

Chapter 9 Apprentices and Merchant Adventurers

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Introduction

Merchant Adventurers were engaged in trade overseas and their main business was the newer trade in English woollen cloth exported anywhere, as opposed to the Merchant Staplers who exported raw wool to fixed places such as Calais. The Adventurers were free to risk, or 'adventure', their capital wherever they could find a market. Early guilds were religious fraternities but trading elements gradually became more important. The word 'mystery' meaning professional skill (Latin *misterium*) was used to describe trades.

The objects were to protect by union their rights and privileges as traders, to obtain preferential rights of freedom from tolls and dues in their own town, and in other towns at fairs, and to obtain monopoly of trade in their own town. Non-guildsmen were forbidden to keep shops or sell merchandise. Merchant strangers had their goods examined and told not to remain in town any longer than a specified time; only a merchant may buy their wares. The Crown granted these privileges for a fee.

In 1353 Newcastle on Tyne was named as a Staple Town with nine others - ports for export of wool. The Fellowship had a monthly meeting. Members had two apprentices at most at the same time and fees were paid. From 1405 apprentices were to be sons of men possessed of landed property. The apprentices lived in the same houses as their masters. Mercers, drapers, boothmen and spicers were amongst the guilds in Newcastle. There was a Governor, 12 assistants, 2 wardens, a clerk and a beadle. In the 1500s all English Merchants were forced to join the London Company of Merchant Adventurers with branches at Newcastle, York, Hull and elsewhere. In 1519 £8 a year was paid to London, with arguments about this over the next 100 years. The Merchant Adventurers met in the Maison Dieu in Newcastle, now the Guildhall. Newcastle recruited members from a limited area - apprentices in 1600-1609 came mainly from Durham, Northumberland and Yorkshire.

Mercers were general merchants, including linen and canvas, later restricted to haberdashery and silks. Merchant Drapers were originally general merchants of woollen cloth but later the retailers of woollen cloth were drapers. Boothmen were corn merchants and Baltic tradesmen. Hostmen had the trades of coal and grindstones, incorporated 1600. The Merchant Adventurers eventually took over the drapers, boothmen and mercers. In the early 1700s guilds were beginning to lose their powers and many ports were closed to the English because of wars.

No master could take on another apprentice until his current lad had served 7 years (later 10 years). A lad was often apprenticed to a temporary master then transferred to his proper employer. The Merchants Guild absorbed the Mercers and Boothmen and perhaps also the Drapers. It was necessary for anyone engaging in trade to become a member of the fraternity (*Welford, 1895*).

The Statute of 1563 limited apprenticeships to sons of 40 shilling freeholders and insisted on a seven year apprenticeship but the Act was not enforced (*Hill, 1974*). An Act of 1621 tried to prevent the property-less from coming to any town or city to dwell. In some areas Justices of the Peace refused to work the relevant clause of the Statute of Apprentices. All this had a big impact on the poor (*Hill, 1974*).

Newcastle in about 1602 is pictured on the cover of 'Newcastle' by F. Graham. Copy in Bessie Surtees house in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The greatest exporters of cloth were the Merchant Adventurers who sent unfinished cloth to the Netherlands to be dyed and dressed for re-export to Germany and the Baltic. Dyening was the most profitable part so in 1614 Merchant Adventurers had their licence withdrawn. A new King's Merchant Adventurers was founded licensed to export dressed cloth only. The scheme failed because the Dutch prohibited the import of finished cloth. The old Merchant Adventurers then had their privileges restored.

The entrance fee for the Merchant Adventurers rose at one time to £200.

Haberdashers' Company

The history of the Haberdashers Company, 1991. I.W.Archer, publ. Phillimore, Chichester

Alphabetical lists of Freemen Ms 15858/1 and /2 (1642-1967) (Guildhall)

Apprentice binding books (Guildhall)

Merchant Taylors

*Apprentices 1583-1818 Merchant Taylors SL 37 M555 Guildhall
Apprentice binding books 1583-1933*

Langcliffe apprentices

*The Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle upon Tyne. 1894. The Surtees Soc. vol. I, vol. 93, publ. 1895. Ed. F.W.Dendy (Leeds University Library and Borthwick)
also vol. II, vol. 101, 1899 (Accounts in reign of Henry VIII).*

Thomas Somerscales 1560-1600 clothier

William Somerscale c 1573

Arthur Somskalles 1583-1594 Merchant Taylors

Leonard Carr 1597 Merchant Adventurer in Newcastle, Master in 1615

Henry Somerscales 1592-1614 Merchant Taylor to John Toy 1603-5 no. 262

Thomas Brown Newcastle 1603 son of William of Giggleswick MAdv to A.

Hedworth (See will of John Brown 1591) (folio 82)

William Carr(2) 1622 boothman Newcastle Master Leonard Carr

Lawrence Carr 1623 boothman Newcastle Master Leonard Carr

Adam Somerscale c 1625-1635

William Carr 1630 son of Henry of Langcliffe boothman Newcastle Master Leonard Carr

Thomas Ivison son of William of (L)ancliff 1639 boothman Newcastle Master

Leonard Carr son of William(4) by patrimony 1670 boothman

Lawrence Swainson of Langcliffe son of John of Giggleswick c 1635-1645 Merchant in London, Haberdasher; Newcastle 1651 MAdv and Boothman (departed service 1658)(folio 82)

Adam Somerscale Merchant Adventurer of York(?) admitted 1646.

John Carr c1654

Nathaniel Lawson c 1699

Names noted in local Wills and in Enrolment lists

Will of Thomas Somerscale of Stockdale 1572/3: son William sending him apprentice in London

Will of John Browne 1591: Thomas his son. 20 nobles at end of apprenticeship

Will of Henry Somerscales (2) In 1609 a Merchant Taylor in London. Also in 1612. Apprentice in 1592-1614?

Will of Richard Armitstead 1613: sons John, Robert and William at school and possible apprenticeships.

Will of Giles Foster 1601/2: son Richard of the city of London clothworker

Will of Henry Somerscales 1609: son Thomas trained in law or trade.

Henry Frankland son of Richard Frankland of Nealsing, to Leonard Carr 1618 (folio 96)

Will of William Browne 1621: son Thomas £5 one year after apprenticeship ends.

Will of James Carr of Stackhouse 1654: grandchild John Carr sending to London

Will of Richard Lawson of Langcliffe 1699: son Nathaniel when 23 or finishing apprenticeship

The Carrs of Langcliffe

There were prosperous merchants in the Carr family on Tyneside from the 1400s onwards and they came to be powerful men in the affairs of Newcastle. They are not closely related to the Carrs in Craven. It may be that William Carr at the Manor of Bavington Magna near Hexham in the early 15th C is the forebear of the Carrs - with descendents moving to Durham, Sleaford (Lincolnshire) and Craven (Purdue, 1999; Carrs, 1893-9). It was not easy to become a member of the Newcastle guilds so being a distant kinsman may have been helpful. In the late 1500s apprentices were being sent to Newcastle from Yorkshire.



The Side, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1834

In Langcliffe William(1) had a son Leonard bp 1578 (*GI/Parish Register*). The Merchant Adventurer records state that Leonard Carr, son of William Carr of Langcliffe in Craven in the County of York was apprenticed to George Dent, Boothman (corn merchant and clerk of the town chamber of Newcastle, aged 64 in 1600)(Welford, 1895) and Merchant Adventurer 1st August 1597 - a year of raging plague in Newcastle. George Dent was a merchant in Newcastle (*Surtees Soc., Wills and Inventories from the Registry at Durham, 1860. p145-6.*

GU/MA/3/1 folio 78 Tyne and Wear Archives Guild Records

*At a Courte holden the xxvij th day of Aprill Anno dni 1598 ano regni Elizabeth ...
Quadragesimo Leonard Carr Sonne of William Carr of Langcliffe in Craven in the
County of Yorke yeom Apprentice to George Dent of the Towne of Newcastle upon
Tyne Boothman and merchant adventurer was entered and enrolled in this Courte*

This Apprentichre(?) begineth the first daye of Auguste in the xxxix th yeare of the Reign of our said Sovereign Ladie quene Elizabeth and bounden by Indenture for Tenn yeares And the date of the same Indenture is the said first day of Auguste in the said xxxix th year of the reigne of our said Sovereigne Ladie Quein Elizabeth Ann dni 1597

And Received for his Enrollment xxij s vj d

Leonard became a Freeman in 1607 - having served under a master who was a Freeman (*GU/NCF/4 List of Freeman*). Leonard married in Newcastle and raised his family there (*IGI*). His daughter Jane married into the Shafto family (*Surtees Soc., 1929, no. 142, vol.I, Wills and Inventories*). Leonard later had his kinsmen (nephews) as apprentices, William (2) bp 1603, son of Thomas of Langcliffe, yeoman, in 1622, and his brother Lawrence in 1623.

GU/MA/3/1 folio 101 Tyne and Wear Archives Guild Records

At a Court holden the x day of Aprill 1623 Willm Carr Sonne of Thomas Carr of Langcliff in the County of York yeoman Apprentice to Leonard Carr marchant Adventurer & botheman was inrolled his Indentures beare date the xxiiij th day of June 1622 and is bounde for ten yeares

Rec for his Inrolement xxij s vj d

And the same for Lawrence Carr in 1623 (*folio 102*) - another plague year.

In 1630 William son of Henry Carr of Langcliffe deceased was taken on by Leonard (*folio 113*).

Leonard Carr was admitted to the Hostmen (coal merchants) in 1609, already a Merchant Adventurer (*Surtees Soc, 1901, vol. 101, p265; Welford, 1887*). He became Master (Governor) of the Merchant Adventurers in Newcastle on Tyne in 1615. In 1617 he was a Commissioner to supervise the river. By 1621 he occupied the Nag's Head Inn dealing in wine and other liquors - still there in 1634 (*Welford, 1895*). He was Sheriff 1635/6 and Alderman 1641-1657 (*Surtees Soc. vol. 124*). There is no mention of his name in the Port Books to show what he was dealing in. However, he was involved in a salt-making company (*Howell, 1967, p21; Welford, 1895 Patent Rolls II Car. I part xx*).

'Here I viewed the salt works.... more salt made than in any part of England these pans placed in the river mouth and wrought with coals brought by water from Newcastle pits.'

The Civil War of the 1640s led to a siege by the Scots of Newcastle in 1644. Parliament was motivated by the need to supply coal to London which had led to Parliament seeking to take control of the town. The aldermen, including Leonard Carr had been careful not to associate too closely with the royalist cause for political reasons. Already by that time he had been Steward (1639/40)(*GU/HO/16*) and Governor (1641-3)(*GU/HO/16*) of the Hostmen before the Civil War and Governor and assistant of the Merchant Adventurers as well (1641-5). He had participated in the defence of the town against royalists in 1644 but he had not then been accused of being disloyal to Parliamentary forces in later royalist scares. He might have been a royalist at heart (*Welford, 1895*). Nevertheless, in 1657 he was charged with collusion

with royalists in the period 1642-5. In the *Calendar of State Papers* 1656-7, April 28th (p359) Privy Council President Lawrence (on behalf of the Lord Protector, Cromwell) writes to Leonard Carr Alderman of Newcastle on Tyne about raising and lending money to support the King's forces. There was gross exaggeration of the charges; Leonard was considered by Parliament to be unfit to be an alderman and was removed in 1657 (Howell, 1967). This was part of the politics of national issues regarding the loyalty of the North to rulers in London.

Leonard died in 1658, buried in All Saints, and left £5 a year to support the poor of his parish (*PCC will PROB 11/286, rough copy in Arch. Ael., 1978*). He mentions Elizabeth daughter of his brother Lawrence (who went to live in Newcastle and became clerk to the Company of Merchant Adventurers) and Mary daughter of Cousin Lawrence Carr. He gives money also to nephew John Carr son of his brother John. The Dent family children are left money (George Dent was his Master). Leonard Carr son of William Carr(4) of Langcliffe is left £5. His 'colemines and colyerie' are left to the Shafto's. The poor of Giggleswick, 'where I was born' are given £10.

There was concern also about Quakerism in Newcastle. The Merchant Adventurers expressed concern about a 'great apostasy and falling off from the truth to Popery, Quakerism, and all manner of heresy and unheard-of blasphemy and profaneness. No Popish recusant, no Quaker, none that did not regularly attend the public services of the town, nor any who were base-begotten or deformed should be taken as apprentices'.

William (2) bp 1603, son of Thomas of Langcliffe, yeoman, was apprenticed to Leonard in 1622. A number of references are found to him in Surtees Soc. 1895. He was chosen as assistant in 1641/2 and perhaps kept that post to at least 1658 (when Leonard died). In 1645 he was fined 40s for selling goods through his apprentice Robert Potter at Penrith. In 1656 he was appointed to treat with drapers in the town. We have a memorandum about a will of 1661 but it is doubted if this is the correct William (*Borthwick vol 51 fol 485*).

William Carr(4) son of William(3) is also noted as a merchant in his will of 1673/4 and in an Indenture of 1650 (*WYAS Sheepscair DW 370*) concerning Langcliffe land, as William Carr younger of Langcliffe. It is not known if or where he might have been apprenticed, in part since his birth date is not known.

By the 1700s The Merchant Adventurers were recruited mainly by patrimony (e.g. Leonard Carr of Langcliffe son of William(4)). The development of water power in Airedale and Calderdale helped keep enterprising Yorkshiremen in their own locality.

GU/MA/3/3 Tyne and Wear Archives Guild Records

At a Court holden the 22th March 1669

Leonard Carr: At the Court aforesaid, Leonard Carr, son of Mr William Carr, Merchant Adventurer and Boothman, was admitted to his Freedom of this Fellowship, by Patrimonie

And Sworne Accordingly