



Occupations of an Edwardian Suburb

Notes on the Occupations of Poet's Corner, 1911

The suburb of Poet's Corner was begun in the 1890's, the first houses built in Shakespeare Avenue beside an empty plot of land which was to become Beechen Cliff Methodist church. The estate steadily spread, each new road named after an English poet, the majority of the housing being completed by the time of the 1911 census. This study currently covers the Poet's Corner estate, with the section of Wellsway that runs past the Poets along with the two earlier streets, Beechen Cliff Road and Devonshire Buildings, that form the northern and southern boundary of the estate respectively. This represents 1,529 people living in 433 households (3.5 people per household). The 1911 census, much more detailed than any previous census, has given me the opportunity to study this suburb in great detail, household by household.

The Breadth of Geographical Origins

Before I take a look at the occupational structure of this estate, I want to take a quick look at the breadth of places that people came from in Poet's Corner. This suburb attracted people from far and wide and only 40% came from Bath itself. Represented here were 76 counties from within the UK, with 24% coming from the three neighbouring counties, 4.4% from London and then a sliding scale of counties, some near but many quite far away with Lancashire (31 people, 2.2%) coming 8th immediately after Dorset and Devon. Within the British Isles, 49 people came from Scotland, 26 from Wales, 18 from Ireland, 8 from the Channel Isles and 1 from the Isle of Man. Outside of this 25 countries were represented, 7 people from the USA, 5 from Morocco, 4 from India, 3 from South Africa, 2 each from France, Germany and Malta, and 1 each from New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Fiji, Ceylon, Australia and Italy!

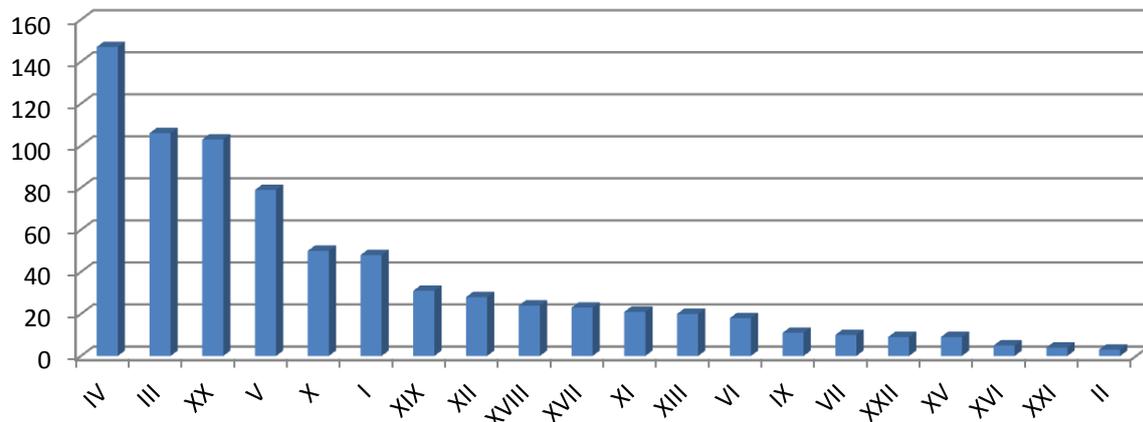
A Broad Range of Occupations

When looking at the occupations of the inhabitants, the largest group in the suburb were people who had no occupation recorded on the census, making up 60% of the total. Starting with the largest, 297 (19%) married women, 210 (14%) scholars (i.e. school aged children), 107 (7%) pre-school children, 106 (7%) people related to the head of household and presumed to be carrying out household duties (all were female), 98 (6.4%) living on private means, 32 (2%) retired from business, 28 (1.8%) who were 70+ and do not state what they are, 14 (.9%) pensioners, 13 (.85%) students and 8 (.5%) unemployed, 1 (.07%) old age pensioner (see note, below, about OAPs).

At the top of the list of people who give their occupations are: 131 (8.5%) domestic servants, 28 (1.8%) people who were in teaching, 28 (1.8%) who were clerks, 24 (1.5%) workers in engine and machine making, 21 (1.4%) working for the Post Office, 21 commercial travellers, 16 (1%) grocers, 15 (1%) drapers, 15 dressmakers (most women working from home), 14 (.9%) lodging house keepers, 13 (.85%) tailors, 13 builders, 12 (.8%) law clerks, 12 milliners (women usually working from home), 10 (.65%) local council officers, 10 electricians, 9 (.6%) civil servants, 9 piano/organ makers, 8 (.5%) ministers/priests, 8 sick nurses, 8 schoolmasters, teachers, professors, lecturers in other schools, 8 bankers including clerks, 8 railway employees including clerks, 8 printers, 7 (.46%) coal and coke merchants, 7 brewers, 6 (4%) musicians, 6 auctioners / valuers / house agents, 6 life assurance/insurance officials and clerks, 6 cabinet makers... I will draw this list to a close here, the full list of 167 occupational areas will be published on the Bear Flat 1911 Census website. In summary, below, is a chart and table showing the main occupational headings given in the census:



**Poet's Corner, Bear Flat, Bath
Occupational Headings
Non-Working Population Removed
(see Key, below)**



Section Number	Total	%	Description (Official Headings from the 1911 Census)
IV	147	9.6%	Domestic Servants, Caretakers, Bath & Wash-house Services, Others in Service
III	106	6.92%	Clergy & Other Religious, Legal, Medical, Teaching, Publishing, Mining, Surveying, Artists & Musicians, Theatre & Other Entertainment
XX	103	6.73%	Inn & Hotel Trade, Lodging & Boarding House Keeping, Food Production including Dairy, Fish, Cereals, Baking, Sugars, Vegetables & Fruit, Non-Alcoholic Drink, Alcoholic Drinks
V	79	5.16%	Merchants, Salesmen & Travellers, Accounting, Commercial, Banking and Insurance
X	50	3.27%	Metal Founding and Manufacturing, including Electric Cables, Metal Tools, Boilers, Ship Building & Railway Manufacturing, Cycle, Motor Cars, etc., Ironmongery
I	48	3.14%	Post Office, Civil Service, Police, Poor Law and Local Authority
XIX	31	2.02%	Dressmaking & Tailoring, Hats, Gloves, Hosiery, Shoe and Boot Makers, Wigs, Umbrellas, etc.
XII	28	1.83%	Building, including Railway, Mines and Roads
XVIII	24	1.57%	Cotton, Wool, Silk and Other Textile Manufacture and Sales
XVII	23	1.5%	Paper & Cardboard Manufacture and Sales, Printing, Bookbinding and Newspapers.
XI	21	1.37%	Precious Metals and Gems, Clocks & Watches, Musical Instruments, Toys, Other Small Items
XIII	20	1.31%	Wooden Trades, including Woodworkers & Cabinet Makers, Barrel & Box Manufacture, and Sales of these
VI	18	1.18%	Transport & Communications, including Railways, Docks, Warehouse and non-Government Telegraph/Telephone
IX	11	0.72%	Miners and Other Mine/Quarry Workers, Coal, Coke - Merchants, Dealers, and Distributors of Mined Materials
VII	10	0.65%	Agriculture including Farmers, Shepherds, Gardeners, etc.
XXII	9	0.59%	Circulars & Advertising, Agricultural Animal Dealers, Various Trades Not Yet Covered, Multiple Shops, Pawnbrokers, etc., General Labouring, Factory Workers and other Undefined Trades
XV	9	0.59%	Chemical Manufacture including Dye, Paint, Silk & Blacking Manufacture, Gunpowder, Salt, Rubber, Oils, etc. Chemists & Druggists
XVI	5	0.33%	Furs & Skins, Saddlers, Brooms & Quills, Manufacture and Dealing in these
XXI	4	0.26%	Gas & Electricity Manufacture and Distribution, Drainage and Sanitary Services
II	3	0.2%	Army, Navy and Marines

This probably represents a fairly typical middle-class Edwardian suburb of the period, not that dissimilar to others I have looked at, but I will be carrying out more comparative research later. Some occupations seem very familiar in the modern Poet's Corner, others (e.g. Oil & Colourmen) seem quite alien to the modern world.



Interesting and Unusual Occupations in Poet's Corner in 1911

Below is a list of interesting/unusual occupations¹ and also those that have caught my eye either because they seem to typify Bath or typify the Edwardian Age. I've given a brief summary of the occupations and why I have found them interesting. This starts with those specific to Bath because they were concerned with the baths and then carries on with an alphabetical list.

Occupations Associated with the Hot Baths

Obviously Bath's hot mineral baths made its fortune in the ancient world, the mediaeval period and where a primary cause of Bath's success in the Georgian period. In 1911 they were continuing to offer employment and at the top of the tree was:

Director of The Hot Mineral Bath, John Hatton, South View, Beechen Cliff Road.

Masseur/Masseuse

Related to the above, were those who worked in and around the baths and their medicinal properties. When I first came across the 3 entries their occupations had been transcribed as 'Mansense'. Puzzled by the entry I had a look at the original census documents and saw that they actually had written Masseur/Masseuse (FindMyPast have now corrected this). From the Post Office Directory for Bath in 1911 39 people were recorded with this occupation, 13 as masseur and 26 masseuse. In Poet's Corner they are:

Masseur, Edmund Henry Sheppard, 30 Kipling Av., employed at the Municipal Baths;

Masseur and Medical Electrician, Edwin Frank Eskett, 27 Kipling Av., no place of employment recorded;

Masseuse, Harriet Annie Morris, 16 Milton Av., employed at the Municipal Baths.

Swimming

Although swimming instructor may not have been an uncommon occupation in Britain in 1911, this one was employed by Bath Corporation and working at the Municipal (hot?) Baths, he is also recorded as a 'Masseuse' in the PO Directory for Bath:

Swimming Master, Arthur Canning, 36, Kipling Av.



Early photographs of Longfellow Avenue (left, around 1905) and the top of Shakespeare Avenue (right, around 1908), with the gates of Alexandra Park on the far right of the picture



Other Occupations of Note

Crane Makers

Stothert & Pitt started producing ironmongery in Bath in 1785 and grew with the Industrial Revolution producing a number of spin off companies and product ranges. In the mid-19th Century they moved into making cranes, several fine examples of these can be still seen on the quayside in Bristol.

Draughtsman (Crane), Edwin Unclas Barnard, 44 Shakespeare Av., employer not given but we can assume it was Stothert & Pitt;

Engineer Fitter, Berie Poolman, Shirley Lodge, Beechen Cliff Road. Working for Stothert & Pitt;

Engineers Draughtsman, Thomas Arthur Briggs, 26 Milton Av., employed by a 'crane maker';

Machine Shop Foreman, Albert Horace Lewis, 62 Shakespeare Av., employed by a 'crane maker';

Tracer In Drawing Office, Wilfred C Brookes, 18 Kipling Av., employed by a 'crane maker';

Domestic Economics

Many schools of Domestic Economy were founded in Britain in the later half of the 19th Century, designed to train girls in domestic skills such as needlework, cooking, dressmaking, but also concerned with managing the household and the household budget. Bath offered a range of establishments concerned with this specifically female type of education, in Poet's Corner we find:

Co-Partner Domestic Economy School, Lillian Buckpitt, 81 Shakespeare Av.

Farming

Although the suburb was built on farmland, farming had by this time been pushed away up the hill, and yet we find two people connected with farming living in Shakespeare Av.:

Farm Labourer, Herbert Brimble, 68 Shakespeare Av.

Farmer, James Hunt, 20 Shakespeare Av.

Neither of these appear in the 1911 Post Office Directory for Bath, Herbert Brimble is a farm labourer so probably wouldn't appear but James Hunt is recorded as a farmer and possibly should. If anyone has any idea where they farmed I would be grateful for the information.

However, in Wellsway we find a dairyman who is shown in the PO Directory:

Joseph George Derriman, Dairyman and Milk Retailer, at 75 Wellsway.

The PO Directory lists his premises as Holloway (presumably where his milk was sold from) and Bloomfield Road Farm.

Fuller's Earth Production

There area a number of places where Fuller's Earth was mined south of Bath, including Englishcombe and Tucking Mill. The local greensand deposits are rich in the naturally occurring material, this is used with water in finishing woollen cloth to absorb the oils, and other greasy impurities in wool:

Manager Fullers Earth Work, Walter Francis Keevil, Beechen Cliff House, Beechen Cliff Road;

Assistant Manager Of Fullers Earth Mines And Works, Owen Frank Keevil, 82 Shakespeare Av.,

Working for Fuller's Earth Union Limited;

Clerk Fullers Earth Works, Owen Frank Keevil, son of the above

Maltsters

Bath was a centre for brewing in the Nineteenth Century, with more breweries than its larger neighbour, Bristol. On the corner where the Wells Road becomes the Wellsway was the Bear Pub and Brewery, flattened by bombing during the Second World War, a modern pub is all that remains.



Living at **89 Shakespeare Ave.**, was **James Edwin Parker**, given as a **Maltster's Chief Clerk** in 1911 and in 1901, living at **3, St Mary's Buildings, Wells Road**, as a **Maltster Office Manager**. His son, **Edwin Arthur**, is following him into the business as a **Maltster's Clerk**. There is no evidence linking them with the Bear Brewery but it is possible that they were employed just around the corner from where they lived. Just around the corner, living as a boarder at **43 Wellsway, Archibald Frankomb** is shown as a **Clerk Maltster** on the census.

Merchant Marine

Bath has connections with the Admiralty as they set up shop here in the Second World War, allegedly, to fool the Germans, however, to find an officer of the merchant marine here in 1911 does seem a bit strange: **Mercantile Marine Officer, Thomas Wiltshire, 12 Shakespeare Av.**

Ministers of Religion

The suburb of Poet's Corner was founded around its Methodist Church in Shakespeare Av.. In the suburb in 1911 it seems that every Protestant denomination was present:

Baptist Minister, Louis Parkinson, Easton House, Beechen Cliff Road;

Clerical Primitive Methodist Minister, Murray Wilson, 39 Wellsway;

Congregational Minister, James Turner Smith, 9 Devonshire Buildings;

Deaconess, Fanny Gray, 40 Kipling Av.;

Minister (Retired) Methodist Church, John Miller Ward, 28 Devonshire Buildings;

Pastor Free Church, Andrew Barclay, 89 Wellsway;

Student Free Church Ministry, Leslie Cabburn Seymour, a boarder at 32 Kipling Av.;

(see also the Swedenborgian Church, below)

Motor Car Manufacture

Another sign of the times, Bath was the centre for a small scale motorcar manufacture. The census return doesn't say who employs him, and this was two years before Horstman, 'a pioneer of automotive engineering' started in Bath:

Motor Car Body Maker, Simeon Stanley, 46 Longfellow Av.

Oil and Colourmen

'Oil and Colourmen' sounds intriguing to the modern ear and covered a range of suppliers from lamp oil sellers to the men who supplied house paint:

General Contractor And Oil And Colourman (Building Trade), Herbert Henry Knight, 135 Wellsway;

Oil and Colour Merchant, Frederick William Stone, 46 Longfellow Av.

Old Age Pensioner

The Old Age Pension was introduced in 1908 and was 5 shillings a week for those over 70 who have an annual means not over £31 10s. Only 1 person in the suburb qualified:

Old age Pensioner, Flora Ann Mcleod, 35 Shakespeare Av.

Omnibus Driver

Probably a major contributory factor to the growth of the Edwardian suburbs that sprang up in cities such as Bath, cheap and fast public transport was a key element. Only 1 person living in the suburb represents this trend (but see Railway Workers, below):

Omnibus Driver, Frederick Blackwell, 29 Wellsway



Plasticine

William Harbutt, sculptor and teacher in Bath, invented Plasticine in 1897 for his sculpture students. He started production in Bathampton in 1900. In Bear Flat the following was connected with this industry:

Junior Clerk, Plasticine Works, Gladys May Barham, 6 Milton Av.

Police Officers

There were two officers constables living in Bruton Avenue:

Police Constables, John Streets and Albert Hill, 4 Bruton Avenue

And, just to prove my thesis that Bath attracted people from far and wide :

Pensioned Superintendent Metropolitan Police Force, Henry Augustus Ferrett, 30 Longfellow Av.

Political Activists

The average, sedate, Edwardian suburb would probably not be a place to look for radical or, in this case, reactionary politics, however:

Honorary Secretary Anti Socialist Union, John Charles Baynton Taylor, 101 Wellsway

Post Office Workers

Many would argue that the invention of the modern postal system in the middle of the Nineteenth Century did as much or even more to revolutionise communications than the railways (see the next item). Bath has had long associations with the Post Office as a regional hub and, one of Bath's most famous 18th Century residents, Ralph Allen, is said to have become wealthy, not so much for the stone which he quarried on Combe Down, but because he owned the Post Office franchise for Bath from 1712.

In 1911 Poet's Corner has 21 people connected with the Post Office, some are just listed as postmen but others involved in the newer branches of the postal service, the telegraph and the telephone:

Inspector GPO, Samuel F Woodman, 57 Shakespeare Av.;

Postal Superintendent, James Henry Tiley, 27 Wellsway;

Overseer GPO, William Wilce Griffiths, 35 Milton Av.;

15 Postal Clerks living across the range of roads in Poet's Corner, 1 is also recorded as a Professional Organist, Harry Male, 67 Shakespeare Av.;

Sorting Clerk, Austin Bailey, 52 Shakespeare Av.;

Sorting Clerks And Telegraphists, Theadore Sperring, 59 Wellsway, and Cecil Ernest Hutchings, 15 Milton Av.;

Stamper GPO, Samuel George Poolman, Shirley Lodge, Beechen Cliff Road;

Telegraph Messenger, Stanley Fricker, 13 Kipling Av.;

Telephonist (Post Office), Doris Lily Muriel Blacker, 45 Wellsway

Railway Workers

Bath is situated on the route of one of Britain's earliest long distance railways, built by Brunel in the 1830's. Therefore Bath had long been the connected with the railways, it is also common to find railway workers in Edwardian suburbs of this type. This suburb had 11 and most of them were living in Shakespeare Av.:

6 Railway Clerks/Agents, a Railway Out Porter, and a Ticket Collector, all living in Shakespeare Av., Nos 13, 25, 29, 30, 43, 44, 68 and 79;

Bridge Inspector GW Railway, Alfred Charles Brookes, 18 Kipling Av.;

Manager of Railway Company (it doesn't say which), Arthur Edward Dawes, 8 Shelley Rd.



Servants²

Rare today, domestic servants formed the backbone of any middle class estate in 1911. The number present on the census in Poet's corner in 1911 was 133, which, for an estate with more than 400 dwellings, is possibly too few. The bigger houses in Devonshire Buildings and Beechen Cliff Road often have living in servants who have clearly defined roles. For the households lower down the social scale on this estate, it is likely that all had at least one domestic servant. However, in a new lower to middling middle class suburb like this, few servants would have lived on the premises, most would have been daily servants and therefore may not have been recorded on a census that took place on a Sunday when they would be at home with their own families. The majority of the servants appearing in Poet's corner have their Relation to Head on the census recorded as 'Servant', 'Domestic Servant', 'Companion', 'Housekeeper' or similar, which suggests that they were in Poet's corner carrying out their servant duties and might live elsewhere. Eleven people are shown as being with their families and one visiting another family, and presumably not in the household for which they were a servant. Further work will be done on this at a later stage, the following is just a general summary of some of the people and their roles:

Chaffeur (Domestic), Charles Edward Parsons, 11 Shakespeare Av.

2 Coachmen (Domestic), Charles Francis Brewer, 8 Longfellow Av., and William Robert Mans, 30 Shakespeare Av. (all 3 were heads of household and therefore working elsewhere)

Companions, Mary Ada Hooper, 85 Wellsway, Winifred Maud Johnson, 29 Devonshire Buildings and Ellen Rose Wheatley, 36 Shakespeare Av.

Companions were relatively high status servants, unmarried women from poorer families, who worked alongside their mistress sharing household duties, but still recorded as servants.

1 Daily Work As Lady Help. Only 1 person, **Mary Irene Lawrence of 32 Milton Av.** appears under the specific census heading '**Day Girls, Day Servants (so returned)**'. She is probably with her family for the census, either because she has undertaken her duties for the day and returned home, or has the Sunday off.

6 Domestic Cooks. Five of these were found in the larger houses in Devonshire Buildings and Beechen Cliff Road, but one, **Evelyn Maud Racey**, is working at **30 Milton Av.** for 2 elderly sisters, along with a housemaid, **Agnes Minnie Racey**.

2 Governesses, Helen Lucy Roberts, 39 Shakespeare Av., and Elsie Mary Wilkinson, 43 Longfellow Av. Both were at home with their families and working as governesses elsewhere. Governesses were common amongst the upper classes, educating younger children at home. The absence of any governesses in this suburb may partly be due to the census day being a Sunday when they would probably not be working or possibly there were few employed by this section of society - further research is needed.

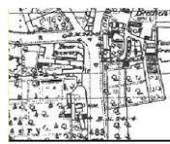
11 Housekeepers, 1 retired These can be found living across the range of streets, some were family members (i.e. a cousin, an aunt, a daughter and a sister), others were listed as housekeeper or servant in the 'relation to head' column of the census.

Monthly Nurse, Emily Josephine Parton, 22 Kipling Av.

Nurses employed to be with a newborn child and their mother during the 'lying in period'. 4 weeks or 1 month - hence, monthly - was seen as the ideal period, although it could be shorter or longer.

4 Retired Servants: 1 Coachman; 1 Gardener; 1 Governess; and 1 Housekeeper

Servants did retire and it was one of the scandals of the period that, after a lifetime in service, staff could be laid off when too old to perform their duties without any remuneration. This was one of the reasons for bringing in the Old Age Pension to protect such people. The two retired male servants were heads of household in their seventies living with their wives. The two retired female servants, one, **Anna Stokes**,



61 Wellsway, is living with her sister, one runs a boarding house, the other, **Caroline Susan Landsdown**, **22 Kipling Av.**, lives with her brother a retired master mariner.

Nurses: 1 Night Nurse, Sarah Matthews a servant at 21 Shelley Rd.; **2 Sick Nurses: Alice Maud Duggan and Anna Doble, both boarding at 9 Shakespeare Av.**

(a nurse employed to be with a newborn child and their mother during the 'lying in period', 4 weeks or 1

Swedenborgian Church

Amongst the clergymen and one C of E deaconess living on Bear Flat in 1911, there is one entry for the Swedenborgian Church. Established by scientist and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg in the 18th Century. Bath's imposing 'Greek temple' Swendenborgian Church was built in 1844 in Henry Street, where it can still be seen today, although it is now offices.

Minister New Church Swendenborgian, John Rous Presland, 45 Longfellow Av.

Woollen Cloth Manufacturer

Bath's mediaeval wealth largely came from the woollen trade. However, by the late 19th Century Bath was no longer a major manufacturer of cloth. Worthy of mentions because of their relative rarity by 1911 the only woollen manufacture listed was Carr & Son in East Twerton and Chas. Salter of Farley Mills, Farley Hungerford:

Woollen Cloth Manufacturer Director, Nelson Ernest Webb, St Kilda, Beechen Cliff Road

Richard Williams

Sept. 2014

¹ My apologies to teachers (of which I was one), clerks, commercial travellers, grocers, drapers, etc., who made up the majority of the estate. I will comment on these at a later date when I'm dealing with the occupations of the estate more thoroughly.

² For an excellent read on servants of this period and later, see **Lucy Lethbridge, *Servants, A Downstairs View of Twentieth Century Britain***. This covers not just the big houses but is a very thoroughly researched book which looks at servants at all levels, starting with a summary of what happened before in Georgian and Victorian Britain and their going into great detail right through from the Edwardian period up to the present day.