and the Shropshire teazle dealer doing business in Leeds in 1789, noted above, was in the town in April.[1] The Leeds inns offered the dealers, especially those from the West of England, the necessary accommodation for the time it took them to dispose of their teazles; convenient places familiar to their customers, where they could wait for enquiries and have messages left for them; and when required, storage for the teazles in the outbuildings of the inn yards so that they could be kept secure and under cover. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, some of the purchasers may still have lived and worked in the nearby streets, and delivering or collecting by hand the small lots that many probably needed, would have been a straightforward matter. Clothiers and manufacturers from farther away would have had theirs taken by packhorse or carrier.

In the sections of the Leeds directories of 1830, 1834 and 1839 in which the lists appear, the word 'dealers' was used as a description, whereas in some, mostly later, shorter entries in Leeds directories into the 1840s, relating to the trade at the inns, the term employed was 'growers'. From the purchaser's point of view, there was probably little difference between the two, but it is likely that the body to be found at the inns at any one time included a varied mixture of both dealers and growers. In the growing districts, the description 'grower' or 'teazle grower' had a specific connotation, a grower often being the specialist in the trade who, in partnership with a local farmer or smallholder, grew the crop on a selected piece of land. In the West of England the arrangement between the two was fairly equal, the work and the profits being split between them, this being called 'growing to half'.[2] In Yorkshire, the arrangement was more of a rental agreement, the grower taking the profit, but also bearing any losses.[3] The teazle grower was often, therefore, someone in the rural community with some freedom of action and a bit of capital, sometimes a village inn-keeper, a shop-keeper, mole catcher or such-like. Some growers inevitably became dealers, buying up small lots, which they sold along with the teazles they had grown themselves. Some growers were farmers, whilst some dealers were farmers who did not grow teazles themselves, but acted as middlemen, adding buying and selling teazles to their other lines of business. In the growing districts, growing especially, and also dealing in teazles, because of the peculiar characteristics of the trade, had a tendency sometimes to become a family speciality, involving brothers or cousins, or fathers and sons, and particular surnames recur amongst the lists of names of both West of England and Yorkshire dealers attending at the Leeds inns in the 1830s, and in the entries in

nineteenth and early twentieth century directories covering the Yorkshire growing area.

In 1830 only, the full description was 'Teasel and woad dealers'. In the nineteenth century, woad was still widely used in the dyeing trade, being used in the Yorkshire woollen trade to produce some particular shades. Grown a good deal, especially in Lincolnshire, it was also produced in some of the same areas as teazles, and often by specialist growers like the teazle growers. In the West of England, woad was grown in Somerset at Keynsham near Bristol. In Yorkshire, in the late 1830s, woad, as well as flax and teazles, was grown in what were described as the 'marshlands' near Cawood, Sherburn, Selby and Thorne,[4] and into the pre-1914 years, it was still the practice of teazle growers around Sherburn and South Milford to sprinkle woad seed into the gaps left by frost amongst the young teazle plants during their winter in the ground.[5] Woad was sometimes an additional item sold by teazle dealers and growers, and was sometimes stocked by local teazle dealers in Huddersfield particularly, in the nineteenth century.

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The three Leeds directory lists, as well as providing the names of the dealers along with their places of origin, by county in the case of those from the West of England, and by village or other location for the Yorkshire dealers, also gave the names of the inns at which the individual dealers could be found. This information shows that there was a fairly rigid difference between the West of England and the Yorkshire dealers in their choice of inns. This was most noticeable in the case of the West of England dealers. In 1830, all, apart from three, these being the three Worcestershire dealers, were to be found at one particular inn, the New Cross Inn, whilst the Yorkshire dealers were scattered across nine different inns. In 1834, all of the Somerset and Gloucestershire dealers were again to be found at the New Cross Inn, whilst the Yorkshire dealers attended at six inns, and in 1839, all but one of the dealers who came from the West of England counties were recorded as being in attendance at the New Cross Inn, five other inns being attended by the Yorkshire dealers. This separation was also geographical, because the New Cross Inn was on Meadow Lane south of the river Aire, whilst the inns where the Yorkshire dealers were mostly to be found, lay in the streets to the north of Leeds bridge, directly in the older commercial and business centre of the town, around Briggate and Vicar Lane.

It is probable that this separation was of long standing, perhaps going back to the time when the Yorkshire dealers first began to join the West of England dealers in the trade at the Leeds inns. It was probably also the first outward sign of the increasingly significant difference in the position of the two groups selling teazles in Leeds, the one operating from the far side of the country, the other based on relatively nearby villages that were mostly no farther away than a few hours on horseback, or a day's round trip by wagon.

The evidence of the 1830s helps to suggest that up to at least 1704, when the opening of the Aire & Calder Navigation made it possible for West of England teazles to be brought by water to the centre of Leeds, the West of England dealers attended at inns in the vicinity of Briggate and Vicar Lane, the commercial quarter, transferring their teazles to the inn yards. This may have continued until eventually warehousing was built near the navigation quay, when the practice may have arisen of the dealers keeping their teazles in the warehousing, with the dealers perhaps moving to an inn or inns nearby. The West of England dealers may, therefore, possibly have already moved to an inn near the navigation, perhaps even on the south side, before the dealers and growers from the Yorkshire growing area began to come into the Leeds trade around the 1760s.

Wherever they may have been before, it is clear that the settlement of the main body of the West of England dealers from Somerset, Gloucestershire, and possibly Worcestershire too, at the New Cross Inn by 1830, was a relatively recent occurrence, for the inn, which was not mentioned in a directory of 1822, was apparently part of the South Market development of the middle 1820s. Built between Meadow Lane and Hunslet Lane, this was intended to capture retail and other trade on the south side of Leeds, and had shops, stalls

and other facilities. The project, according to the architect's bird's eye view, included buildings on both Meadow Lane and Hunslet Lane, and the New Cross Inn, and its yard, identified on a later street plan, occupied the block on Meadow Lane at the corner with the South Row, the street running alongside on the left in the view. A directory of 1826 shows that the inn had been established by then. It may well be that having perhaps previously kept their teazles in the navigation warehousing, or elsewhere, the West of England dealers had found it cheaper, or more convenient, to use storage at the South Market, or at the very least, to have been drawn by the attraction of a large new inn with excellent accommodation facilities, judging by the size of the building, and which was suitable as a venue where customers could be met, and from where the teazles could be shown and inspected, and released and taken away.

When, probably around the 1760s, the Yorkshire growers and dealers had also begun to visit Leeds to sell their teazles, it was also necessary for them, in a consuming market that was still made up of a large number of smaller-scale buyers, to frequent the inns in search of business. However, not being under the same necessity as the West of England dealers to bring their teazles with them, they were in a position to sell on samples, and then make their delivery, or deliveries, in due course, when they had enough orders to make it worthwhile to send a wagonload of teazles to Leeds. They were, therefore, able to select inns more advantageously placed in the streets and yards in the business quarter north of the river where up to the second quarter of the nineteenth century much of the trade of the woollen industry was located, and which still retained its commercial importance. As a result, in 1830, out of the nine inns where Yorkshire dealers waited on business, seven were north of the Aire and, in fact, only two of the forty-seven Yorkshire dealers were at inns to the south of the river. Some of the inns, the Angel, the Ship and the Talbot, were on Briggate itself. The Spotted Cow was on Vicar Lane, the London Tavern being in the same vicinity. The two farthest away, the Black Bull, probably the inn of that name on Lands Lane, and the Horse and Trumpet on Upperhead row, as it was then styled, were only a couple of minutes' walk away from the others.

One result of the situation was that whilst in the 1830s the West of England dealers remained almost wholly permanently attached to attendance at the New Cross Inn, the Yorkshire dealers were free to move amongst the inns north of the river. Compared with 1830, in 1834, the Angel, Ship, Talbot and Horse and Trumpet had been given up and a couple of new ones, the Boot and Shoe, on Wood Street, Briggate, and the New Inn, on Vicar Lane, had come in amongst the five inns north of the river attended by the Yorkshire dealers. By 1839, the selection was again different, the Boot and Shoe and the London Tavern being absent from that year's list, and some dealers resorting to two further inns, the Black Swan and the Old Parrot. The nature of this process of movement and change is reflected in the way in which the numbers of Yorkshire dealers attending at these inns varied not only in any one year, but from one time to another. In 1830, some inns, the Eagle and Child, on Hunslet Lane south of the Aire, and the Talbot, were host to no more than one dealer, whilst the Horse and Trumpet and the Ship had two and the Black Bull four. Three out of the nine using the London Tavern were from Worcestershire. This meant that there was an enormous disparity between all these and the Spotted Cow, which in 1830 twenty-six Yorkshire dealers chose as their place to meet customers. By 1834, however, the number in attendance at the Spotted Cow had fallen to eighteen, whilst the next most popular inn, the Boot and Shoe attracted seven, still a considerable difference. In 1839, though, no more than three Yorkshire dealers chose the Spotted Cow, the largest number, fourteen, being in attendance at the Black Swan, which was, like the Boot and Shoe in 1834, previously absent from the listings. This fluidity is reflected further by the fact that amongst the few Yorkshire dealers who can be seen from these lists to have attended at the inns on more than one occasion, over half moved to a different inn after their first known visit. The reason for the shifting popularity of particular inns cannot now be known, but it is apparent that for a good many of the Yorkshire dealers, the choice of an

inn was not completely haphazard. There was a certain tendency for dealers from one place, and for dealers who were probably related to each other, to select an inn together. It was not uncharacteristic that the three Worcestershire dealers in 1830, two of whom shared the surname of Jackson, chose the same inn, the London Tavern, having probably made the journey together. Also in 1830, the four dealers at the Angel all came from South Milford, whilst the two at the Horse and Trumpet were from Sherburn. The two dealers from Biggin were both amongst the large group at the Spotted Cow, which also included five out of six Darrington dealers in 1830. There was a tendency, seen in 1834 and 1839, for the dealers from Wistow and Wistow Lordship, at the extreme eastern end of the Barkston Ash growing district of Yorkshire, to choose an inn in common. Amongst those dealers, who were most probably relatives of each other, there were members of some of the leading growing families in the Yorkshire growing villages. In 1839, the three Sherburn dealers in attendance at the New Inn by themselves included two of the Hey family, of whom, between 1820 and 1840, four were engaged in the teazle business as growers and dealers. In that same year, the three to be found at the Spotted Cow included two Burtofts, or Bortofts, from the South Milford family of growers and dealers. One of these two was probably the James Bortoft who had a subsequent career as a dealer, and who in the 1860s, established himself as a teazle merchant in Leeds, a business which, as James Bortoft & Sons, teazle growers, dealers and merchants of South Milford and Leeds, was the chief supplier of Yorkshire teazles to the West Riding market down to 1914.

Of the thirteen different inns recorded as having been used by the teazle dealers as their places of business in Leeds in the 1830s, all but three have disappeared. One of those to survive is the Ship, which, down its old passageway or yard off Briggate, still looks much as it must have done when in 1830 Jonathan Walton of Lumby and Jonathan Wilson of Sherburn waited there for customers. A little way below the Ship is the Angel Inn in the Angel Inn Yard, also between Briggate and Lands Lane, where in 1830, four South Milford dealers, George Baker, Richard Paver, James Swallow and Henry Wood were to be found. The third inn, the Horse and Trumpet on the Headrow, where in 1830 William Blackburn and George Fleetham, both of Sherburn, were in attendance, has been given an ornate Victorian face-lift. Older photographs of some amongst this named group of inns used by the teazle dealers can be seen on the Leodis website.

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The compilation and publication in the Leeds directories of 1830, 1834, and 1839 of the lists of visiting teazle dealers along with their places of origin and the names of the inns they attended, indicates the great importance of the teazle market at the inns at the time. Nevertheless, it is clear from the three lists themselves that even by 1830, the business at the inns was in the midst of a process of change and decline. There was a steady fall in the recorded numbers of dealers attending at the inns, from seventy-seven in 1830, to sixty-seven in 1834 and then forty-two in 1839. After 1839, no more lists were compiled and published. In their place was a series of short notes relating to the trading at the inns, and instead of these forming separate sections in the main body of the directories, they were tucked away in the classified columns, along with the names of the local teazle dealers. The first of these brief entries in fact appeared in 1837, the reference being to the ‘Many Teasel Growers from Somersetshire & various parts of Yorkshire’ who attended at a number of named inns. This was amended in 1842 to ‘About 40’ attending ‘occasionally’. This was reprinted verbatim in 1843, and again in 1847, when it was put inside brackets to indicate its decreasing significance. The inns named in all of these short entries were, in order, the Black Bull, Boot and Shoe, London Tavern, Spotted Cow, and New Inn, the resorts mainly of the Yorkshire dealers, and the New Cross Inn, that of the West of England dealers.[6] After 1847, no further references to the teazle market at the Leeds inns are known, either in the directories or elsewhere.

This decline in attendance at the inns was not evenly distributed, though, but was more

pronounced, and took place more rapidly, amongst the Yorkshire dealers. Their numbers, as recorded in the three directory lists fell steadily, from forty-seven in 1830, to thirty-one in 1834, and twenty-four in 1839, a drop of about one half. Amongst the dealers from the West of England, there was also a fall in attendance, but this was more hesitant and less severe than that amongst the Yorkshire dealers. Between 1830 and 1834, their numbers in fact rose from thirty to thirty-six before coming down to eighteen in 1839, still more than half of the attendances in 1830. By counties, it is true that after 1830, no more dealers from Worcestershire were recorded, whilst the Gloucestershire representation went down from five to three in 1834. However, this number from Gloucestershire held up again in 1839, and when Somerset is taken on its own, the continuity in attendances looks rather stronger. It was in fact a rise by one half in the numbers from Somerset, from twenty-two to thirty-three that caused the surge in 1834 compared with 1830, whilst the 1839 figure of fifteen still compares reasonably well with that of twenty-two Somerset dealers present in 1830. Although, according to the 1839 list, the Yorkshire dealers still formed the majority of those attending at the inns, the first of the short notes in 1837, gives the order of the places the dealers came from as ‘Somersetshire’ first, and ‘various parts of Yorkshire’ second, which suggests that into the 1840s, it was the Somerset dealers who continued to form the larger part of the roughly forty dealers who reportedly continued to attend at the inns.

There is no reason to think that in the 1830s, the demand was already falling to such an extent as to cause the disappearance of half the Yorkshire dealers from the market. In fact, at the same time as the attendances by the Yorkshire dealers at the Leeds inns was falling by around one half, the county directories suggest that at Sherburn and South Milford, the two nearby main centres of the Yorkshire growing and supply trade, there was a rise in the total number of known dealers involved in the business. At Sherburn, there were thirteen in 1830, sixteen in 1834 and eighteen in 1838-39. At South Milford, for which the information is less complete, the number rose from the twelve of 1834 to thirteen in 1838-9. From 1834 to 1838-9, taking the two places together, there was a rise from twenty-eight to thirty-one.[7]

Even in 1830, though, nearly half of the known Sherburn dealers do not seem to have been in attendance at an inn in Leeds. In 1834, this rose to over two-thirds, and by 1838-9, over half were not at any of the recorded inns. In 1834, one third of South Milford dealers were not in attendance at the listed inns, and in 1838-9, this had gone up to two-thirds. In 1838-9, out of the thirty-one dealers in the two villages, compared with eleven who attended at the inns, twenty did not.

What seems most likely is that the abandonment of the inns by the Yorkshire dealers especially, was the result of changes taking place in the pattern of demand in the woollen industry, changes from which the Yorkshire dealers were better-placed to adapt to, and to benefit from, than the West of England dealers, and which made the Yorkshire dealers decreasingly dependant on regular attendances at the inns. Increasingly, as has been seen, through the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, the Leeds woollen trade and the woollen manufacture generally, was becoming characterised by steam-powered mills and factories using gigs for raising. These mills not only required supplies of teazles on a greater scale than the hand dressing shops of the recent past, but also needed them in the particular types and qualities, and at appropriate prices, to suit the run of their own business through the year. In addition, teazles in the form of stavs were bulky, and needed dry storage conditions, a likely problem in many industrial buildings where space of any kind was probably scarce. The mills, therefore, required suppliers from whom they could order what they needed at any particular time, and receive deliveries accordingly, so that the flow of supplies for the gigs could be maintained evenly, in a way that would not overwhelm the mill storage space, and so that the handle setters and their assistants in the mills, who clipped and sorted the teazles, would also have a steady flow of work. Ideally, too, with an expensive and variable commodity, establishing a long-term

connection with a nearby supplier who could be trusted on quality, prices and deliveries, was better than the more random chance of the main annual round of business at the inns.

Of the two groups, the West of England and the Yorkshire dealers, it was the latter, with their storage barns and their supply network at hand, who were better able to meet the requirements of the Leeds cloth finishing mills. The evidence of the three lists in the 1830s shows that they began to use the inns in a different way, putting in an attendance to establish contact with one or more customers, and then turning this into a regular commercial relationship. They, therefore, only needed to return to the inns if for any reason they needed to find an additional or a replacement buyer, and it is not impossible that many were in any case able to make their own contacts amongst the great number of mills in Leeds.

The way in which the Yorkshire dealers responded to this situation, and not only abandoned the inns, but did so at an increasingly rapid rate in the 1830s, can be seen best when the attendances of individual named dealers at the inns are examined. Out of the ninety-three Yorkshire dealers whose names are recorded in the lists of 1830, 1834, and 1839, not one was present at any of the inns on all three occasions, and no more than ten were recorded twice. Of the forty-seven who were present in 1830, seven were seen again in 1834, and one in 1839. However, out of the thirty-one in attendance at the inns in 1834, only two were back again in 1839. This probably helps to explain the way in which the attendances by the Yorkshire dealers at the various inns they attended in the 1830s, fluctuated and varied so much, most of the dealers either being new-comers to the Leeds market at the inns, or very infrequent attenders on business there.

By contrast, out of sixty individual dealers from the West of England who were present in Leeds in 1830, 1834 and 1839, usually at the New Cross Inn, fifteen were recorded twice and five on all three occasions. Although none of the five Gloucestershire dealers of 1830 was recorded again in the later years, out of three who came in 1834, two were in Leeds again in 1839. As before, when Somerset is taken on its own, the record of repeat attendances is particularly strong. Of the twenty-two dealers from the county recorded in 1830, over half, thirteen, came again in 1834, and one other in 1839. Of the thirty-three present in 1834, eleven returned in 1839. Of the forty-eight individual Somerset dealers, thirteen attended twice, and all five of those present in all three years were from Somerset.

The particular Yorkshire growers and dealers who were best able to take advantage of the changing pattern of demand in the Leeds market, were those in the nearby Barkston Ash growing villages, which were not only the main area of production because of their closeness to Leeds, but which, because of their geographical position, were on the transit route for teazles coming in towards Leeds from the outlying parts of the growing area, especially those towards and in the East and North Ridings. The three lists seem to confirm that this inward flow was being increasingly subsumed into the business of the Barkston Ash dealers as they found the additional stocks needed to supply the demands of their mill customers. In 1830, a couple of dealers from North Duffield and Cliffe in the East Riding were present at the inns in Leeds, whilst a sizable contingent of six from Darrington and one from Purston Jaglin came from the growing localities south of the Aire. However, in 1834, no dealers from the East Riding can be identified, whilst those from south of the Aire, who were, though, close enough to Leeds and some of the manufacturing towns to make their own arrangements, were, with a single exception, also absent. The only dealers from the direction of the North Riding were one from Collingham near Wetherby, in 1834, and one from York in 1839. One piece of more direct evidence from 1840, about the absorption of stocks of teazles from the outlying growing places into the business of the Barkston Ash dealers at this time, is a note of a purchase of teazles from Long Marston near York, by Jonathan Wilson, the Sherburn teazle dealer and farmer, who had them transferred to his thatched barn on Low Street, Sherburn,[8] presumably to form part of his stocks for sale in the Leeds market. Jonathan Wilson may have exemplified the shift that was taking place, because earlier, in 1830, he had been in

attendance at a Leeds inn, the Ship on Briggate, but was not noted again at an inn in either 1834 or 1839.

Although the attendance at the inns by West of England dealers dropped to some extent in the 1830s, as has been seen, the Somerset dealers especially continued to rely on what were probably still annual visits to the Leeds inns. Less is known about the details of how their business continued to operate during the time when the Yorkshire dealers were quitting regular business at the inns, but there is evidence, which will be looked at in detail later, that around the 1830s, the West of England dealers made attempts to improve their contacts in the Leeds market. One solution lay in the appointment of an agent, or possibly agents, to represent them during the periods when they had returned to the West of England. However, another outcome to the situation of the West of England dealers selling teazles in Leeds can be found in the teazle records for 1859-67 of one particular Yorkshire dealer, William Bean. Bean's dealings provide a guide to the further development of the West of England supply trade; throw light on the way that the individual Yorkshire dealers of the nineteenth century undertook their business; and trace forward from the last mention in 1847, the way in which the business of the Barkston Ash dealers in the Leeds market developed.

(b) The mid-Victorian period

William Bean was probably the farmer of that name noted in a directory of 1857 at Church Fenton, a mile or so to the north of Sherburn.[9] His name does not appear in any of the county or Leeds directories as a teazle dealer or grower, nor does the surname occur anywhere else in connection with the teazle business. Although growing was still carried on at Church Fenton then, there are no indications from his records that he was himself a grower. There is, though, evidence that he was buying and selling teazles, and overall he seems to have been a middleman, a farmer with business, according to his ledger, in commodities such as potatoes, wheat and linseed cake, perhaps also in Leeds, to which he added dealing in teazles.

Demand in the Leeds teazle market was still strong enough to have attracted Bean into the trade in 1859, when he apparently sold his first teazles, the relatively small quantity of seventeen packs of 13,500 each. In 1860, he disposed of 143 packs, and the annual amount rose to 184 in 1861, and then to 238 in 1862, the maximum for any one year. In succeeding years he sold 168, 207, 197 and 151 packs, with a final sale to one of his mill customers of twenty packs in 1867. In 1866, however, he was also disposing of teazles elsewhere, apparently to clear his stocks with the aim of quitting the business. Altogether, he handled at least 1,325 packs.

Bean had no more than five different customers in the woollen trade, and one of these definitely, and three others probably, can be identified as cloth finishers in Leeds. Of the five, one, Henry Wilson, perhaps of Carlton Cross Mill, Leeds, was Bean's main customer throughout, and he was also evidently Bean's first contact in the Leeds market, for in the years 1859-61, Wilson was the sole buyer. Bean may have tried to expand his business, or possibly been used as a stand-by by other firms, for from 1862 he did occasional business with four other customers. The most important of these was Abraham Webster & Son, who took forty-one packs in 1862 and eighty packs in 1865. Jonathan Crawford & Son bought twenty-one packs in 1862. A further new buyer, Binns & Boyd of Leeds took six packs in 1863, and another four in 1864, whilst a Mr Pickard purchased thirteen packs in 1865. In the last two years all of Bean's sales to his industrial customers went to Henry Wilson, who, all told, bought somewhere over 1,157 packs, accounting for approaching 90 per cent of Bean's business with the mills.

In the years up to and including 1863, Bean did not always note the sources of the teazles that he sold, and it was only in 1864 that he became more meticulous about this. What these details show, though, is that although it might have been expected from Bean's location out in the heart of the Yorkshire growing area, that Yorkshire teazles would

have dominated his business, from as early as 1860 he was selling substantial and increasingly large quantities of West of England, or 'West' teazles, and that these eventually made up the whole of his trade in English teazles with the mills. Also, and equally surprising at first sight, from 1863 he was selling mostly smaller amounts of German teazles. No Yorkshire teazles were mentioned in his sales records until 1864.

Nevertheless, Bean is known to have bought Yorkshire teazles in the period up to 1863, and it is likely that the large quantities of teazles recorded up until then, but not given a description in terms of source, were in fact Yorkshire teazles. If, as is most likely, Bean began by handling locally-grown teazles, it would have been natural for him to have recorded these simply as 'teazles' amongst the various other items he wrote notes about, but to have made a specific identification against other types as he began to deal in them, until in 1864 he found it advisable to describe them all by their origin because the balance of his stocks had changed so much. Assuming this to have been the case, Yorkshire teazles can be seen to have made up the larger part of Bean's trade in the early years of his business in the Leeds teazle market. They made up the initial seventeen packs sold in 1859, nearly ninety out of 143 in 1860, 144 out of 184 in 1861 and 194 of the 238 packs sold in 1862. However, that was the last year in which Yorkshire teazles predominated. In 1863, the sales of the no more than seventy-four packs of Yorkshire were exceeded by those of the eighty-nine of West. In 1864, the quantity of Yorkshire rose, to ninety-one packs, but so did the amount of West, to 110. The sales of Yorkshire then fell in 1865 to forty-two packs as against 103 of West, and in 1866 and 1867, no Yorkshire teazles at all were sold, the English all being West teazles.

German teazles first appeared with the sale of five packs in 1863. These were then priced at £5 5*s*. 0*d*., compared with Yorkshire and West at £4 10*s.* 0*d*., so that as well as being reputedly inferior in quality, they were very expensive. Perhaps as a result of both of these factors, there was little enthusiasm for them, Bean also having to put the price up repeatedly, presumably to pay for them being in long-term storage whereas with Yorkshire and West teazles there was usually an annual flow in the supply trade. By 1864, when six packs were disposed of, the cost, as a result, had risen to £5 10*s*. 0*d*. In 1865, though, which may have been a year of shortages, fifty-two packs of German were sold at £6 4*s*. 0*d*. each, mostly to Abraham Webster & Son. Another six, at £6 10*s*. 0*d.*, went in 1866, and Bean was then still left with some of them on his hands.

The developing pattern of Bean's sales of English teazles is reflected in the surviving notes of his individual purchases of teazles. From 1862 to 1866 he recorded dealings with eight different suppliers, most of whom can be linked one way or another with either the local Yorkshire or the West teazle trade. Up to 1864, the chief connection was with Yorkshire suppliers. There was a gap covering 1865, but most of the notes from 1866 relate to business with people from whom Bean bought, or had bought, West teazles. Of the four individuals from whom he bought stocks in 1862-64, three can be connected with the Yorkshire growing trade, the only one who is not identifiable being John Harrison, from whom a purchase was made in 1862. Also in 1862, though, Bean bought two loads of teazles from William Greenwood, a name which can pretty certainly be related to that of the dealer of the same name of Selby, a few miles on the east side of Church Fenton, who in 1830, was selling teazles at the Black Bull in Leeds. In 1863 kings, buttons and scrubs were purchased from W. Raper, the surname being one found in parts of the local area, whilst in 1864, what were described specifically as Yorkshire teazles were obtained from William Batman, undoubtedly of the South Milford family in which in the 1830s a William and John Batman were farmers and teazle growers or dealers. From then on, apart from the otherwise unknown William Longbottom from whom Bean in 1866, noted purchases of best, kings, buttons and scrubs, probably in fact West, all of the known suppliers were definitely connected with the West of England growing trade. Two notes of 1866 related to teazles bought from John Gingill, this surname being a distinctive one from the West. One was about a payment of £5 on account, whilst the other referred to 'old' West teazles from

Gingill, indicating that Bean had already bought these by at least 1865. Two others who sold Bean West teazles in 1866 were S. Bennitt and one Collins of Bishop Sutton. This was a place in Somerset close to the main growing villages north of the Mendips, and the name can probably be connected with the surname of the John and Joseph Collins or Collings of Somerset, who in 1830 and 1834 were to be found selling teazles in Leeds at the New Cross Inn.

Bean's handling of German teazles seems to have been based on a single purchase in 1863 from J. Baley, who may have been the agent for the exporters, or perhaps the actual importer. The quantities, made up of seventy packs sold, that is 945,000 teazles, plus some others left on Bean's hands, made up altogether somewhere around 1,000,000 teazles. They were probably shipped from Hamburg to Goole, and may well already have been in dockside warehousing at Goole, or possibly Leeds, when Bean bought them. If so, they may have remained *in situ* the whole time, forcing Bean to pay the charges, which were probably responsible for his having to keep putting up the price.

The declining significance of Yorkshire teazles in Bean's stocks over the years 1859-65, and their eventual replacement by West, may have been a direct result of the reduction in the amount of growing in Yorkshire as the demand for teazles in the Leeds woollen trade went down. Although growing in the West of England was also to suffer, the much larger production in Somerset meant that supplies could be switched from the declining local consuming market to that in Yorkshire. What is not known is the mechanism through which Bean contracted for his supplies of West of England teazles. However, it seems likely, after the last known reference to the attendances by the visiting growers and dealers at the Leeds inns in 1847, that some kind of presence may have been maintained, perhaps still at the New Cross Inn on Meadow Lane next to the South Market, or some similar location. What the circumstances of Bean's trade suggests is that into the mid-Victorian period, the West of England growers or dealers had further adapted their own activities to suit the changing conditions of the market. Operating from the far side of the country, but with the large consuming trade in Leeds itself disappearing, it was perhaps less feasible for them to expect to sell direct to the customers, as had once been the case. Instead, they seem to have turned to supplying local Barkston Ash dealers, such as Bean, who already had a foothold in the trade, and were in a better position to look after their business with their customers at the mills, and who were, themselves, beginning to need additional supplies from elsewhere. They were also fairly certainly catering for the requirements of the still small group of dealers or merchants based in Leeds itself.

It is not known either how Bean's contacts with his customers were initiated, but his connection with one major buyer, Henry Wilson, over a total of ten years suggests a pattern that was probably aimed at by many Barkston Ash dealers and growers selling teazles to the cloth finishing mills in Leeds. It was undoubtedly by means of such arrangements that the Yorkshire dealers freed themselves from regular attendance at the inns in the decades earlier. Bean seems to have worked to maintain his business with Wilson, seeking alternative sources of West and German teazles as the available supplies of Yorkshire presumably diminished. In this respect, Bean was probably at a disadvantage compared with some others in apparently not having been a grower himself.

There is, in fact, only scanty or indirect evidence in Bean's ledger about some of the other aspects of the management of his teazle operation. There are few indications about the routes that the various types of teazles took to reach him, the quantities in which they were supplied, the nature, location and duration of storage, and whether Bean, himself, had to have any preparation or sorting carried out. Only the pattern of sales and deliveries is a little clearer.

Yorkshire teazles that Bean bought, such as the two loads from William Greenwood in 1862, would most probably have been taken to Bean's own farm at Church Fenton. West of England dealers from whom he bought may already have transported their teazles to Leeds, as seems to have been the earlier practice. However, they may have been sent on

later, and it is not impossible that they were taken up-river to Selby, and then moved by road to Bean's own farm in the first instance. Bean, however, may have had to follow the practice of taking temporary storage, and the only specific notes of this, in 1866, refer to West teazles. These were kept 'over the shade', or in the 'Chamber', probably one and the same, at an inn called the Wheat Sheaf, perhaps out in the growing area near Church Fenton. It has already been suggested that the German teazles bought in 1863 might have been in long-term commercial storage, most likely either at Goole or in Leeds.

Although railway lines, including the one passing through Church Fenton itself, ran across the growing area into Leeds, there are no indications of rail transportation having been used. Conveyance by wagon from Church Fenton to the mills in Leeds had the advantage of door-to-door delivery in the course of a single day's round trip, with a minimum of handling and delay, and down to 1914 road transport was still frequently in use between the growing district and at least the nearer mills. In some years, Bean recorded over a dozen separate sales, ranging in quantity from sixteen stavs, just over half a pack, to forty or more packs, and there were clearly frequent deliveries to meet orders as they came in. Smaller lots for more than one customer may have been sent at the same time, or with other goods that Bean handled. Bean bought his Yorkshire teazles in the form of stavs of 300, forty-five of these making a Yorkshire growers' pack of 13,500, the recognised unit for sales to, and purchases by, the mills. However, he would have bought West teazles from the growers of these by the West pack of 20,000, made up of forty stavs of 500. When selling to the mills, he followed the usual conversion of twenty-seven West stavs of 500 to the Yorkshire pack. It is possible, therefore, to identify the teazles that Bean had in store at the Wheat Sheaf in 1866 as West, because alongside both of his notes he had written '27 to the pack'. Where a customer's order included half a pack, in West teazles, the half was supplied in the form of fourteen stavs. Some of the orders that Bean fulfilled were for round figures in packs, but the great majority were for packs and a miscellaneous number of stavs, suggesting that often the mill took whatever Bean had in stock of any particular category that was required. The main exception was with orders for German, which were mostly for a number of packs. These may have come to Bean, not in the usual English form of stavs, but loose in bales or perhaps boxes, containing a particular number, and so it is more likely that Bean had to have whatever was needed counted out, and that they would mostly, therefore, have been ordered and supplied by a number of packs.

The English categories that Bean sold were those usual in the trade, described sometimes as West or Yorkshire, best or middlings, which were the main part of the crop, often simply called teazles, kings, used on heavier cloths, scrubs, which were inferior or misshapen teazles, and buttons, the small teazles usually used to pack in the larger teazles on the machines. Prices could vary a good deal from one year to another. In 1859, Bean sold teazles at £2 15*s*. 0*d*. per pack. In the following year they were £3, going up to £4 14*s*. 0*d*., and on one occasion £5. West teazles cost £4 10*s.* 0*d*. in 1863, and West buttons £1 16*s*. 0*d*. per pack, whilst in 1864, Yorkshire and West teazles were priced equally at £4 15*s.* 0*d*. An order from Binns & Boyd of Leeds in 1864 was priced by Bean as Yorkshire kings at £3 7*s*. 0*d*., Yorkshire buttons 27*s.* 6*d.*, and scrubs 28*s*. Sales to Henry Wilson, Bean's main customer, were on credit, the account not finally being settled until 1 April 1869, two years after the last delivery. Part of the payment consisted of 5½ yds of cloth supplied to Bean from Wilson's mill on 28 September 1868.

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Although in 1866, Bean was still doing a considerable business in buying and selling West teazles, it is evident that he was already planning the retirement from the business that took place effectively in the following year. The decline of the Leeds consuming market affected the position of the Barkston Ash growers and dealers such as Bean, who had dominated much of the trade until the period, in two ways. The surviving consuming

market was scattered across the towns of the manufacturing districts on the far side of Leeds, beyond their reach. In addition, the Yorkshire teazle cultivation, which provided the basic commodity of their business, was in decline. One sign of the change in the previously dominant role of the Barkston Ash trade was that around 1860, the Leeds teazle merchant firm of Cornock, in a reversal of the usual commercial direction of operations, themselves opened a depot at Sherburn, in order to buy in the supplies of Yorkshire teazles needed as part of their business. A further sign was that in the mid-1860s, the South Milford grower and dealer James Bortoft, with whose activities William Bean must have been familiar, in a step which was the counterpart of Cornock's, advanced his own commercial operation to Leeds itself, opening a store as a teazle merchant there, undoubtedly so that he could keep in touch with the consuming trade in the main woollen manufacturing districts on the west side of Leeds.

In 1866, therefore, although William Bean was able to sell his largest ever annual quantity of West teazles, 145 packs, to Henry Wilson, and six packs of German, with a final twenty packs of West in 1867, in early 1866 he was also taking steps to dispose of some of his less useful items in stock. On 3 April 1866, he delivered to the warehouse of Mr Lambert old West middlings originally from John Gingill, and on 17 April, these were followed by West middlings that had come from S. Bennitt, and that had been stored over the shade at the Wheat Sheaf. A third consignment three days later, consisted of West middlings supplied by Collins of Bishop Sutton, and the last of the German, in middlings and buttons. The significance of these three deliveries is that the Mr Lambert who bought them was undoubtedly Samuel Lambert, one of the handful of specialist teazle dealers or merchants based in Leeds itself. Although the independent activities of the small-scale growers and dealers in the Yorkshire growing district did not disappear altogether, the transfer of Bean's unwanted stocks to Lambert's warehouse foreshadowed the coming dominance of the Leeds teazle merchants in the West Riding teazle commerce as the business passed into a new phase.[10]