

The place of Godalming in the hosiery and knitwear industry: history and products

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An account is given of the development of the machine knitting industry in Godalming from its origins in the 17th century to the present day, based largely upon documentary sources. The Godalming knitwear industry has survived as a remnant of an early distribution pattern centred on London. During the course of the 18th century the industry became largely concentrated in the East Midlands. It survived in Godalming by specialisation, in underclothing from 1790 to the late 19th century and subsequently in the manufacture of outerwear, in which Godalming firms played an innovative role.

Introduction

The first knitting machine, which was known as the stocking frame, was invented in the late 16th century by William Lee of Calverton in Nottinghamshire. The frame is illustrated in its developed form in fig 1 and its mechanism is described in Appendix 1 (Microfiche 30-2).

After attempting unsuccessfully to establish his invention in London in the 1590s, Lee took the frame to France. In the hostile climate which followed the assassination of Henri IV in 1610, Lee's associates returned to London and set up work in Old Street Square. Shortly afterwards, some of them started a second centre of manufacture in Nottinghamshire.¹ During the course of the 17th century the London framework knitting industry spread to several outlying districts, including west Surrey and neighbouring parts of Hampshire and Berkshire. Subsequently the English hosiery industry became overwhelmingly concentrated in the East Midland counties of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire but a remnant of the early distribution pattern has survived in Surrey until the present day.

The quatercentenary of William Lee's invention was celebrated in 1989 and a short interim account of the author's work on the Godalming framework knitting industry was published as part of the Surrey contribution to the events of that year.² This article described the rise and decline of the early phase of the industry from the late 17th to late 18th century, and briefly outlined the developments from 1790 onwards on which the author's more recent research has concentrated. These developments include the manufacture of fleecy hosiery, the relatively early introduction of the factory system in the district and the pioneering role of Godalming firms in the manufacture of outerwear. The present article deals with the history of the industry primarily as revealed in documentary sources. The associated buildings are discussed in detail elsewhere.³

The early framework knitting industry: the 17th and 18th centuries

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDUSTRY IN SURREY

The 19th century historians of the industry, Gravenor Henson and William Felkin, implied that the stocking frame spread from London to Godalming at an early stage in its development.⁴ However the earliest records of individual framework knitters in Surrey and Hampshire date from the 1680s and there is little documentary evidence for the '50 hands' Henson estimated were employed in the region by 1664. There were then some 400 frames

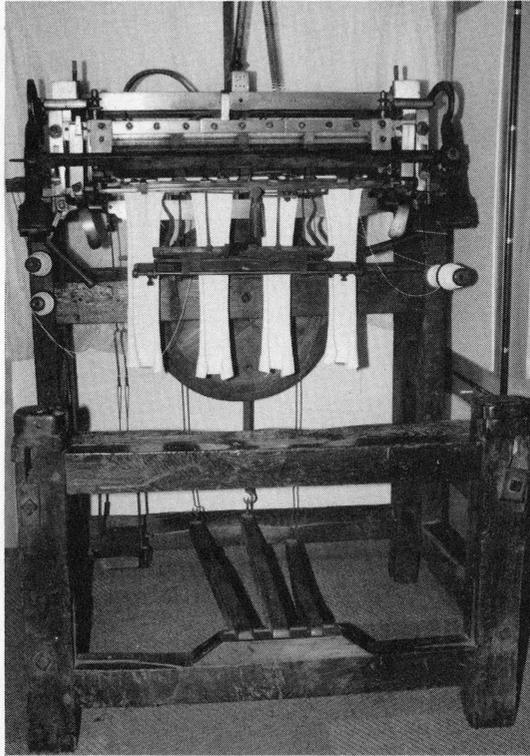


Fig 1. Stocking frame in Godalming Museum. A detail is shown in Appendix 1, Microfiche 30.

in London and a further 50 around Berkhamsted and Tring in Hertfordshire and Chesham in Buckinghamshire.⁵

The earliest definitely recorded framework knitter in Godalming is Isaac Fortrie, who was party to a deed of 1681-2.⁶ He was born in 1648 and his first child was buried in 1671,⁷ showing that he was of an age to enter the trade in the 1660s. It is possible that Henry Sad, described as a silk weaver of Milford in 1676 and 1677,⁸ was a framework knitter since before the knitting frame became familiar its operators were sometimes so described. Several names in early records of the Framework Knitters' Company can be identified as Surrey men, including Isaac Fortrie and Joshua Parkhurst in 1698, John, Joseph and Richard Chitty and Caleb Tickner in 1696 and John Bowler in 1701.⁹ The earliest known Hampshire framework knitters are Edward Limming of Alton who died in 1687, and Charles Clements of Odiham and Richard Matthews of Alton who died in the 1690s.¹⁰ Their ages and date of entry to the trade are not known. No named framework knitters have been identified in Berkshire.

Technical difficulties with the design of the stocking frame held back the development of the industry throughout most of the 17th century. However once the frame had been perfected, growth was rapid (table 1) and the number of frames in the country as a whole increased by roughly a factor of thirteen between 1664 and 1714.¹¹ The growth in Surrey and adjacent areas was representative of this development and is reflected in the large number of framework knitters recorded after the turn of the century.¹²

Framework knitting replaced cloth manufacturing as the chief textile industry of south-west Surrey. Historically the district had been part of a medieval woollen manufacturing region which extended also across Hampshire and into the neighbouring counties of Sussex and Berkshire, and was known for its medley, its blue and white broadcloths and especially for its kerseys. Changes in farming practices in the 16th century brought a decline in the

YEAR	1669	1714	1753	1782	1812	1844
Surrey, Hants, Berks	50*	700	350	200	130	102
Bucks and Herts	50					
London	400	2,500	1,000	500	137	60
East Midlands	150	3,400	10,000	17,350	25,168	44,040
Britain, total	660	8,000	14,000	20,000	29,590	48,482

* see note 5

TABLE 1: Number of stocking frames in South-East England and the East Midlands, 1669–1844 (Source: W Felkin, *An Account of the Machine Wrought Hosiery Trade*, 2nd ed 1845)

production of short-stapled fleece from which woollens were made and an increase in long-stapled wool which was suitable for worsteds. A great variety of 'new draperies' was introduced, including worsteds and mixed fabrics, which greatly increased in popularity.¹³ As a result of these changes the old woollen industry in Surrey and Hampshire was in decline in the 17th century,¹⁴ although it survived on a reduced scale in Godalming, where a small woollen industry survived even into the 19th century.¹⁵

Many of the early framework knitters in Godalming were from families previously associated with the cloth industry.¹⁶ However the new industry clearly did not develop from woollen manufacturing since in the early stages it was involved particularly with the production of silk stockings. For instance, the probate inventory of Edward Limming of Alton in Hampshire in 1687 included 'Item a fframe to knitt silke stockins and other materialls to ye same belonging' valued at £22¹⁷ and several men in the Surrey industry were described specifically as knitters of silk.¹⁸ Indeed in 1664 three-fifths of the country's frames were employed on silk, making stockings, waistcoat pieces and other small items of dress.¹⁹ Worsteds stockings were also made in the region but were the product of a different technology from woollen manufacture, involving the preparation of long wool by combing. Definite evidence for the manufacture of worsted stockings in Surrey is known from the 1720s, when framework knitters were associated with a Mr Willmore's worsted manufactory in Farnham.²⁰ Several combmakers are recorded in the district in the 1730s and 1740s.²¹

There is no known connection between framework knitting and hand knitting in the region. Indeed no evidence has been found of a hand-knitting industry in the relevant part of Surrey. The development of hand knitting was closely linked with changes in male fashion which revealed the leg and required well-fitting hose. Cloth hose, which were cut on the bias and seamed, were increasingly superseded by knitted wool hose. From the 16th century onwards a cottage hand knitting industry developed in many parts of Britain, often as a part-time occupation alongside farming, and large quantities of stockings were exported. Hand knitted silk stockings, which became fashionable among the wealthy, were imported from Spain and by the late 16th century were being produced in England.²² A pauper hand knitting industry in Leicestershire, which produced worsted stockings, significantly influenced the subsequent development of framework knitting in that county.²³ In the south of England, Wokingham in Berkshire enacted bylaws in 1625 concerning the employment of the poor at hand knitting silk stockings. However production apparently ceased there around 1629, some decades before the introduction of framework knitting in the region.²⁴ It is recorded that hand knitted worsted and silk stockings were made in Hampshire, but in the southern part of the county rather than the area where framework knitting became established.²⁵ In Surrey large quantities of knit hose were dyed in the 1580s and 1590s in the northern part of the county, at Kingston and Southwark, but their source is not known²⁶ and in the late 17th century John Aubrey wrote that there was 'a great market for *Welch* stockings at Farnham.'²⁷ The evidence therefore suggests that framework knitting in the region was a new development which was introduced from London.

THE SURREY FRAMEWORK KNITTERS

The early framework knitting industry of the region was dispersed among several towns and villages (fig 2). According to Henson's account, the Surrey district extended from Albury to Chiddingfold.²⁸ Records of the Framework Knitters' Company show that in 1729 Surrey had the largest concentration of members in the region, with 57 paying fees at a court held in Godalming in that year (Appendix 2, Microfiche 33-6), compared with 30 at Odiham.²⁹

It has been noted that many framework knitters came from families associated with the cloth industry. These include for example the Bowler, Chitty, Hooke, Monger, Parkhurst, Shrubbs, Toft and Woods families. Others, notably the Edsalls and Purchases, were sons of linen weavers.³⁰ The Woollards had probably been fellmongers³¹ and several members of the Tickner family who were framework knitters or wives of framework knitters in the early 18th century were the children and grandchildren of blacksmiths, framework knitting first being taken up by the generation born in the 1670s.³² Many were from families of some substance. For instance, Richard Joyce, the father of the framework knitter Richard Joyce, had four hearths in the 1660s and 1670s.³³ Isaac Fortrie, who himself purchased property for £100 in 1681-2, was probably the eldest son of Isaac Fortrie the elder, Vicar of Godalming, whose family owned tenements and land in Godalming and Eashing.³⁴

A somewhat later generation of entrants to the industry, those who were apprenticed to framework knitters in the second and third decades of the 18th century, are known from published Surrey apprenticeship records. These show that recruitment was largely local and that most apprentices were from modest social backgrounds. Of 66 whose place of origin is stated, 32 were from Godalming and 25 from other towns and villages in south-west Surrey, the chief of which were Witley with six, Guildford with four, and Chiddingfold and Thursley each with two. Others were from Elstead, Compton, Hambledon, Farnham, Cranleigh, Ewhurst, Shalford, Ash, Dunsfold and Wonersh. Of the 31 apprentices whose fathers' occupations are stated, the largest number, ten, were husbandmen. Three were yeoman and two were farmers. Four were in the cloth trade, four were dealers in foodstuffs, and the remainder were a papermaker, 'scribler', maltster, wheelwright, collarmaker, cordwainer, carpenter and bricklayer.³⁵

A number of fire insurance policies provide information about the property and business interests of some of the Surrey framework knitters. This data is summarised in Appendix 3 (Microfiche 37-40). It relates to eighteen individuals in Godalming, including some of the more prominent men in the industry, who insured property and goods between 1726 and 1792 for amounts ranging from £100 to £1000. The fire insurance registers also contain names of framework knitters who occupied rented properties, ranging from poorer tenements valued at £25 or £30 to substantial houses insured for £100.

The dwelling houses occupied by the policy holders themselves ranged in value from £80 to £400 and the household goods, utensils and stock in trade from £80 to £150. More than half of the policy holders had capital invested outside the framework knitting industry. Eight owned one or more items of property which were let to tenants. These were mainly dwelling houses and tenements but an inn and a slaughterhouse are also mentioned. The pages of the Woods Collection provide ample further evidence of property and additional businesses owned by framework knitters. In some cases it is apparent that the property was inherited or acquired by marriage, as for instance in the case of Francis Hooke, who was described as a victualler and framework knitter in his will of 1768 and owned an inn and other property in the town.³⁶

The fire insurance registers provide three instances of framework knitters who had other businesses. Henry Woods in 1727 insured a malthouse of which the stock-in-trade was equal in value, at £150, to that of the household goods, stock-in-trade and frames in his dwelling house. James Toft insured a brewhouse in addition to his dwelling house in 1765, and Caleb Hackman, who had the most valuable business of the group, appears to have diversified his activities, being variously described as a haberdasher and framework knitter,

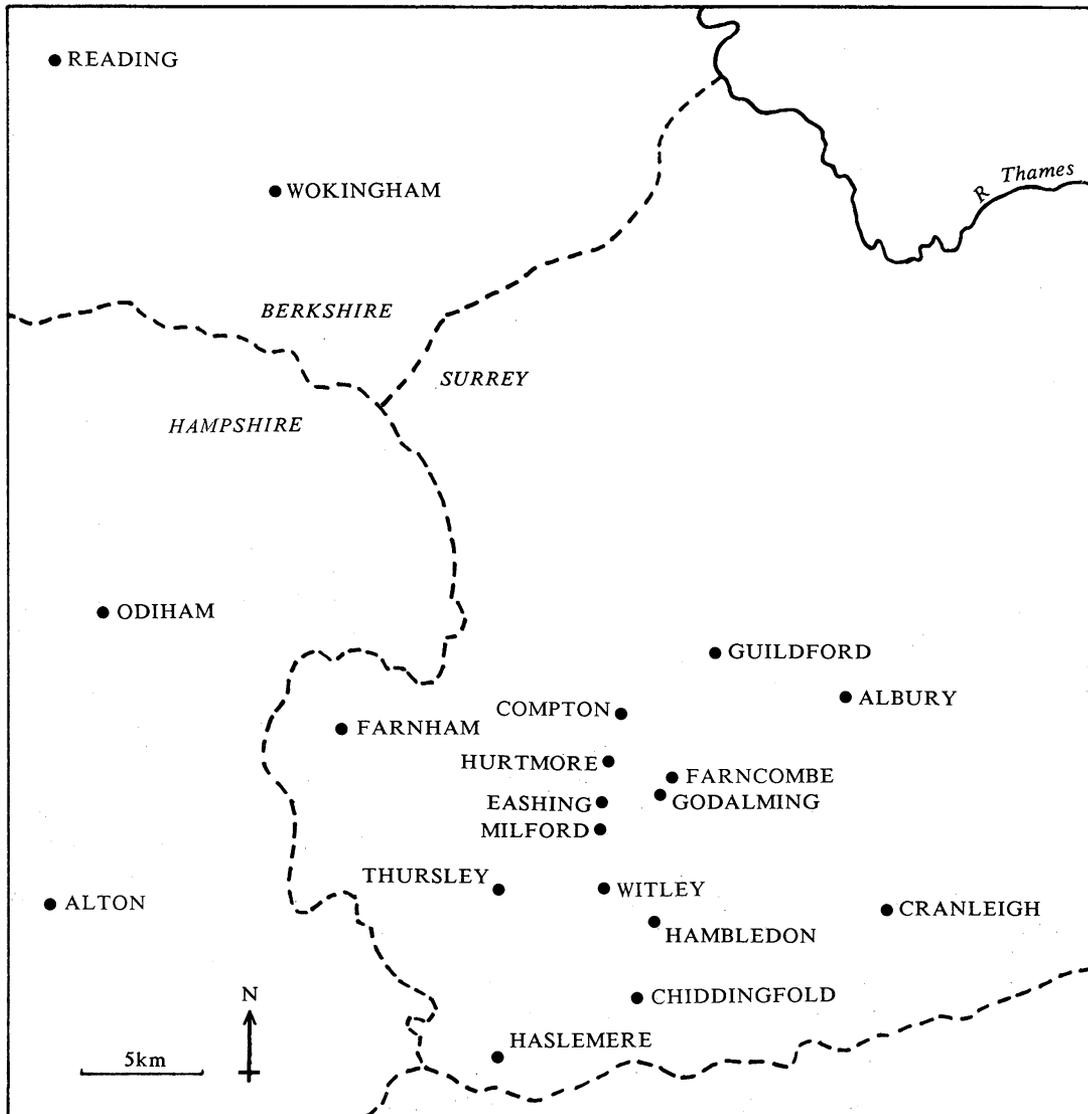


Fig 2. Map showing known locations of the framework knitting industry in south-west Surrey and adjacent areas. (References to framework knitters in Godalming and Farncombe are numerous. Sources for other marked locations include the following: *a* Henson, 184-5: Reading, Wokingham, Albury (not confirmed); *b* 1753 Petition (note 59): Guildford, Witley, Thursley, Hambledon, Compton; *c* Godalming Militia Roll, 1758 (note 60): Cranleigh, Chiddingfold, Compton, Eashing, Witley; *d* GMR 5/4/71; Milford; *e* Guildhall 11936/131/173973 (Sun Fire): Thursley; *f* Haslemere Par. Reg. burials, 12 Apr 1739; *g* GMR RB1184, Box 5A/51/13: Hurtmere; *h* FWKCo. letter book (note 53): Farnham; *i* Hants wills (note 10): Alton, Odiham)

a linen draper and manufacturer, and a mercer and draper, and in the 1780s being engaged in woollen manufacture and dyeing.³⁷

Some framework knitters clearly held a position of standing in the community. James Toft the elder for instance, in his will of 1764, left in addition to his house and other effects his Seat Room in Godalming church, his seats in the singing gallery and another seat in the body of the church.³⁸ Framework knitters began to hold office as Warden and Bailiff of the Borough of Godalming in the second decade of the 18th century. The names

and years of office of twelve who have been identified as framework knitters with some degree of certainty are listed in Appendix 2 (Microfiche 33-6).³⁹ A list of subscribers to the repair of the market house in 1729 can be compared with the list of Godalming members in that year in the Court Minute Book of the Framework Knitters' Company.⁴⁰ The subscription list was headed by Sir More Molyneux, Knight, of Losely House, and James Oglethorpe Esquire. They subscribed 5 guineas and 1 guinea respectively, and 38 others gave between 1 guinea and 1 shilling. Six of these contributors can be identified as framework knitters, namely Thomas Gilham (1 guinea), Henry Woods (8s), Peryer Tickner (5s) and Robert Monger, John Chitty and Caleb Tickner who subscribed 2s 6d each. The master framework knitters thus appear to have occupied a significant position in the civic life of the town in the 18th century, but by no means a dominant one.

ORGANISATION OF THE INDUSTRY

In the East Midlands a class of substantial merchant hosiers was emerging by 1730. Besides selling through fairs and local retail outlets they kept trading establishments in London, at first in inns and later in their own warehouses in the Wood Street area.⁴¹ The knitters rented their frames and obtained yarn from the hosiers to whom they delivered the finished work. Particularly in rural districts the work came to be organised through unpopular middlemen known as bag hosiers. Workplaces evolved from domestic premises, sometimes modified by the addition of long windows, through purpose-built houses to frameshops containing assemblages of frames.⁴²

The Godalming men were generally described as framework knitters or stocking makers and the only known reference to a hosier in the district before the late 18th century is to Joseph Randall (1628-1668). His family had been mercers and there is no evidence that he was involved in the manufacture of stockings.⁴³ Records of Surrey apprenticeships for the period 1711-1731 show no master hosiers in south-west Surrey but include four in Southwark whose apprentices were sons of a London dyer, a London leather seller, a Suffolk clerk and a Sussex gentleman, with premiums ranging from £40 to £63. By contrast, out of the 68 apprentice framework knitters, 45 paid £5 or £6, 17 less than £5, one £10 and one £20. These premiums put framework knitters in the same category as other craftsmen and artisans rather than with more prestigious trades.⁴⁴ Published indexes to fire insurance registers of the period 1775-87 include a hosier in Guildford who was however also a hatter and was probably a retailer.⁴⁵ In 1729 correspondence from the Framework Knitters' Company in London to members in Surrey and Hampshire was 'put into Mr Littler's bagg' to be sent to his workmen, Mr Littler being an Assistant of the Company.⁴⁶ This shows that work was being sent from London to the country and is consistent with Henson's comment that the Surrey men worked wholly for the London trade.⁴⁷

Some indication of the nature and scale of the Godalming framework knitting establishments is provided by the fire insurance registers. These indicate that domestic premises were used and they contain one reference to a small separate workshop in the 1790s. Only one policy isolates frames, which were valued at £10 each in 1763. The only known probate inventory of a Surrey framework knitter, that of Richard Hamond in 1730 (fig 3), lists two frames rented out, each valued at £13.⁴⁸ From these values it can be estimated that the master framework knitters in the sample owned up to about eight frames.

The industry was regulated by the Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters which received its first charter of incorporation in 1657. A new Royal Charter was granted in 1663 and became operative in 1664.⁴⁹ Surrey masters were generally styled 'foreign brother' of the Company⁵⁰ but Hampshire members had a special right to the freedom of the City of London.⁵¹

The Company had early gained a reputation for extravagance supported by a system of heavy dues and onerous burdens imposed upon its members. These were resented particularly by framework knitters in the East Midlands who were for instance compelled to go to London to take up their freedoms. At the same time apprenticeship regulations were being

An Inventory of all and singular
 the Goods and Chattell right and
 Creditts of Richard Hamond late
 of Godalming in the County of
 Surrey framework knitter deceased
 taken and appraised this
 fifteenth day of May Anno Domini
 1730 by us Joshua Parkhurst &
 John Cartney as follows to wit

Imprimis The Executors wearing £ 3 2
 Appraisell & money in purse 5 0 0

Item one Stocking frame
 in the house of Richard 13 0 0
 Pr stand

Item another Stocking
 frame in the house of 13 0 0
 Henry Purchase

Item one Chocke Chaise 30 5 0
 Chair

Item one from Henry
 Purchase 31 10 0

Item one from John
 Cartney 1 0 0

Item one to the Executors
 from the Brother John
 Hamond for principall 92 0 0
 & interest

£ 125 18 0

Fig 3. Probate inventory of Richard Hamond, framework knitter, 1730. (GMR LM 1092. Reproduced by permission of Major J R More-Molyneux)

breached and the trade was already becoming overcrowded by 1710 when an episode of framebreaking by journeymen broke out in London. Some masters moved to the East Midlands where they employed large numbers of pauper apprentices and opposed the Company's efforts to assert its authority, achieving a significant victory in 1731 in an action known as the Cartwright case.⁵²

Correspondence with Godalming members shows that in the 1720s they strongly supported the Company and were keen to uphold its rules regarding entry to the trade.⁵³ Their loyalty was probably connected with their involvement in working for a joint stock company which was established by the chartered company in 1720 'for carrying on the trade of making silk and worsted stockings.' According to Henson, the journeymen of London, Godalming, Odiham and Oakingham (Wokingham) received handsome wages and the firm reaped high profits. However the scheme was abandoned in 1730 as a result of underselling by hosiers in the East Midlands.⁵⁴

DECLINE OF THE EARLY INDUSTRY

As shown in table 1 the framework knitting industry in south-east England reached its peak in the early 18th century. Between 1714 and 1753 the number of frames in the region was more than halved while the centre of the industry shifted to the East Midlands. By 1782 approximately 86 per cent of the country's frames were located in the counties of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire. Centres of the industry also grew up in Scotland and Ireland and in Northamptonshire and Gloucestershire, with a scatter of frames in many other areas. The total number of frames increased rapidly during the course of the 18th century as the industry came to cater for the mass market, first in wool stockings and, particularly from the 1770s onwards, in cotton hosiery. The cotton branch of the industry came to be associated particularly with Nottinghamshire, with a significant centre of production at Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, while Leicestershire tended to specialise in wool and Derbyshire in silk.⁵⁵

During the 1730s and early 1740s, after the Framework Knitters' Company lost control in the East Midlands and the joint stock company ceased its operation in the London area, the chartered company lay dormant. Entry to the trade was unregulated, the industry was facing increasing foreign competition, in particular from France, and earnings fell. The phrase 'as poor as a stockinger', which later became well-known, was used as early as 1740.⁵⁶ In Godalming Mary Monger, the widow of Nicholas Monger, made her will in 1735 leaving her goods to her grandsons 'for apprenticing them to a handicraft, except that of framework knitter.'⁵⁷

Conditions in the industry were described in evidence to parliamentary inquiries held in 1753 and 1778, in both of which Godalming men gave evidence. The first of these inquiries concerned an attempt by the Framework Knitters' Company to reassert its authority. In 1745 the Company enacted new bylaws and attempted to enforce them in various centres of the industry, demanding the admittance of members and the payment of quarterage fees in arrears. In 1750 proceedings were started against two defaulting Godalming members, Henry Moore and James Toft, both of whom were paupers. A meeting called in Godalming resolved to defend the men by public subscription but in the event the prosecution was dropped.⁵⁸

Opposition to the Company was organised in Nottingham, London and Surrey and petitions were presented to Parliament in 1753. In the case of Surrey, these came both from the trade and from the local gentry who argued that enforcement of the bylaws would cause journeymen to demand London wages and drive the trade from the district. Evidence from Godalming was given by Henry Moore and another journeyman Thomas Mayor, and by three masters, Edward Luck, Daniel Lee and Harry Bachelor. Luck employed eight or nine men and had enough work for them all. However, although they had served regular apprenticeships, they could not afford to take up their freedoms; indeed three of

them were receiving parish relief.⁵⁹ It is therefore significant that 'stocking makers' feature prominently in the Godalming militia roll of 1758.⁶⁰

The inquiry of 1753 found that the bylaws were injurious to the trade and established that the Company was powerless to enforce them. The workers had allied themselves with the employers in this instance because of resentment against the Company's demands, but as conditions continued to deteriorate they turned to the Company as a focus for a campaign to regulate wages. In 1776 they began to form associations in various centres of the industry to encourage workers to be admitted and to oppose the employment of non-apprenticed labour.⁶¹

In 1778 petitions were presented to Parliament by framework knitters in and around Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Godalming, London and Westminster, Tewkesbury and Northamptonshire. A motion to bring in a Bill was defeated and the campaign was resumed in the following year. A Bill to regulate wages and prevent frauds and abuses was then introduced but was opposed by the hosiers and failed at its third reading. It was stated in the inquiries that earnings had been falling since 1756/7 and ranged from as little as 4s 6d a week for coarser worsted work in the East Midlands to as much as 9s in some cases in London. Edward Luck of Godalming again gave evidence. Wages were average, at about 6s 6d a week for a 12 to 13 hour day, after deductions for working expenses. The same system operated in Surrey as in the main centres of the industry, with workmen paying frame rent out of their earnings. A man with two children could not live by the trade and Luck knew by handling the parish accounts that many were receiving relief. Many good hands had left, some for want of work but more because of reduced earnings, and he himself had not worked at the trade for some ten years.⁶²

During the campaigns of 1778-9 the framework knitters renewed their efforts to obtain support from the Company. There was an ambitious plan to achieve mass admittance but the response was disappointing, with for example only 134 enrolling at Nottingham between 25 September and 2 October 1778.⁶³ In London in the following year 40 were admitted on one occasion, on 10 August at The Cock, Old Street Square. These included six recognisable Godalming names: Caleb Tickner, senior and junior, William Mayor, James Woods and John and William Fleet. William Newman, one of four entered on 14 September 1779, may also have been from Godalming.⁶⁴

The Hampshire industry was in terminal decline in the late 18th century and the last known framework knitter there, James White of North Warnborough, died in 1822.⁶⁵

The late 18th and early 19th centuries

Trade began to improve in the last two decades of the 18th century and the Godalming industry revived through specialisation. A new phase of the industry began, based largely on the manufacture of fleecy hosiery, and this continued through most of the 19th century. Known hosiery manufacturers of the period are listed in Appendix 4 (Microfiche 41-4).

Recovery came about partly through an easing of foreign trade following the end of the American War of Independence and the reduction of duties on exports to France in 1786. There was also a new demand for fancy products which prompted major advances in the design of machinery between 1760 and 1800. The late 18th century saw for example the introduction of machines to make point net, which was an early form of machine-made lace, and the development of various patterned fabrics.⁶⁶

Although the Surrey industry had been contracting during most of the 18th century, there are signs of activity and commitment to the trade in the years before the establishment of the fleecy hosiery manufacture in 1790. The enrolment of several Godalming men in the Framework Knitters' Company during the labour movements of the 1770s has been noted. Hosiers are recorded for the first time in a directory of 1784 (Appendix 4, Microfiche 41-4).⁶⁷ It is also significant that a purpose-built frameshop, representing an intermediate stage between the domestic establishments inferred from the fire insurance registers and

the factories which came later, is dated to before 1780 by land tax evaluations and by structural features.⁶⁸

One of the innovations made in the late 18th century was knotted work, which was patented by William Horton and Richard Marsh of London.⁶⁹ The fabric had a lustrous striped appearance, resulting from changes in stitch direction, and this was used as a vertical pattern on stockings by working them sideways. The style was popular for a few years and led to the development of wide frames, in order to make the leg in one piece. Both Henson and Felkin relate that in developing machines for knotted work, Horton constructed frames which were 30 inches wide, compared with the standard 18 inches, and followed these with two machines of 54 inches. The men named these Gog and Magog and refused to work them at more than 36 inch width. However Magog was later sent to Godalming to make fleecy greatcoats and was operated with renown for 20 years by one James Whitehorn. Henson states that Horton and Marsh had three separate establishments, in Newgate Street, London, at Middleton Cheney and Chacombe in Northamptonshire, and in Nottingham. Felkin however refers to Horton's workmen in Godalming.⁷⁰ Horton certainly had links with the town since he later became a partner in the firm of Holland, Waistell & Horton, which manufactured fleecy hosiery in Godalming after 1790 and had a warehouse at 99 Holborn.⁷¹

FLEECY HOSIERY:

Between 1788 and 1802, George Holland of London took out a series of patents for fleecy hosiery. The first of these was for a method of working courses of unspun fleece into a fabric made of spun yarn, so that one side had the appearance of the knit side of ordinary stocking stitch and the reverse had a fleecy coating. Subsequent patents covered variations of the method, the use of different fibres, and a minor improvement to the machine.⁷² The garments were recommended for sufferers from gout and rheumatism and also for general use, since opinion at the time favoured the wearing of wool next to the skin at all seasons and in all climates. The clothing was made in various degrees of warmth from No 1 for summer wear to No 6, which was one inch thick, for severe medical conditions. A broadsheet issued by Holland, Waistell & Horton c1797 quotes medical opinions and recommendations by satisfied customers, and gives a detailed list of the garments manufactured (fig 4).⁷³

In evidence to a parliamentary inquiry in 1812, it was stated that Messrs Holland & Co were the only substantial manufacturers of fleecy hosiery. However, since the expiry of the patent, inferior products had begun to appear. 'Wrought' or fashioned work, which was shaped on the frame, was distinguished from 'spurious' or 'cut-up' products which were cut out and sewn from lengths of wide knitted fabric. It was stated that fraudulent articles had been produced in Nottingham which were 'made of one thread, cut up, fleeced every third or fourth course instead of every second, and manufactured with inferior wool' so that 'when washed, the fabric strings and goes into lumps.'⁷⁴

Few examples of fleecy underclothing of the period are known to survive. The Victoria & Albert Museum, London holds two vests which belonged to the banker Thomas Coutts (1735-1822).⁷⁵ These garments are fashioned and although they are clearly well-used they retain a smooth, light fleecy coating on the reverse of the fabric. In view of their quality there is a strong probability that they were manufactured by Holland & Co. The Museum of Costume, Bath holds a pair of pantaloons which are of knitted cotton, heavily fleeced. Their origin is unknown but it is suggested that they are of mid 19th century date and may have been used for padding the legs in theatrical costume or worn with court dress. The garment has been noted by a previous author but not described in detail.⁷⁶ Inspection shows that it is elaborately fashioned and is of good quality material.

The Holland business in Godalming was managed by John and Henry Holland who owned and occupied small premises in the town from 1790 to 1794. From 1792 onwards



LIST OF ARTICLES,

SOLD BY

HOLLAND, WAISTELL, AND HORTON,
PATENTEES OF THE FLEECY HOSIERY,AND MANUFACTURERS TO THEIR
MAJESTIES AND THE ROYAL FAMILY,
No. 99, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON;

And also by the Principal Hofiers in Town and Country, by Appointment of the Patentees.

UNDER-CLOTHING for GENTLEMEN.

Shirts, or under waistcoats, with or without sleeves.
Ditto of cotton or worsted not fleeced.
Drawers and Pantaloons.
Ditto of cotton or worsted not fleeced.
Gauze Hofe.
Socks, ankle-socks, and muffatees.
Breast-plates or bosom friends.

UNDER CLOTHING for LADIES.

Under waistcoats, with or without sleeves.
Petticoats, drawers, or sliders.
Gauze hofe.
Socks and ankle-socks.
Breast-plates or bosom-friends.
Night-caps.

OUTER CLOTHING.

Great coats or wrapping gowns.
Pieces for breeches.
Pantaloons.
Hofe fleeced all through, or in the feet only.
Travelling stockings soled and calashed.
Stirrup hofe, and bootikins.
Travelling caps, superior to fur.

Night-caps.
Gloves fleeced, with outfides of cotton or worsted.
Silk gloves fleeced with Vigonia Wool.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Blankets and cradle blankets.
Feet baskets and coach carpeting.
Muff-linings.
Collars for fore throats.
Pieces for under waistcoats, drawers, and petticoats from half-yard wide to three-quarters.
Flannel of every kind.
Plain silk, cotton, and worsted hofe of the best qualities.
Stocking breeches pieces, pantaloons, gloves, plain and striped hofe of the trae Nankeen colour of our own dyeing.

For the GOUT, RHEUMATISM, &c.

Large hofe thick fleeced and very elastic.
Ankle-socks and knee-caps, ditto.
Night-caps and breast-plates, ditto.
Gloves and mittens, ditto.
Shirts and drawers, ditto.
Shoes and bootikins, ditto.

FLEECY HOSIERY is made of various thicknesses, or degrees of warmth. Scales of thickness are graduated from No. 1, to No. 6.—No. 1 is lined with a thin sprinkling of the finest wool, and No. 6 is an inch thick. For persons in health, and for the prevention of disorders, articles are fleeced to the thickness of No. 1 for summer wear, and to the thickness of No. 2 for winter; but for the rheumatism, gout, and other complaints, to the thickness of No. 3, and upward, to No. 6, as the case may require.

Henry Holland occupied larger premises which were owned by William Seward and later by Mary Seward.⁷⁷ The Universal British Directory for Godalming of 1798 lists, in addition to Henry Holland, eight framework knitters who were presumably independent masters (Appendix 4, Microfiche 41-4). One of the framework knitters was also a 'chinaman' and it is known that another, William Buchanan, who had been described as a hosier in 1784, was engaged in property dealing and house building in the early 19th century.⁷⁸

Most of the framework knitters in the town were clearly working for Messrs Holland & Co at this time since on Boxing Day 1791, when the firm's workmen walked in procession from Godalming to Guildford and back, 140 'manufacturers' took part. This corresponds well with the figure of 130 frames in 1812 (table 1). The event took the form of the traditional processions in honour of St Blaise, the patron saint of woolcombers, which were held in other wool textile districts at this period.⁷⁹

Frames were increasingly housed in frameshops, which were a necessity in the case of wide machines. Some frameshops were owned by hosiers and others by outsiders who invested in the industry. Although Hollands' central establishment in the town was referred to in contemporary records as a 'stocking manufactory' the system of employment at this period was still that in which the framework knitters worked as independent artisans, renting frames and taking orders for work.⁸⁰

Several wool dealers are recorded in the Godalming district between the 1760s and the 1840s (Appendix 4, Microfiche 41-4). They probably served various small textile industries in addition to framework knitting, including the manufacture of cloth, blankets⁸¹ and flannel⁸² at Godalming and worsted, lace and braid at Elstead.⁸³ The manufacture of knitted cotton goods in Godalming was referred to as early as 1753 when petitions to Parliament from Surrey framework knitters and others referred to the manufacture of great quantities of wool, silk, thread and cotton.⁸⁴ In 1844 there were 40 narrow and 15 wide frames in Godalming, corresponding to 40 employed on cotton goods and 15 in the worsted and lambswool branch producing drawers. All the Godalming frames were employed on wrought-work, whereas the majority of wide frames in the country, with the exception of those in the Scottish borders, were used for manufacturing cut-ups. The products of the Godalming industry were distinct from those of London where only one third of the frames were narrow and used for wrought cotton goods and the rest were wide frames making silk fabric for purses and sashes.⁸⁵

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The framework knitting industry nationally suffered severe difficulties in the first half of the 19th century. The depression which followed the Napoleonic wars was accompanied by changes in fashion and a decline in the demand for decorative hosiery. However the system of frame rents encouraged the proliferation of frames and productive capacity increased. Wage cutting occurred from 1807 onwards and the overcrowded state of the industry exposed the framework knitters to abuses such as the payment of wages in truck and the charging of excessive frame rent. Other grievances centred on the practice of 'colting' or employing cheap, unqualified labour, and in particular on the manufacture of cut-ups which undersold properly fashioned goods and were perceived as causing the decay of the trade.⁸⁶

Conditions in the early 19th century led to direct action by the Luddites and to a series of political movements verging upon breaking the Combination Laws in which the historian of the industry, Gravenor Henson, played a leading part. In 1811-12 Henson in Nottingham was instrumental in setting up the United Committee of Framework Knitters, which promoted a Bill 'For Preventing Frauds and Abuses in the Framework Knitting Manufacture.' The Nottingham committee corresponded with framework knitters in other centres of the industry, including Godalming. Subscription lists and a petition were circulated in March 1812 and by the end of April had collected over 10,000 signatures, including 114

with Parliament, I have succeeded in forming a Society at Godalming who commence their first Meeting on Saturday, There are just 100 Stocking Makers at Godalming, 36 of whom have Paid 2s/- seven of whom 1s/6, 19 have paid 1s/- and 6 from 3d to 6d making in all 68 who have paid and 22 who have not paid. These they have determined shall either pay one way or the other, as they will have no communication with them, several of them are very bad hands, and they vow if they are fast they shall keep so. Mr Holland the Hosier of Godalming very much wishes that Drawers should be prohibited from being cut, and he is by no means friendly to the cutting of Petticoats. I had a very long and interesting conversation with him on the subject, and I think that the Thighs and every part but the Waistband of Framework Drawers ought to be prohibited from being cut. He has referred me to his Partners in London for a further Discussion on this subject, I would

i. with some inquiries

Fig 5. Extract from a letter from Gravenor Henson in London to Mr T. Roper, Newton's Head, Nottingham, June 4, 1812

... I have succeeded in forming a Society at Godalming who commence their first Meeting on Saturday. There are just 100 Stocking Makers at Godalming, 36 of whom have Paid 2s/-, seven of whom 1s/6d, 19 have paid 1s/- and 6 from 3d to 6d making in all 68 who have paid and 22 who have not paid. These they have determined shall either pay one way or the other, as they will have no communication with them, several of them are very bad hands, and they vow if they are fast they shall keep so. Mr Holland the Hosier of Godalming very much wishes that Drawers should be prohibited from being cut, and he is by no means friendly to the cutting of Petticoats. I had a very long and interesting conversation with him on the subject, and I think that the Thighs and every part but the Waistband of Framework Drawers ought to be prohibited from being cut. He has referred me to his Partners in London for further Discussion on this subject . . .

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from Godalming and 92 from London. A list of some of the Godalming subscribers is given in Appendix 2 (Microfiche 33-6). After visiting Godalming in June 1812, Henson reported to headquarters that there were 100 'stocking makers' in the town, of whom 68 had paid. His letter (fig 5) continues on the subject of standards of quality for the manufacture of underclothing, which he had discussed with Mr Holland.⁸⁷

At the inquiry which followed, evidence on the fleecy hosiery manufacture was given by John Wallbank, a workman employed by Messrs Holland in London. On the subject of employment practices, he stated that the workmen were properly paid, the work being 'estimated according to the number of courses', and labour relations were good. Wallbank's evidence that fraudulent articles had been produced in Nottingham since the expiry of the patent has been noted.⁸⁸

Godalming workmen may have been involved in setting up the fleecy hosiery manufacture elsewhere. Places of birth recorded in the 1851 census enumerators' returns reveal instances of Godalming framework knitters spending periods of time in the East Midlands in the first quarter of the 19th century. James Callingham had a daughter, Rebecca, born in Nottingham in 1804, and Thomas Woods who was born c1791, married a woman born at Old Radford, Nottinghamshire. James Whitehorn, the man who was renowned for operating Horton's wide machine 'Magog', had a son born in Mansfield in 1818.

The parliamentary campaign of 1812 failed and a new society was formed entitled 'The United Branches of the Framework Knitters for obtaining Parliamentary Relief and the Encouragement of Mechanics in the Improvement of Mechanism'. This was to be a federation of local societies covering the whole kingdom. Its primary aim was to facilitate the obtaining of work by qualified members. At its first conference in Nottingham in 1814 it was reported that 33 societies had been formed in Nottinghamshire, 11 in Derbyshire, 10 in Leicestershire, one in Godalming and one in the City of London. Godalming, with 130 frames had 70 members out of a total of 2,390 and thus with about half a per cent of the country's frames had 3 per cent of the members. London, with about the same number of frames had 27 members.⁸⁹ The Society was suppressed under the Combination Act and its papers were seized. One of these documents consists of a list of 30 members, including several known Godalming names and two men stated to be from Haslemere (Appendix 2, Microfiche 33-6).⁹⁰

In the East Midlands, strikes for higher wages took place in 1819, 1821 and 1824, and various political efforts were made in the next two decades, but the situation continued to deteriorate.⁹¹ The plight of the workers is vividly described in the report of the Factory Commissioners in 1833⁹² as well as in the report of the inquiry into the condition of the framework knitters in 1845. The reports of 1833 and 1845 contain no detailed evidence from Surrey, which by then had become a very minor centre of the industry. In 1833 half the frames in Godalming were idle, whilst in London only 12 were in work, and these for specialised theatrical-uses.⁹³ In 1841 nineteen frames from the 'Keeley factory' in Godalming were auctioned at Nottingham. The report of this sale stated that fleecy blankets and greatcoats had been made there until 1838.⁹⁴ Hollands' High Street premises were still listed in Pigot's Directory of 1839 but at the 1841 census Henry Holland, hosier aged 25, and Henry Holland, Independant (*sic*) aged 47, were living at the Wharf. The business of James Fry, who was listed as a hosier in the High Street in the 1839 directory and the 1841 census, continued until the 1860s. In 1844 the number of frames in Godalming had declined to 102 of which 55 were in work.⁹⁵ The observation of Brayley & Britten at about this time that 'a few kerseys, woollens and stockings' were still made in the town⁹⁶ indicates that the industry was then at a low ebb.

As the industry declined during the first half of the 19th century it contracted into the urban area. In 1800 there had still been framework knitters in the villages, for example in Hurtmore, where members of the Mayer, Badslade, Newman and Tickner families are recorded. Surviving members of this framework knitting community appear to have moved into the town by about 1820.⁹⁷ By the time of the 1841 census no framework knitters were

found outside the urban centre of Godalming, although one was recorded in Farnham. In contrast the greatest concentrations of framework knitters in the East Midlands were in the villages, where the number of frames per hundred population, based on the 1841 census figures, in some cases exceeded 30.⁹⁸ The corresponding figure for the parish of Godalming was 2.3 per hundred, which is comparable to the densities found in the large towns of the East Midlands where alternative employment was available. Many Godalming framework knitters clearly left the trade. The census enumerators' returns show however that a few moved to the East Midlands. Two young men, both members of families with a long-standing involvement in the trade, William Mayers and Alfred Whitehorn, went to Nottinghamshire in the 1840s and returned by 1851 when the industry in Godalming had begun to recover. Also by 1851 a few Nottingham workers had moved to Godalming, marking the beginning of a movement which continued over the next two decades as hosiery factories were established in the town.

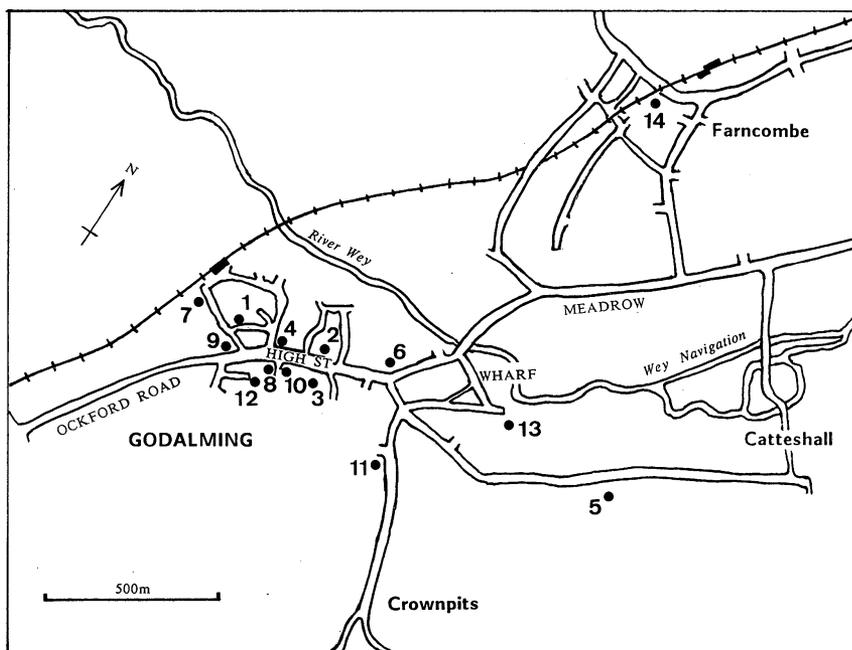


Fig 6. Map of Godalming showing known factory and frameshop sites and main areas inhabited by framework knitters in the second half of the 19th century.

- 1 Frameshop, Mint Street (formerly Hart's Lane), c1780 - early 19th century; probably re-used second half of 19th century
- 2 Messrs Holland, off High Street, early 19th century
- 3 Framework shop, Hart's Yard, 1810
- 4 James Fry, High Street, mid 19th century
- 5 Langham Factory: Holland, c1850-1855, Nevill c1855-1895, BSB Knitwear 1990-
- 6 14 High Street: Allen & Solly, Farnden's Yard, c1860-75
- 7 Mill Lane Factory: Allen & Solly c1870-1888, A R Pitchers 1915 (?), Keefe & Lewis 1930s, Knit Lore 1959-68 (?)
- 8 93 (formerly 72) High Street: Pitchers, early 20th century; W F Paine, 1907-22
- 9 Pitchers, 118 (formerly 46) High Street, 1907-1910s
- 10 Pitchers, 91 (formerly 73) High Street, 1920s
- 11 W F Paine, Brighton Road, 1922-65
- 12 R J & A R Pitchers, Rock Place, late 1920s-1970
- 13 Riverside Factory: W F Paine, 1965-8, Alan Paine 1968-90
- 14 Kent & Curwen, Farncombe Street, 1976-90.

The streets and districts shown are those in which framework knitters were recorded in census enumerators' returns, 1841-81. Other streets are omitted.

Hosiery factories

The Godalming hosiery industry enjoyed a further revival in the second half of the 19th century with the building of factories, the arrival of new firms and the migration to Godalming of workers from other parts of the country. The term 'factory' is used in the present article for the major hosiery establishments of the second half of the 19th century. However the definition of a factory in the hosiery industry is problematic, particularly in the case of Godalming. In the East Midlands, a distinction between factories and frameshops has been made according to whether powered or hand-operated machinery was used. The Godalming establishments do not fit clearly into this definition since one of the two principal ones appears to have remained wholly hand-operated. Whilst powered machinery necessitated a new form of organisation, some disciplined workplaces were probably introduced for the purpose of quality control.⁹⁹

The factory system of production was late to be adopted in the hosiery industry nationally, partly because of the overcrowded labour market, but also because of technical difficulties in the development of powered machinery. Although some progress was made towards applying rotary motion to the knitting frame in the early 19th century, the problem of using powered machines to produce fashioned garments was not completely solved until 1864, with the introduction of Cotton's Patent machine. Even then many manufacturers were slow to make the change until prompted by reforms and social changes in the 1870s. In particular the Truck Act of 1874, which primarily abolished the payment of wages in kind, ended the system of frame rents. Also the Education Acts removed children from the home where they had commonly been employed in winding yarn.¹⁰⁰ The Godalming hosiery factories were thus comparatively early. There is evidence however that old working practices survived in the town alongside the new factories and may even have been used to some extent by factory proprietors as well as by the small independent manufacturers who still existed. This is indicated by the account of the working life of Edwin Tickner, a former employee of James Fry, who recorded his memories in 1910 at the age of 70.¹⁰¹

THE MANUFACTURERS

The three major hosiery establishments in Godalming in the 19th century were those of James Fry, of Messrs Holland and their successors Nevill & Co, and of the firm of Allen & Solly. Known details of these firms are summarised in table 2. For the second half of the 19th century, the documentary record is supplemented by the physical evidence of surviving buildings, which is the subject of a separate study.¹⁰² Locations of known sites associated with the industry are shown in fig 6.

YEAR	1841	1844	1851	1861	1863	1871	1881
Frames in employment		55					
Male employees	55		69	80		87	66
Female employees			11	30		27	12
Major employers;							
Fry (men employed)			24				-
Holland				-	-	-	-
Nevill (frames)	-	-	-		13*		
(men employed)	-	-	-				21
Allen & Solly (frames)	-	-	-	25**	42		

* Steam powered frames

** Inferred from the 1863 survey when 17 of the 42 frames were new

- Not operating at this date

TABLE 2: Number of frames and employees recorded in the Godalming hosiery industry, 1841-1881 (Sources: Felkin, *Account*; Census Enumerators' Returns; Godalming Museum, Penfold Survey, 1863)

James Fry

James Fry's business in the High Street continued to operate under the old system, the proprietor being listed in the 1851 census returns as a 'master employing 24 men'. The firm took part in the Great Exhibition of 1851 with the following entry in Class 20 (Articles of clothing for immediate, personal, or domestic use):¹⁰³

193 FRY, JAMES, *Godalming, Surrey* - Manufacturer.
 Fine Lisle-thread hose embroidered. Four-thread hose, plain.
 Fleecy breast-plates. Segovia shirts and pantaloons. Merino shirts and vests.
 Cotton pantaloons, drawers and shirts.
 The three preceding articles are all in different qualities.

By 1861 James Fry had been succeeded at the High Street premises by his son of the same name but at the 1871 census, James the younger, still described as a hosier, was lodging at the Red Lion Inn and he is not recorded thereafter.

Holland and Nevill

It has been noted that Holland & Co closed at least part of their operation in 1838 and sold nineteen machines in Nottingham in 1841. However by 1851, when they took part in the Great Exhibition, Thomas Holland & Co had established the Langham Factory in Catteshall Lane. This was built on a site beside a spring which in 1843 had been occupied by a dyehouse in the occupation of William Oliver. The site was then owned by William Elphs Holland and was probably therefore already associated with the family's business.¹⁰⁴ The firm's entry in the Great Exhibition, adjacent to that of James Fry, was as follows:¹⁰⁵

194 HOLLAND, THOMAS & Co., *Langham Factory, Godalming* -
 Inventors, Manufacturers and Proprietors.
 Ladies' dresses; waistcoats, petticoats, drawers, etc.
 Men's shirts, trousers, drawers, hose, etc., manufactured of a fleecy wool, different from any hitherto adopted for under clothing.
 Similar articles in "Segovia;" likewise prepared from a peculiar wool; also, in "double Segovia," and in silk and wool.
 Men's trousers, shirts, and hose, in cotton. Cloth for outside wear.
 Over-coat, exhibited for lightness and warmth.
 Elastic cloth, calculated for breeches and trousers, used in riding.
 Registered waistcoat, with elastic ribbed back.
 Registered shirts, with elastic backs and smooth fronts; ribbed or plain, made from cotton, silk thread, etc.

Holland & Co may have experienced financial or other difficulties after moving to Langham for by 1855 they sold out to Nevill & Co of London¹⁰⁶ and in the 1861 census returns Mary Holland, widow, who had been described as a hosier in the 1851 census, had become 'Superintendent of needlework at Manufactory', together with her daughter Anne. The use of steam power at Langham is recorded in 1863.¹⁰⁷ This may have been adopted by Holland & Co as part of their new development or it may have been introduced by Nevill & Co who clearly made major changes shortly after they acquired the works, since they recruited technical and managerial personnel from Leicestershire.

It can be inferred from the census enumerators' returns of 1861 that these staff and their families moved to Godalming in about 1858. The manager Charles Bark was a British subject born in Paris, whose wife was born in Leicester. Two of their children had been born in Northamptonshire, another centre of the industry, in the late 1840s and two younger children had been born in Godalming. The hosier's clerk George Dixon was a native of Jedburgh, a hosiery town in the Scottish Borders, but his wife was born in Leicestershire and their year-old son was born in Godalming. Other personnel from Leicestershire in the 1861 census returns include framesmiths John and Thomas Toon, engineer John Webb, fuller and dresser Samuel Hill, and Henry Holden who was a 'warehouseman in stocking factory'.

The factory was referred to in the 1861 census as the 'Wollen & Cottn Hos Mf'. The 1881 census returns record a number of wool and cotton 'weavers' but since most of these individuals appeared in previous census years as framework knitters it is probable that the term was used inaccurately. There is evidence for the preparation of materials in the town, a 'wool frame spinner' being listed in 1871. Two woolcombers were recorded in 1871, one of whom remained ten years later. Fleecy underclothing continued to be made at Langham and one of its developments was the manufacture of gun sponges for muzzle-loading firearms.¹⁰⁸

The principal observation concerning the buildings at Langham is that they were large in relation both to other factory buildings in the town and in relation to the estimated size of the workforce. It has therefore been concluded that the making up of garments was probably carried out on the premises rather than by outworkers.¹⁰⁹

By the time of the 1881 census the Langham Factory employed only 21 men and the senior staff from the East Midlands had left. The last entry in local directories was in 1895. At about this time the firm moved to Dulwich in south London. However a few frames were left in Godalming and Nevill and Co continued to send work to a small group of framework knitters for several years.¹¹⁰ At Langham, the Godalming Sanitary Steam Laundry which had been established alongside the hosiery factory in 1885, took over the remainder of the site. Since the laundry closed in about 1982 the buildings have been in multiple occupation.¹¹¹

Allen & Solly

A second hosiery factory was established in Godalming in about 1860 by Allen & Solly, an old-established Nottingham firm with a distribution base in London. The firm operated entirely under the domestic system in the East Midlands and its Godalming establishments represent an early venture into factory organisation. According to a contemporary newspaper account, the firm produced high quality hosiery and underclothing, including fine silk goods, in which there was an extensive export trade, in particular with the United States, Australia and India. All the firm's products were stated to be handmade.¹¹²

The partners first built 'a factory for hand frames' in Godalming on the site of an old oast house.¹¹³ The premises, in Farnden's Yard, were recorded by J W Penfold in 1863 as owned by J Robinson and occupied by Solly. A two-storey brick building from the complex survives. This has been recorded and identified as the building in the Penfold survey which had 'a work room and packing room on top and a workshop for 25 frames'.¹¹⁴ The firm moved to a new purpose-built factory in Mill Lane by 1870. This building, and contemporary accounts of events at the factory, have been noted by a previous author. In particular it has been noted that 160 guests, mainly women, were entertained at the factory on the occasion of Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887, and that in view of the size of the premises, this implies the employment of a large number of female outworkers.¹¹⁵

In view of the general association of the factory system with powered machinery, the evidence of contemporary accounts that Allen & Solly's products were hand made is of particular interest. It has been noted that no steam engine was recorded by Penfold at Farnden's Yard in 1863¹¹⁶ and no physical evidence has been found for the use of steam power at the Mill Lane factory.¹¹⁷

Allen & Solly closed their Godalming operation in 1888 and moved to a large new factory at Arnold in Nottingham. Their Godalming premises have since had a variety of industrial and commercial uses.¹¹⁸

Minor firms

In addition to the major producers discussed above, some small hosiery manufacturers are recorded in Godalming in the second half of the 19th century, including Frederick Wallis

and Amos Hackman.¹¹⁹ Architectural features indicate that the frameshop at 22 Mint Street was extended and reused in the second half of the 19th century, after several decades of alternative use.¹²⁰ Also it can be inferred from the occupations of women recorded in census enumerators' returns that some framework knitters retained their independent status. Male workers are generally described simply as 'framework knitter' but, whilst some women expressly worked direct to a factory, others worked for individuals. For instance in 1861 Francis (*sic*) Tucker who lived with her grandfather, a framework knitter aged 70, was a 'seamer for framework knitter' and in 1871 the unmarried daughter of Henry Woods, framework knitter aged 60, was recorded as 'assistant'.

THE WORKERS

Census enumerators' returns for the years 1841-1881 provide a wealth of information on the hosiery workers which is summarised in table 3. It is apparent that the factory phase reached its peak in the town in around 1871. The hosiery industry, with 87 male employees, was then the second largest manufacturing industry in Godalming. By comparison, it is recorded that 260 hands were employed at Spicers' paper mill at Catteshall, and 27 paper mill workers were listed at Eashing. The names of 72 workers were recorded in the leather industry in Godalming.

YEAR	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
A. Occupations					
Framework knitters and equivalent	49	63	64	70	58
Related trades (a)	4	3	7	6	3
Technical (b)			5	6	3
Proprietors and administrators	2	3	4	5	2
Total	55	69	80	87	66
B. Women seamers etc (c)					
	-	11	30	27	12
C. Place of origin of group A					
Surrey	53	61	53	57	46
Outside Surrey (1841)	2				
Counties adjoining Surrey		1	2	2	2
Nottinghamshire		5	8	14	12
Leicestershire			13(d)	7(d)	4
Derbyshire			2	5	2
Manchester		1			
Colchester		1	1		
Gloucester			1		
Scotland			1	2	
Total outside South-East		7	26	28	18

a. Woolcomber, dyer and scourer, fuller, winder

b. Framesmith, engineer, engine driver, warehouseman

c. Women in exclusively female occupations. Includes seamers, menders, ironers, and needlewomen but not dressmakers

d. Includes British subject born in Paris with East Midlands connections.

TABLE 3: Hosiery employees in Godalming recorded at the census, 1841-1881: occupations and places or origin. (Source: Census Enumerators' Returns)

Places of birth recorded in the census returns show that, in addition to the personnel from Leicestershire recruited by Nevill & Co in the late 1850s, a significant number of hosiery workers moved to Godalming from various locations in the East Midlands and elsewhere during the town's factory era. The largest number arrived in the decade 1851-61 when they came to make up nearly one-third of the male workforce. The first such

incomer from the East Midlands however was a woolcomber named William Baker from Mountsorrel, Leicester, who came to Elstead by 1847 to work at Appleton's worsted and small-ware manufactory, which made trimmings and braids for military uniforms. He married at Elstead but moved to Godalming between the censuses of 1851 and 1861. Single incomers included men of a wide range of ages, and whilst most came from the East Midlands there were also individuals from Manchester, Gloucester, Colchester and Dumfries. Several did not remain but others married and raised families in the town. In some cases entire families moved, such as the family of Henry Hall from Derbyshire, who arrived in about 1873, and that of William Booth who came from Nottingham, probably by 1855.

The number of women hosiery workers shown at successive dates suggests under-recording, which is known often to have occurred. Women were largely engaged in making up garments and Felkin estimated that as many women as men were employed in the industry as a whole.¹²¹ Indeed the evidence which has been noted regarding Allen & Solly's employment of female outworkers suggests that the ratio was higher in Godalming. The view discussed above that the two major firms may have operated different systems of employment is supported by the fact that a number of women are recorded in the census returns as workers at a factory. For instance in 1861 Eliza Rose Millman was recorded as 'worker at stocking factory' and in 1871 two sisters, Mary and Roselina Baverstock, were 'employed at stocking factory'.

Census enumerators' returns also show the distribution of hosiery workers in the district. In 1841 the largest concentration, accounting for about 42 per cent, lived close to the centre of the town. Within this area there were small groupings at Crown Court in the High Street, and in the area around the modern Mill Lane and Mint Street. About one quarter of the workers lived to the north of the town, in Farncombe and Meadow, and another quarter to the south-west in Ockford Road. Later the proportion living in the town centre fell and there was a corresponding increase in Farncombe and a growth in Catteshall, which was probably related to the development of the hosiery factory at Langham. Ockford Road continued to have a substantial number of framework knitters and several lived in the Crown Pits area along the Brighton Road. These locations are indicated in fig 6.

Outerwear

In the late 19th century another revival of the Godalming knitwear industry began which foreshadowed certain national developments, in particular the growth of a large outerwear branch and a change in the distribution pattern of the industry. The firms involved in this phase are listed in Appendix 4 (Microfiche 41-4).

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OUTERWEAR INDUSTRY

Knitted jackets and sweaters became part of mainstream fashion after the First World war, when less formal styles of dressing were adopted. The origin of these garments has been traced to knitted shirts which appeared in Britain as sportswear and sea-wear before 1850.¹²² A market for sports sweaters existed in Godalming at Charterhouse School and in catering for this demand the firm of W T Pitchers, and subsequently also that of W F Paine, played a significant role in the development of the outerwear branch of the knitwear industry.

William Thomas Pitchers (fig 7 and M fig 12, Microfiche 26) was a tailor who moved to Godalming from Cambridge in about 1873 to work for Mr John Clarke. In 1885 he established his own business in the town and acted as outfitter to Charterhouse. According to local and family tradition, the technical innovator of the family was William's wife Lucy, who is shown with him in fig 7 and with their son Archibald in M fig 13 (Microfiche 26). Mrs Pitchers, who also ran a millinery and drapery business and mourning warehouse



Fig 7. Lucy and William Thomas Pitchers. (Michael Pitchers collection)

in Church Street under the style of Lucy Pitchers & Co,¹²³ originally employed women to knit sweaters by hand, using knitting needles, in a workshop in the town.¹²⁴

By the late 19th century the stocking frame was being superseded by a new type of machine with latch needles, known as the 'flat' knitting machine, which had been introduced by I W Lamb in America in 1862.¹²⁵ Lucy Pitchers devised a method of forming cable stitch, the popular stitch used for sports sweaters, on the flat machine. Her method, which is familiar to modern domestic machine knitters, was to cross over groups of stitches with the aid of a pair of three-pronged tools known as narrowing combs, which were normally used for decreasing the number of stitches to fashion the garment.¹²⁶ A further technical development of the period was that of the purl stitch machine, in particular the type introduced by Stoll in 1893. This allowed the loops to be knocked off towards either side

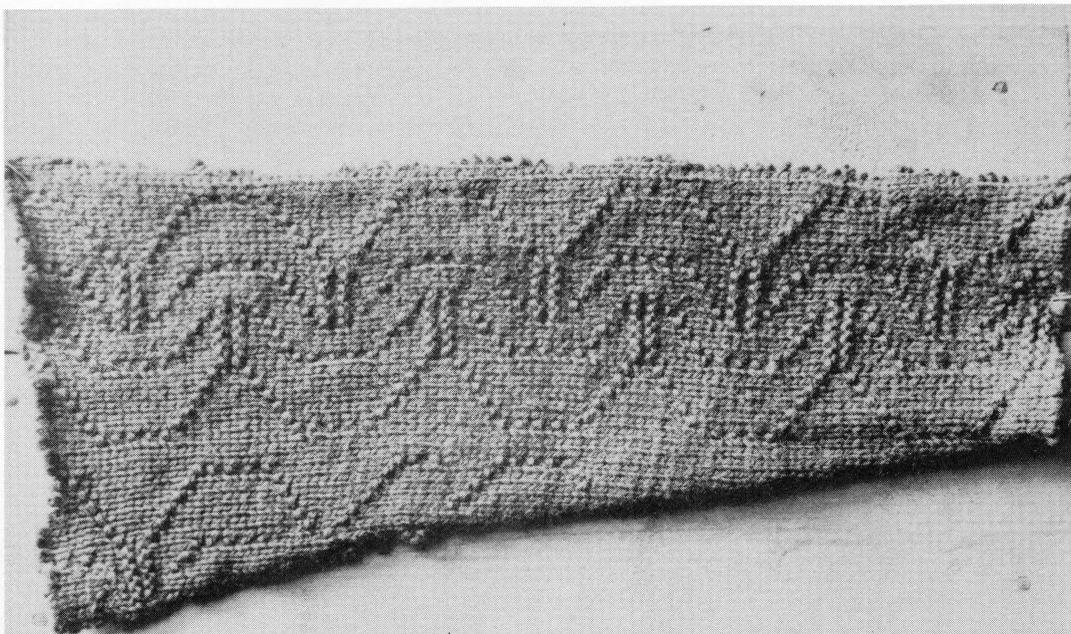


Fig 8. Sample of jacquard purl stitch, 1893. (Michael Pitchers collection)

of the fabric, to produce garter stitch.¹²⁷ Mrs Pitchers liaised with the Stoll knitting machine company to have jacquard punched cards fitted to their machine. Repeat patterns were then produced, consisting of purl stitches in relief on a stocking stitch ground (fig 8). In 1893 W T Pitchers registered several designs in England and the USA for both cable stitch and jacquard purl stitch sweaters.¹²⁸ Photographs survive of many purl stitch socks and sweaters manufactured by the firm, some of which were exported to the USA (M figs 15, 16, Microfiche 27-8).¹²⁹ In 1899 a new company, W T Pitchers Limited, was formed with a nominal capital of £10,000. Its business was described as that of 'practical tailor, habit and breeches maker, athletic and general outfitter and general warehouseman, also knitting business', carried on at Godalming, Haslemere and Oxford.¹³⁰ The firm continued to manufacture sports sweaters (fig 9) and on occasion supplied more specialist products, such as sleeping bags for the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914 (figs 10, 11; M fig 17, Microfiche 28). Shackleton wrote to Messrs Pitchers on 21 July of that year:

'I am in receipt of your invoice for the two dozen Sleeping-Bags, and beg to enclose my cheque for £17.2/-.

I take this opportunity of thanking you for the special discount you have given to the Expedition, and to say how much I appreciate this voluntary reduction on your part, signifying as it does your interest in our efforts, without regard to the business side of our order.

I feel we have a good article from you, and hope to give you a favourable report on the return of the Expedition.'

William and Lucy's daughter, Lucy Florence Pitchers, registered the design for the sleeping bag in 1914. Their sons, Archibald (fig 11; M figs 13, 14, Microfiche 26) and James, were both active in the business and from 1934 ran it as A R & R J Pitchers Limited.¹³¹ In 1931, A R Pitchers patented a device for forming a whole row of cable stitches at once. This was manufactured by the local Weylea engineering company at Elstead.¹³²

In about 1907, when W T Pitchers Limited moved to a new location in the High Street, the firm's old premises on the corner of High Street and South Street were taken over by William Paine (M fig 18, Microfiche 29), a tailor from Sevenoaks in Kent. William Paine

experimented with some knitting machines which had remained on the premises and then began manufacturing sweaters with some 30 employees, specialising in high quality products for the club and school trade. Unusually for the period¹³³ he sold his own brand direct to retailers. Eventually in the late 1920s he sold his tailoring business to Silver's of Reading and began to concentrate exclusively on the manufacture of knitwear.¹³⁴

GROWTH AND DECLINE: 1920-1990

In the 20th century the outerwear branch of the knitwear industry greatly expanded and the concentration of hosiery manufacture in the East Midlands became somewhat diminished. The two Godalming firms took part in these trends, opening new purpose-built factories in the 1920s.¹³⁵ These operated throughout the Second World War, supplying the armed forces, with 80 employees at Paine's and 110 at Pitchers' in 1943.¹³⁶

R J & A R Pitchers' factory in Rock Place was taken over by the Jaeger Company at the end of the Second World War, although the Pitchers family continued to be actively involved in the business. The premises were extended and powered automatic machinery was installed in the 1950s but the factory closed in 1970 and was demolished in 1989.¹³⁷



Fig 9. British bobsleigh team wearing cable stitch sports sweaters. Date and place unknown but possibly the first Winter Olympic Games, Chamonix, 1924. (Michael Pitchers collection)

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THE IMPERIAL TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

<p>TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS "ANTEXPEDI LONDON."</p> <p>TELEPHONE NO. 2345 REGENT.</p> <p>CODES A.B.C. 5TH EDITION.</p> <p>AND BROOMHALL.</p>	<p>4. NEW BURLINGTON STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.</p>
---	--

14th July 1914

PLEASE QUOTE ORDER NO. *68*

PLEASE SUPPLY *by 20th July 1914 & deliver*
to J. + T. Bayley
18 Cannonville Street E.C.

24 - 6 ft-woollen sleeping bags @ 2/1. each

E. Shackleton
Commander

Mr. J. Pitchers
46 High Street
Godalming

Fig 10. Order for sleeping bags from Sir Ernest Shackleton, 1914. (Michael Pitchers collection)

W F Paine Limited, which became Alan Paine Limited in 1968, has remained a private family firm. It also installed powered machinery and expanded in the post-war period, eventually opening a new factory at Godalming Wharf in 1965. The firm employed approximately 700 people in the 1970s.¹³⁸ It has specialised in fashioned sweaters, in particular menswear, made from natural fibres. The Godalming knitwear industry has certain parallels with the much larger industry of the Scottish Borders, with respect to the manufacture of underclothing in the 19th century and of high-quality outerwear in the 20th century.¹³⁹ It is therefore significant that after the Second World War W F Paine Limited recruited staff from Scotland in order to develop a cashmere line. The firm originally concentrated on unassuming classic styles but adopted an advanced fashion approach in the late 1960s. Its products have been sold throughout the world, with the emphasis at first on North American and later on Western European markets and it received three Queen's Awards for export achievement between 1966 and 1979.¹⁴⁰ Further factories were opened at Ammanford in South Wales in 1968 and Sutton in Ashfield in Nottinghamshire in 1979 and several subsidiary companies were formed, including marketing companies in West Germany in 1979 and in the USA in 1986.¹⁴¹

The knitwear industry in Britain faced considerable economic difficulties in the 1980s.¹⁴² In 1990 Alan Paine Limited moved its manufacturing plant to South Wales and a new location at Haslemere and sold its Godalming site for redevelopment.¹⁴³

THE HAND-OPERATED BRANCH

In addition to the two major 20th century firms, several others operated for limited periods, as indicated in Appendix 4 (Microfiche 41-4). The chief of these was Keefe & Lewis, which was established by an employee of R J & A R Pitchers in the 1930s and specialised in heavy gauge cable stitch sweaters made on hand operated machines. The hand operated branch was also continued by Jaeger after the Second World War, alongside their production on automatic machines¹⁴⁴ and a cable stitch cricket sweater manufactured by W F Paine Limited in 1953 is held by Godalming Museum.

The small firms engaged in the hand operated branch have made flexible use of a variety of existing industrial, and occasionally domestic, premises in Godalming and Guildford.¹⁴⁵ The firms themselves have undergone many changes. Keefe & Lewis operated in Guildford until 1972 and the remnants of this business were eventually taken over by Kent & Curwen, tie and club colour specialists of London, who manufactured cricket sweaters in Farncombe until 1990.¹⁴⁶ Production was then continued in Godalming by BSB Knitwear, a small firm employing of the order of 14 workers. A second small firm, K F Knitwear, manufactures cricket sweaters in Guildford.¹⁴⁷ Examples of its products are held by Guildford and Godalming Museums.

Conclusion

As framework knitting in south-east England declined from the 18th century onwards, the industry in Godalming made a series of recoveries, largely by means of successful innovation

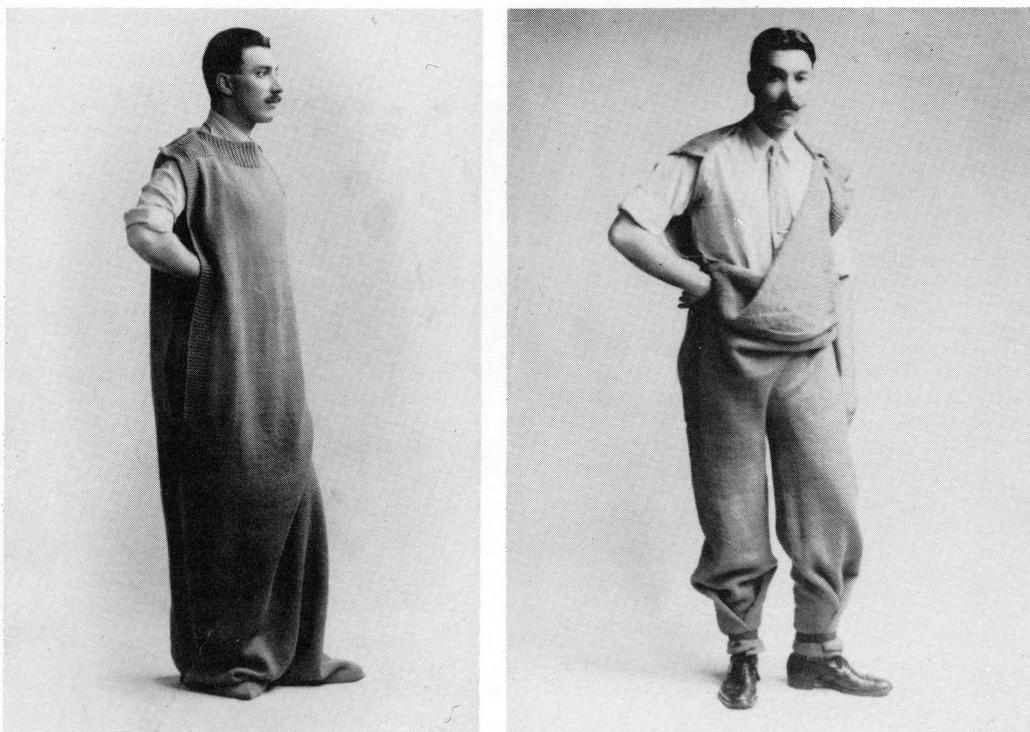


Fig 11. Sleeping bag and variation, modelled by Archibald Pitchers. (Michael Pitchers collection)

and specialisation, particularly in high quality products. In this respect certain parallels can be drawn with the Scottish knitwear industry which similarly, though later, changed from the manufacture of stockings to underclothing and then to high-quality outerwear.

From its beginnings in the 17th century the Surrey industry was on the periphery of the London trade and it owed its continued progress in the late 18th century and the second half of the 19th century to firms from London and the East Midlands. Factories were established early in Godalming but after a few decades outgrew the town.

The outerwear industry which developed from the 1890s onwards was the product of local initiative. This made a significant contribution to early technical advances in the manufacture of patterned knitwear. It also anticipated major developments in the hosiery industry nationally, in particular the growth of the outerwear branch and the expansion of the industry in the Home Counties after the First World War.

Whilst manufacturing industry has in general declined in the district in the late 20th century, the presence of local skill has led to successful small-scale production by specialist knitwear firms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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(See also abbreviations at front of the volume)

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- Guildhall: Guildhall Library, London
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- NAO: Nottinghamshire Archives Office
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