

JOHN MURLY, MALTSTER OF MERRIOTT, SOMERSET

MARY MILES

Tom. '...You are Meal-man, Malt-man, Miller, Corn-master,
and all.

Dick. 'Yea and half a Brewer too, and a Devil and all for
Wealth'.

*Words spoken to John Murly from The History of Sir John Oldcas-
tle, attributed to William Shakespeare in 'Comedies, Histories and
Tragedies, Publ according to the True Original Copies 3 ...'*

*William Shakespeare, 1664, p.37; and 'The Works of Mr William
Shakespeare in Eight Volumes Adorn'd with Cut's, Vol. 6, Jacob
Tonson, 1709, p.3147*

Introduction

A collection of papers at the Devon Records Office contains records from Somerset maltster and brewer, John Murly of Merriott. The aim of this work is to investigate what they tell us about the workings of a rural malting during the first half of the 19th century. The main books used were ledgers and day books of malt and hops, and beer sales under the reference 1044B-0/M/E18 – E22. In addition to these, other information was taken from 1044B-0/M/E11 - 17, E37, F43, and T44. These included notebooks, correspondence, deeds, a copy will, and an account book which supplied some details of brewing. It is not known how these documents came into the hands of the solicitors who deposited them, since there is nothing to link them directly.

The malt and hop sales ran from 7 October 1799 until 8 September 1827, amounting (with duplicates removed) to 3,061 entries, while the beer sale records cover the period 1806 to 1825 coming (with duplicates removed) to 2,994 entries. (A very short period of beer sales during 1804 was noted in the middle of malt and hop sales, but not enough to provide information other than that he was brewing at this earlier date in addition to malting.)

Merriott is a small village, just 2 miles north of Crewkerne in the South of the county of Somerset, close to the border with Dorset. In 1801 it had a population of 1,017, by 1821

this had risen to 1,212, peaked at just under 1,500 between 1831 and 1871, and subsequently fell significantly. It was mainly agricultural, with some market gardening carried on.¹

The books

The day books were in date order, and included those purchases paid for immediately. The ledgers were made up in customer name order to enable bills to be sent out to those not paying immediately. However, this was complicated by some entries in the ledgers not having entries in the day books (representing orders taken personally by Murly when out and about); furthermore, since some books overlapped in time a few entries were repeated in three books. Also, a period of approximately 6 months was missing in one beer day book, which could only be verified through random entries in 2 other books. All these books had entries for other items included – e.g. sometimes beer purchases in the middle of malt and hop ones, some farming items and references to lime sales. They often had entries of a related nature entered on the back pages (by turning the book upside down); these included such items as barley purchase accounts (with some calculations of amounts turned into malt), statements of the brewhouse and malthouse (perhaps for the Excise), and coal purchases.

The entries are, with one small set of exceptions, made by a single hand - which is John's own handwriting (e.g. 'The Excise guage of my couch' infers he is writing). The exception is in the earliest malt day book. From 1 September 1804 to 8 September 1804 a few sales of beer were inserted in a smaller and much neater hand. This was subsequently crossed out, and malt and hop entries in John's handwriting recommenced on 1 September 1804.

The earliest day book had the first couple of pages torn out. These may have included pages from before October 1799, but as the book is dated 1799 on the cover cannot have been

much before that. So we can only be sure that John was malting from October 1799, and brewing from sometime before September 1804.

The ledgers were in double-entry book-keeping, with credits on the right-hand page opposite the entry of the bill. Some of the publicans paid in small dribs and drabs, meaning that a large portion of the right-hand page was taken up with payments, and space had to be left on the left-hand side to accommodate this. Payments were made in cash, cheques or notes of hand, and frequently in kind. For those farming customers who sold him barley, John would make a calculation to determine who finally owed money. He often included on the debit side work he had carried out, such as hauling timber or stone. When he decided to start a new ledger, he transferred any outstanding debts to the new one. There is a little evidence in the ledgers for the malt and hops he used himself for brewing. He must have recorded these in a book which has not survived. Some brewing details were noted in a couple of the books and are discussed below under 'Brewing'.

John's accounts generally were a bit muddled. As noted above, he included various items along with the main use of the ledger, ledgers overlapped, some books changed their main use part-way through, and even the method of recording sometimes changed. Occasionally whole pages were used for other things, for instance in 1823 when he acted as an executor for Mr Templeman, probably his uncle. The missing six months in one beer ledger could only be completed by reference to two other books. All this must have made it hard for John himself to keep tabs on things.

The Murly family

The Murly family were living at Merriott during the 18th and 19thcs. (The 'e' seems to have been deliberately dropped out of the spelling of their surname at the beginning of the 18thcs.) Edward Murly and Elizabeth (nee Rendle/Rendall) had 15 children, only two of whom did not survive infancy. (With the exception of their eldest child, all the other 14 baptisms were performed on 5 January in the relevant years, an unusual occurrence and presumably deliberate. (It must have had a meaning for the family – it had special significance in the West Country, where the ceremony of wassailing the cider apple trees took place on this night, and still does in some areas to this day. Since cider was produced locally, and the Murly's provided cider as well as beer for their workpeople at harvest times, it could well be that the wassail, and the christening of the newest baby in the family made it one big celebration. Doubtless they were drinking the health of the new baby as well as the trees, and perhaps

also fertility in the family (with some apparent success!) John Murly was their second child, and the eldest son; he was baptised on 5 January 1779, so was probably born in 1778. Two of his brothers (Charles and Silvester) became solicitors; Edward junior concentrated on farming, and Roger went into sail cloth manufacture. In the wider family there is mention of an uncle 'William Rendall', probably his mother's brother, and an 'Aunt Templeman' perhaps the married sister of his father.

Edward Murly senior was farming on a large scale in Merriott, and beyond. John's accounts mention various transactions with or on behalf of his father, including hauling stone from Ham Hill, flax, and general farming items. John appears to have rented the Kings Head in Merriott from his father to begin with and also his malthouse. One of John's family was a partner in Murly & Bullock, canvas manufacturers of West Coker (George Bullock was his brother-in-law). Edward senior had property in West Coker - the Portman lands in particular² (the copy of his will of 1818 describes him as a yeoman of West Coker). In his will he left everything in trust for his widow Elizabeth for her lifetime and after she had died, the beneficiaries were to be his youngest six daughters – nothing was left to his sons or his eldest daughter.³The inference from this is that those children not mentioned had already been set up with property or money. His widow Elizabeth lived to a ripe old age – she is mentioned on the 1841 census as being aged 80, though she had died before the 1851 census. In correspondence with John, writers often asked after his mother, and occasionally his sisters – giving the impression of a close-knit family.

John's background then, is one of a comfortable, if not wealthy family. John always had farming interests, though not to the extent of his younger brother Edward. That said, there is evidence that he took on some of his father's farming interests from him while his father was still alive. Correspondences from his landlords refer to this. There are constant references to arrangements between his father and himself – for instance sharing the costs of providing cider and beer for harvesters. Furthermore, John was always looking to ways to add to his holdings – in 1807 he referred to the purchase of the estate of William Pitcher's father. His continued interest in agriculture is shown by the fact that he was one of the subscribers to 'A Natural and Chymical Treatise of Agriculture from the Works of Count Gustaf Adolf Gyllenborg', with additions by W. Pilkinton, and translated by J. Mills in 1823.

In 1800 the duty 'on the first Wetting' at the malthouse was charged to John's father. In 1808 John mentions borrowing £4 from his father while at Weyhill, implying that they both were at the Hop Fair together. Edward senior had probably



Figure 1. The Kings Head, Merriott in 2015. Photo: M Miles.

malted before John, and still had an interest in the business; John may have been taking advice from him. His father helped him financially – hinted at by his payment of the duty in 1800, but other evidence is that Edward senior often let John have barley at a lower rate than other suppliers charged. For instance, in the 1801/2 season, John paid his father £286 for barley, and then at the end of the season (when the price had risen considerably) an additional £134, implying that John had made it up to him. John's brother, Edward junior, had the most land and largest farm. The main landholdings being passed on, the two youngest brothers were helped financially in education and setting up in practice as solicitors. John chose to go into the malting and brewing trade, seeing it as a lucrative occupation, rather than take on the bulk of his father's farm.

His relationship with his brothers was on a cordial business level. There are constant borrowings and repayments between John and Edward junior. All his brothers took orders

and payments from customers for him, especially Silvester in Bridport and Edward junior. His solicitor brothers drew up leases for him, and he used their legal knowledge. In 1813 John mentions payment made to Dr Proctor for going twice to Bridport to see Silvester 'when in a fever', hinting at closeness between the two brothers.

John did not marry. However, there is tantalising evidence that he may have contemplated it. Some of the letters to him ask after his mother, and 'our young friend Grace'. (None of his sisters were called Grace.) In one of his notebooks he made several attempts to pen a bitter ditty about a 'Grace Bunter' having her head cut off and referring to her 'ugly face'. Had he been disappointed in love? (She may have been the daughter of George Bunter, a sailcloth manufacturer of West Coker. He would have known the family through his father's connections in West Coker, and the families were linked through a business there known as Murly Bunter & Co.) In another notebook he wrote out verses of a love

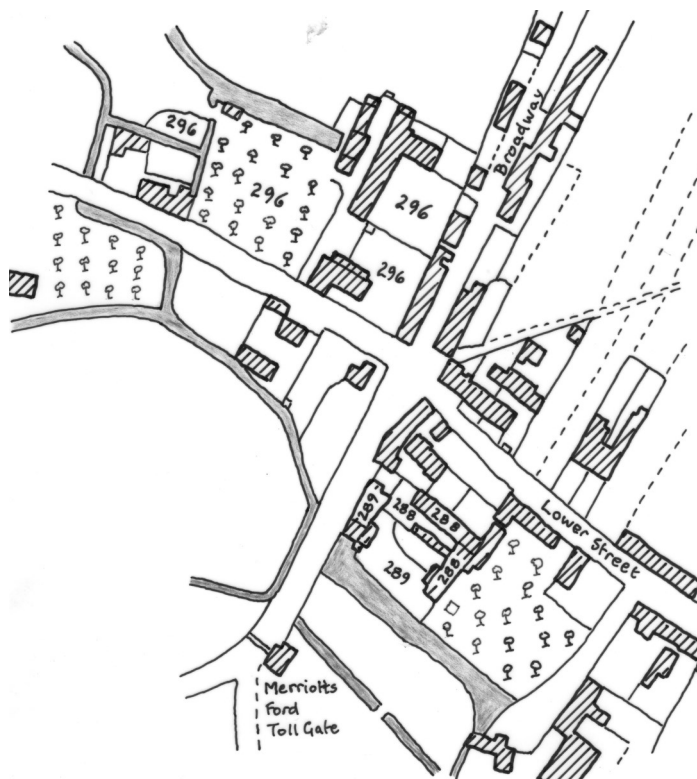


Figure 2. Based on the Tithe Map of Merriott, 1842. Nap House and the farm buildings are marked 296. Nap House is the building to the left of the orchard and on the roadside. From John Murly's description the malthouse is one of the buildings to the right of the orchard. The watercourses through the farm are included and show one arm running beside the farmhouse. This may indicate the site of the brewery as it was said to be beside the house, with the store cellar across the yard. The Bell Inn is number 289, on the roadside. Behind is the malthouse, number 288, adjoining an orchard. Only the back wall of this malthouse survived. Drawing by Peter Daniel.

poem, including these lines, '... Have I lost thee then my fair, Hast thou from me for ever flown ...'. In an undated copy of a letter sent to his youngest sister Sarah, he mentions an Eliza '...I have myself met her in those fields & I must here candidly confess [it] has given me more pleasure to ramble on to the Cottage with her than I have words to express ... You also hear she is going to leave Merriott which I very much regret. I shall very much feel the loss of her society, the parish one of its brightest ornaments.' It serves to show how affectionate he could feel.

He had some bouts of illness, several correspondents asked after his health and one mentions 'I am glad your leg is well' (1838). At one time he may have had tonsillitis, since he wrote out a cure for 'the Quinsey' in one ledger. He also wrote out a recipe for an extremely hot and spicy concoction which included aniseed, grains of Paradise, long pepper, elecampane and treacle, though it not clear if this was in-

tended for himself, or if for animals (elecampane was used for asthma, as a tonic, and for water retention, but also for sheep scab). In the month before his death one says 'Sorry to hear of you again being so ill.' The handwriting in his last ledger deteriorated badly, finishing on 11 January 1841. Among the very last entries he disposed of the remainder of his barley to John Budd, maltster of Crewkerne. In early 1841 John died, aged 62. He had already outlived his younger brother Charles, but not his mother. He was buried at Merriott with a chest tomb at All Saints Church. He had made a will in 1840 (a bill for it survives), but the contents are unknown, only that it ran to six pages.

The site(s)

At the time there were four known malthouses in Merriott, one of these with a brewery. However, each can be eliminat-

ed as not being owned or occupied by the Murly family. John lived in his father's house, firstly with his parents, then his widowed mother and his younger unmarried sisters. This was a large house then known as Nap House,⁴ and described as having a garden and orchard, but the Tithe map shows various buildings in association which are not described.⁵ These undoubtedly included farm buildings. When John described his malthouse and brewery for the Excise he said that 'The Malthouse is situated at the End of my Orchard ... The Brewhouse is situated behind my dwelling house... my store cellar No 3 across the Yard.' This all indicates Nap House.

John was paying his father rent for a malthouse between at least 1805 and 1811, and rent to Simon Rendall between 1812 and 1819, but no mention is made of renting one thereafter. The rent paid to his father was included with items such as his board and barley so the exact amount cannot be determined, but he was paying Simon Rendall £20pa. The Tithe does not show Simon owning any property in Merriott, so the site of this malthouse is not known. It is unlikely that Edward would lease out the buildings behind his house to another person, and so make his son pay rent to someone else. Furthermore, on the Tithe these buildings and land were said to be owned and occupied by John's mother, so were still in family ownership. This indicates that John at some time used two malthouses together. This is a likely scenario, as John had a fire in his malthouse on 12 April 1811, and tried to claim back the duty he had paid on 1,315 bushels of malt he had lost.⁶ He would not want to lose production, so would have taken steps to either get his old malthouse back into production as soon as possible, or rent one nearby, perhaps from someone sympathetic to his plight (Simon may have been related to John's mother). He would have had to lease the malthouse for a number of years, and at this time in this area it was usually a term of seven years. This would explain the rent paid to Simon between 1812 and 1819.

In 1808 he helped his local vicar to refurbish the malthouse at the Parsonage. (For details see 'What is known of the Malthouse' below.) However, John does not appear to have been using this refurbished malthouse at that time.

What is known of the malthouse

There are some details of the malthouse given in his books. In his earliest day book John gave a statement of his malthouse, most probably a copy of what he had advised the Excise. 'I, John Murly of Merriott in the Parish of Merriott County of Somerset do hereby declare all former Entries void, and now make Entry of One Malt House one Cistern one Couch Two Working floors one Kiln & Two Store

Rooms for making and storing Dry Barley & Malt. N B The Malthouse is situated at the End of my Orchard the Cistern is on the Right Hand marked C. the Kiln is opposite markd K the couch beyond the Cistern markd 'couch' the Floors number'd 1F & 2F the Store Rooms are mark'd 1SR & 2SR behind the Kiln and one over the other. as witness etc'. This book was in use between 1799 and 1819.

In addition we have the Excise measurement of his couch, which works out at 12' 6" (3.81m) long, 5' 7" (1.702m) wide and 1' 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (0.366m) deep (a rather odd amount which he showed as 14.4 inches). This is given in his earliest ledger, dating from October 1799 to July 1811, and is written inside the cover, before the Index. This points to the measurements being taken at the earliest period of his malting. As a result it must refer to his malthouse, rather than the one rented from Simon Rendall. From the size of his couch he worked out that it would contain 67.248 bushels, or 53.7984 dry bushels. (The difference between 'couch' and 'dry' bushels lies in the fact that the bushel measure was one of volume. Once the dry barley had been steeped, it would have swollen, and so less of the steeped barley would make a bushel measure, resulting in more 'couch' bushels from the same original amount. The steeped grain had, for a long time, been calculated as an extra quarter on top of the original amount.)⁷

In the same ledger he also made a calculation of his cistern in inches and tenths of an inch. This came out at 6' 10.5" (2.095m) long by 5' 7.3" (1.709m) wide. He did not give the depth. There is some variation in size when compared with his couch, although the breadth is close. The length is somewhat shorter, but it may be that he spread the couch out lengthwise – before the impact of the changed legislation in 1828 there was not so much control over the couch dimensions when compared with the steep.⁸ These calculations were immediately followed by methods for gauging a cask, a tub, a round item, and a square piece of ground. These would have been very useful for him in his business interests, in particular the cask gauge would be needed when filling his customers own casks with beer, since he would need to be sure of the amount he had sold. Again, this all points to the likelihood of an early date for the couch and cistern measurements, and so would relate to his original malthouse.

(Writing in 1862, William Ford gave dimensions for cisterns and couches. For a 15 quarter cistern he gave 120 inches (3.048m) length, by 90 inches (2.286m) breadth, by 40 inches (1.016) depth. For a couch for the same quantity, 150 inches (3.81m) length, by 90 inches (2.286m) breadth, by 30 inches (0.762m) depth. He was writing much later than these ledgers, and, apart from the length of the couch, the measurements do not tally.)⁹

There are few references to repairs carried out, but two bills survive. In 1812, just after the malthouse fire, Robert Rousell junior did a lot of work, including 'Making a frame for the Malthouse ... 2 Days work for 2 Repairing the Malt house Chimley ... Putting Pieces in the Malt House ...' and a lot of work on windows. These must be refurbishments needed after the fire. In 1816 the same man did work in both malthouse and brewery, but this only amounted to a cost of 3s 0d (£0.15). In 1825 further work was done on the kiln by John Paul amounting to £1:0:10 (£1.42). John sold 15 kiln tiles to Simon Rendall in 1835, which must have come from his malthouse.

As noted above, John had a fire in his malthouse on 12 April 1811. There is no sign of much change in the pattern of his sales of malt immediately after the fire, with a sale on the day following the fire, and no apparent effect in the annual sales, which were up on 1810. In 1812 he made his second-best recorded sales figures (perhaps production was up with two malthouses). He must have had some stored elsewhere.

John does seem to have helped others. As noted above, in 1808 he helped the vicar, Revd William Allen, to get his malthouse back into use. He charged him for '(a) Cone for airing the House 10/-, 2 Men throwing out the Earth 2 Days 5/-, 2 Hundd Bricks for putting up the Furnace 11/-, 2 Hhd Lyme 5/-, Load of Cole from Thorney 30cwt @15d £1:17:6, Load of Coal from Langport 30cwt ' £1:12:6' and in Sept added the builder's bill of £1:2:6 (£1.125) to Revd Allens bill. In return he credited Revd Allen with a 'Beer stand 3/-,' and 'Suppose the Copper & Hay to fetch £20'. John did not pay Allen rent, so he was not getting it in order for a landlord and paying him. John was a churchwarden, so it may be that he was doing this as a favour to a new incumbent.

John was wetting twice a week, on a Tuesday and a Saturday. He recorded this for a short period in 1804, noting between 60 and 70 bushels at a time. The largest of these quantities equates to just over 8 quarters. Using the Excise gauge of his couch, if he wetted 60 (dry) bushels of barley twice a week for 9 months, this would amount to 2,340 bushels, and the maximum 70 bushels would produce 2,730 bushels. His largest recorded sales were in the calendar year 1800, when he sold 2,393 bushels of malt, but, if he were brewing at this date the unknown quantity of malt he used should be added. The proportion taken for brewing in 1814 is known. In 1812 he sold 2,293 bushels, and if the same proportion were added, this rises to around 3,850 bushels. When paying his maltster 'barley money' he calculated the number of bushels processed over 4 seasons, running from approximately September to June/July. These are:

Season	Calculated number of bushels
1810-1811	3,600
1811-1812	3,500
1812-1813	3,650
1813-1814	3,565

These are fairly consistent figures, and close to the 1812 calculation postulated above. Given the differences (annual v seasonal calculations, sales which may have overlapped seasons) and his fire, while we cannot be sure of his total output for each year of production, it equates to a malthouse of up to 15 quarters, and must have been working at around maximum possible usage.

There are a few references to other uses for his malthouse. In July 1809 he mentioned 'Kiln Drying W[heat]' for Merriott farmer Jonathan Bartlett, for which he charged £1:11:6 (£1.57). (1809 was not a particularly bad summer – it may refer back to the effects of the hailstorm of July 1808 and only charged to his customer later (see under 'Weather' below).) In a small notebook he wrote:-

'Dried Beans for Mr Shor last year	360
About Oct 1813	<u>237</u>
	597'

The figures must represent the bushels dried. Shore was a local farmer. In April 1820 John charged Jonathan Webber (a yeoman and lime-burner) 15s 0d (£.75) for 'use Malt House 10 days', though he does not state the use to which it was put. Thomas Bidgood, a yeoman, used the malthouse '... for stowing away Flax seed' in March 1824, and was charged £1:10:0 (£1.50). These references showed that did use his malthouse for drying and storage of crops for others; perhaps using it in the same way for himself.

There is no specific mention of pest control in the malthouse. John may have used the age-old method of keeping a cat. He did have problems with pest control on his farm, shown by a bill of 1840 from George Ford, vermin killer of Hethro Farm, Basingstoke, Hampshire, for 'Dressing 4 Wheat Ricks ... D[it]to 2 Barns for Rats and Mic'. It is surprising that John had to bring someone from so far away, but the bill is clearly addressed to him and marked as 'Settled'. Perhaps Ford travelled around the countryside offering his services.

The Maltster

John was not carrying out the malting himself - he often referred to 'Malter' in his ledgers. He employed John

Wheadon of Crewkerne at Crewkerne Fair (reference is made to this on 4 September 1814), but in practice he seems to have employed him annually, as he mentioned owing him £5 in wages from ‘Years agon’ (and paid him £1 extra for interest on it). Out of season, when not working directly in the malthouse, Wheadon was employed in the fields, helping to get in the harvest, as was his wife for haymaking duties. He was evidently well-trusted by John, as he took cash from customers buying directly at the malthouse. Some even paid him at home in Crewkerne, and his wife also took payments there and passed on the cash to John (‘Cash by Malter’s Wife’). He occasionally left money with Wheadon to pay his own debts, presumably when he knew someone would be coming to collect malt. These were not small amounts, being well over £10, so there must have been a good deal of trust.

In January 1812 John noted ‘I am to pay one of the 10/- charges to Sanders ... making Malt’ (for what appears to be a week). Perhaps Wheadon was ill. However, it may be that this was the maltster employed by Simon Rendall at his malthouse, which John was now renting. There may have been an agreement between the two about how wages would be paid for.

Records of some of the wages paid to Wheadon are noted. In 1811 this was 10s 6d (£0.52) per week, in 1812 11s 6d (£0.57), and in 1813 13s 6d (£0.67). At the end of the season Wheadon was also paid ‘barley money’. This was based on a calculation of the number of bushels he had processed and is shown above under ‘What is known of the Malthouse’. John also reimbursed him for getting his shoes repaired, for candles, twine, an anvil, an oak slab and ‘2 pack Cards’. Since Wheadon often left wages to build up and then took one or two pounds at a time, and since he also occasionally purchased beer and barley from John, but was owed for items he had paid for, plus the barley money, there was usually a complicated calculation at the end of the malting season to ascertain what John still owed him. It also raises the question of whether or not Wheadon had another occupation, perhaps having access to some land himself (the barley purchases).

Something which shows the trust John had in him, was a rather unusual transaction. In August 1813 one of John’s customers, a Mr Draper, spent some time in Guernsey. He evidently missed John’s beer and asked for one of his own barrels to be filled up and sent over. John sent Wheadon with it, giving him £3 for the voyage. The value of the beer was only £3:12:0, so John made a loss, but had kept his customer satisfied, and ensured that the barrel was not tampered with en route. No doubt Wheadon found this a very interesting ‘holiday’!

Malt

John made at least two types of malt. This is known because when noting his own use for brewing he sometimes specifically referred to ‘P Malt’ – i.e. pale. However, from the end of January to the beginning of April 1800 he also made reference (in sales to other people) to ‘Hr Malt’, (meaning ‘Harvest’) and in 1825 ‘Honey Malt’. The latter sale was only for 10 bushels, so it could be that he used the rest himself. Both designations need investigation, since they are not terms usually associated at the time (these were pale, white, amber, brown and black). The ‘Harvest’ malt was sold between January and April 1800. It was the new malt made from the new season’s barley, after the last of the previous season’s barley had been used up.¹⁰ The honey malt is more problematic. It would seem to be similar to crystal malt. However, this cannot be produced in an ordinary kiln, since it requires a high temperature and is roasted in a wire cylinder.¹¹ A woven wire kiln floor might be possible. However, it worked, honey malt is generally sweeter, hence the name.

There is also an inference of different types of malt from the different rates sometimes charged to the same customers for 2 separate purchases of malt made on the same day. However, it is just possible that this is old and new malt which has not been noted.

John usually noted when the sales of new malt commenced, and generally seems to have sold out of his old malt first, since it is never mentioned after new malt is sold. The sales of this new malt varied enormously – it was not released at the same time of year/season. The period 1799 to 1813 follows as examples, with the relevant seasons:

Date of release	Season
10/02/1800	1799-1800
13/10/1800	1800/1
10/10/1801	1801/2
01/03/1803	1802/3
15/02/1804	1803/4
21/11/1804	1804/5
15/01/1807	1806/7
11/02/1808	1807/8
08/11/1809	1809/10
24/10/1811	1811/12
06/11/1812	1812/13
08/11/1813	1813/14

From this we can see that the malt of the 1801/2 season took him right into the early months of 1803 to finally sell and release the 1802/3 new malt. (The dates for the missing seasons were not noted.)

Year	Lowest rate for Malt	Highest Rate for Malt	Lowest Rate for Hops	Highest Rate for Hops
1799	5s 9d	7s 0d	3s 6d	4s 6d
1800	6s 0d	12s 0d	3s 0d	5s 6d
1801	6s 6d	14s 0d	1s 6d	5s 6d
1802	4s 0d	7s 0d	1s 6d	2s 6d
1803	5s 6d	7s 6d	1s 5d	2s 6d
1804	7s 6d	11s 0d	1s 3d	2s 6d**
1805	10s 0d	11s 0d	1s 6d	3s 6d
1806	9s 0d	10s 6d	1s 8d	3s 0d
1807	8s 9d	10s 0d	1s 10d*	2s 6d
1808	8s 6d	10s 0d	1s 4d*	2s 6d
1809	9s 6d	11s 0d	1s 1.5d	2s 6d
1810	10s 0d	12s 0d	1s 1.5d	5s 0d
1811	9s 0d	12s 0d	2s 6d*	3s 0d***
1812	11s 0d	14s 0d	3s 0d	5s 0d
1813	10s 0d	14s 0d	3s 0d*	5s 0d
1814	8s 6d	10s 6d	2s 6d*	3s 6d
1815	8s 6d	10s 0d	2s 6d*	4s 0d****
1816	7s 6d	10s 0d	2s 6d	5s 6d
1817	9s 0d	11s 0d	3s 0d	6s 6d
1818	8s 6d	10s 0d	2s 6d	7s 0d
1819	8s 0d	10s 6d	1s 6d	6s 6d
1820	8s 0d	10s 0d	1s 6d	2s 0d
1821	6s 6d	9s 0d	1s 6d	3s 0d
1822	5s 6d^	8s 0d	1s 6d	2s 0d
1823	6s 0d	7s 0d	2s 0d*****	3s 6d
1824	6s 6d	8s 0d	3s 0d	3s 6d
1825	8s 0d	9s 0d	2s 6d	6s 0d
1826	7s 6d	9s 0d	1s 6d	6s 0d
1827	7s 3d	8s 0d	2s 6d	2s 0d

Table 1. Highest and lowest rates for malt and hops charged

* for these years a cheaper rate was given for a few, bulk, purchases.

** only single instance of 4s 0d for just .25lb, so probably inflated.

*** only one instance of 6s 6d for 3.5lb.

**** one instance of 5s 0d for a small purchase.

***** one instance of 1s 0d, and one of 1s 6d, both of which were for old hops.

^ a large purchase of malt attracted a cheaper rate.

There is a variation in dates malting commenced. For example, in 1812 John noted malting began on 29 October 1812 (and the first sale of new malt was made 6 November 1812), but in 1814 the maltster did not start malting until 3 December 1814.

The rate charged for the malt varied (Table 1). There was not a year when a single, standard, charge was made throughout. (For comparison see Thomas Hurman of Cannington¹²) The reason for this was mainly down to the weather and resultant barley crop. In years when the crop was good, the price would come down, and vice versa. In addition to this, the price rises in Malt Duty would have to be passed on to the customer. In the period of John's malting, the Duty had started at 1s 4d per bushel, rose to 2s 5d in 1802, 4s 5 ¼ d in 1804, dropped to 2s 5d in 1816, rose again to 3s 7 ¼ d in 1819, and dropped to 2s 7d in 1822 where it stayed until 1840. Some of the earliest rises were due to the need to raise taxation to pay for the French Wars (1793 – 1815).

Some of the variation in rate may have been down to type of malt, although it has to be said that some of those purchasing two lots of malt on the same day were charged the same price. Another factor was the customers themselves. Some of his publican-brewer customers, such as the Gears, often got a cheaper rate, especially when compared to someone making a small purchase of a bushel or two. Publican-brewers might easily source other supplies, so it was best to ensure that they got a good deal. However, a few small customers were also given a preferential rate, even though they do not appear to be related to him. Perhaps he was feeling generous.

His highest recorded rate was in 1812 and 1813 when he charged 14s 0d per bushel. His lowest was in 1822, when it was generally 5s 6d, but a sale of 84 bushels to Giles Pattermore attracted a very favourable rate of 3s 6d (there was no reason given for this, and it was not the last of the old malt).

Sometimes John sold the malt ready-ground, and sometimes he noted unground, but he did not often mention this. He did not charge a different rate. (For example, Thomas Gear bought 120 bushels of unground malt on 13 April 1802, in addition to 50 bushels ground, all at the same rate. The inference is that Gear was going to store the malt and use it over the summer, as his next purchase was in September.) No mention was made of screening the malt; he may have done this as a matter of course.

The largest single sale of malt was in 1808 when John sold 600 bushels to Charles Pilcher at a cost of £257:10:0. Charles was noted in the ledger as living at Rye in Sussex. Four months earlier he had bought 400 bushels of malt and a

hogshead of cider from John, so his total purchase was 1,000 bushels. Charles Pilcher senior had kept the Red Lion in Rye from 1784-1788, and the Queens Head from 1788 – 1794. He died in 1844 aged 76.¹³ It maybe he who made the purchases. However, it may also be his son, Charles Simonds Pilcher, who was a merchant, farmer, and owner of the ship Anna Louisa.¹⁴ This sale was going a long distance and makes it highly likely that the ship-owner was transporting it either for himself or his father. It is surprising that it was worthwhile to send the malt to an area where maltsters were successfully operating; perhaps it was a case of filling the ship with a cargo at the right price? There was no mention of John buying coal from him, or how the malt was delivered to Pilcher, perhaps via Langport to Bridgwater, or even Bridport/Lyme Regis.

The smallest purchase was for a quarter of a peck of malt (0.0625 bushels). This was made by William Rendall of Hardington in 1825, and was most probably for horse-feed. In addition to this John sold a half peck 3 times and a peck 4 times, all to different customers and at different dates. In 1821 John Patch, a builder, bought a total of 3½ pecks 'for Horses at different times', but as John only entered this as a single charge, we do not know what Patch's smallest purchase was.

Interestingly, John did give an insight into his costs in production. In 1819 he received 460 bushels of barley from one of his farmer barley suppliers, George Salter. John kept 220 bushels for himself and made the rest into malt for Salter. He costed this out as follows:

'21 Bags @ 3s 2d	£3: 6:6
Duty	27: 1:4
Culm 12cwt @ 2/9	1:15:0
Malter 3 weeks	2: 0:6'

This makes a total of £34:3:4, which he entered in his ledger against Salter to be set against what he owed for the barley he had kept himself. However, when he came to make the bill out the costs rose!

'Making 240 Bls Barley into Malt 1/-	£12: 0:0
21 New Bags 3s 6d	3:13:6
Pd duty on the Above Malt	27: 1:4'

So a total charge of £42:14:10d – a profit of over £8. The duty paid is for 224 bushels at the 2s 5d rate, so this would appear to be the amount of malt made from the 240 dry bushels of barley. Using this figure, it means that Salter only paid 3s 10d (£0.19) for his malt, compared to John's usual charge at the time of 10s 6d (£0.50) per bushel. It was worthwhile for Salter.

Year	Malt in bushels	Hops in pounds
1799*	1,132.75	102.00
1800	2,393.75	252.62
1801	2,076.25	474.25
1802	2,110.50	530.50
1803	1,698.50	883.25
1804	949.50	1,464.25
1805	2,004.75	723.50
1806	1,664.00	1,475.25
1807	1,337.50	924.00
1808	1,769.00	1,000.50
1809	1,401.75	804.75
1810	1,696.12	552.00
1811	1,759.50	918.00
1812	2,293.00	816.75
1813	1,669.00	951.00
1814	2,040.50	1,324.50
1815	1,987.50	1,789.00
1816	1,736.75	897.75
1817	1,057.00	551.50
1818	984.75	322.00
1819	470.00	136.25
1820	430.50	114.00
1821	1,096.38	345.50
1822	1,131.50	374.75
1823	646.50	177.00
1824	1,258.50	174.75
1825	1,360.06	180.00
1826	718.00	164.25
1827	573.00	81.25
Total	41,446.81	18,505.12

Table 2. Sales of Malt and hops per annum, quantities. N.B. In addition to the above was a 'large' sale of 460 bushels of malt, in either 1817 or 1818.

* October to December only.

These figures do not include the malt and hops taken by John Murly for his own brewing business. In 1814 these amounted to an extra 68% for malt and 100% for hops, making a total of 3430.5 bushels malt and 2658.5lbs hops, and possibly more, in that year. Similar percentage amounts may have been taken in other years while he was brewing.

This was not the only example of farming customers having their barley made into malt specifically for them. On 1 May 1805 he had noted that he had 30 bushels from Mr Perkins and 40 from Mr Salter 'to be made into malt', and on 20 May 'Sent Mr Perkins 10 Bushl Malt in part as Above. June 8th 9 Bushl as Above', but there is no mention of the remaining bushels for Perkins or the 40 for Salter. Salter's experiment with this smaller amount may have led to his larger transaction detailed above.

The sizes of the bags he used for malt was noted in 1818, when John sold coal merchant Mr Lovibond 100 bushels at a time. They were not uniform; some contained 5 bushels, 4 ½ bushels and 4 bushels. John kept a close eye on his bags, expecting their return. When they were not returned, he charged for them, for instance in 1817 he charged Mr Sanson 5s 0d each for three unreturned bags.

Another factor in his production was the Malt Duty. He made various mentions of this – as in his calculations for the charge to George Salter mentioned above. In January 1800 he charged 'Duty on the first Wetting £2:19:10¼' to his father. (So around 45 bushels.) This must have simply been the first of 1800 or the first of the whole 1799-1800 season, since he was selling malt before this date. In 1813 he gave a note to his father asking for £20 of what his father owed '& as much more as can' as he had to pay £200 duty. In 1807 he borrowed £5 from his brother Edward to make up what he owed for duty. These references point to a difficulty in raising the cash for the duty, but also serve to show how his family rallied to help out. (Others may not have had the luxury of this.) A small scrap of paper, very neatly written, reads 'April 22 1808. Notice to Wet Barley Saturday 23 mornng Nine. J Murly'. This was his formal note to the Excise – who had to be there to gauge the duty owing. Either it was returned to him, or never sent, since John used the back of it to make calculations for bills.

Maltsters had to have a licence, which allowed them to make up to certain quantities of malt. An Act of 1784 had set out the sums then payable by maltsters for a licence, depending on the quantities they intended to produce for the coming year. It started at 10s 0d (£0.50) for 50 to 100 quarters of malt, rising in increments until reaching a total of £3 for anything at or above 550 quarters.¹⁵ The licence had to be renewed annually. In 1822 John recorded paying £1:2:6 (perhaps for part of a year), while his duty had cost him a total of £151:9:0. Although this is the only reference John made to the licence, he must have paid it in other years.

The yearly quantities sold, shown in Table 2, are accurate for sales to other customers. In addition were John's own, unknown, malt usage for brewing. (In 1814 this amounted to

some 68% of his production. Even if this were reduced to 50% per annum over the other years, it was a considerable amount.) His best sale year was 1800, when a total of 2,393 bushels were sold. After drops in 1804, 1818-1820 (a particularly low few years) and 1823, these recovered, but again dropped off in 1826 and stopped in 1827. At only 430.5 bushels, 1820 was his poorest year. In 1804 the number of pounds of hops he sold far outstripped the number of bushels of malt. Since his customers usually bought in quantities of 1 bushel of malt to 1 or less lbs of hops (and no hops to some publican-brewers who sourced elsewhere), and an increase in the number of whole pockets of hops he sold that year, clearly the sales of these hops were going to customers getting their malt supplies elsewhere. Quite a reversal of the norm. Looking at the rates he was charging (Table 1) – in 1804 his hops reached their lowest figure of 1s 3d per pound. Comparing the rate he was charging for malt – in 1804 his lowest rate was the same as his highest in 1803. Maybe this rise in price was a bit premature compared to his fellow maltsters who were able to charge a lower price for their malt for longer, resulting in him selling less malt in 1804. However, this does not seem to be the case in 1824 and 1825, when a more modest price rise in malt took place, and his sales increased.

There is a high level of sales at the beginning of the ledgers. A study of the customers in the first few years between 1799 and 1803 show several large volume sales to customers who are either known to have been or were possible common brewers. These included several brewers in Bristol, Gundry & Co (the forerunners of Palmers Brewery) in Bridport, and George Parker of Bridgwater and ranged from 120 to 400 bushels at a time. None of these customers bought hops. Yet in 1804 no customer bought more than 40 bushels at a time. In 1805, when his sales figures rose again, no customer bought more than 64 bushels at a time. To put this in perspective:-

Year	Volume of sales of 100 bushels or over	Total number of purchases
1799	735.75	5
1800	1515	8
1801	590	5
1802	1152	4
1803	600	2
1804	Nil	
1805	Nil	
1806	Nil	

For some reason his large volume purchasers had dropped off, but were replaced by more regular, smaller volume customers. Was it a co-incidence that in 1804 the French wars were coming to a head, (see also below, under

Season Year	Start	Finish	Bushels purchased	Cost in decimal £	Number of suppliers
1799 - 1800	04/01/1800	30/04/1800	1571.00	394.0250	11
1800 - 1801	24/09/1800	10/03/1801	2673.50	1372.8500	17
1801 - 1802	15/09/1801	08/05/1802	3162.00	812.8166	15
1802 - 1803	10/01/1803	03/05/1803	2183.00	311.0875	5
1803 – 1804 *	14/01/1804	24/02/1804	801.00	120.1500	1
1804 - 1805	01/11/1804	17/06/1805	2317.50	748.0500	12
1805 - 1806	18/10/1805	03/05/1806	2655.50	605.7946	13
1806 - 1807	14/12/1806	21/05/1807	1977.50	473.5875	12
1807 - 1808	01/01/1808	12/05/1808	1519.00	316.9125	8
1808 - 1809	01/01/1809	31/05/1809	1288.00	327.5000	9
1809 - 1810	01/11/1809	06/04/1810	2036.00	638.8540	18
1810 - 1811	27/09/1810	01/03/1811	2835.50	751.6725	12
1811 – 1812 ^	01/10/1811	23/05/1812	2721.50	969.9312	16
1812 – 1813 ^	12/09/1812	01/04/1813	1290.00	600.8479	17
1813 - 1814	29/07/1813	13/04/1814	4381.50	1150.4000	13
1814 - 1815	31/07/1814	14/03/1815	5869.50	1172.7500	18

Table 3. Known Barley purchases.

*Only supplier detailed is Edward Murly Senior – there must have been more purchases.

^Should be larger, - a couple of purchases were noted but no amounts/values given.

‘Weather’.) or were there other factors at play? Was part of the reason the possible commencement of his own brewing?

Some six larger volumes (i.e. over 200 bushels at a time) were purchased later. Looking at 1808 for instance, if the 1,000 bushels sold to Charles Pilcher of Rye is deducted from the figures, the volume of John’s sales would have been just 768 bushels. This may point to why the Pilcher sales took place in May and September – John had a quantity of unsold malt to offload. A total of 400 bushels of malt was sold through corn factors J & S Laws of Bristol in

March and July 1821, again boosting his figures for that year. They were keen to take his malt and wrote asking if he wished to sell more, and clearly felt his malt to be of good quality. Mr Lemon, brewer of Chard, bought 200 bushels in October 1825, and Laws bought a further 200 in December 1826. Gundry and Co. took 120 in January 1827, though this was not the last of his sales.

So John did sell some volumes to larger purchasers after 1803, but in nowhere near the previous regular quantities. The volume of Charles Pilcher’s malt was exceptional.

Could it be that John was using more of his own malt in the years the sales to other customers dropped off? One thing that was clear from looking at the figures was that there seemed to be little effect on sales to others when he had the fire in his malthouse in 1811 and claimed back duty on 1,315 bushels of lost malt. If that were added to his sales for the year, it would have pushed his production figure to well over 3,000 bushels. This is approaching what he used to calculate his maltsters 'barley money'. His figures for total gallons of beer brewed and sold was rising in the period up to 1811, reaching 16,904 in 1810, dropped to 14,422 in 1811, and shot up to 27,541 in 1812, (when he seems to have had 2 malthouses working) so perhaps the fire had affected the amount of malt he had available for his own use in brewing.

The question of when he started malting is not easily answered. His date order book starts with a sale on 7 October 1799, but pages are missing and this may not be his first book. Also the mention in January 1800 of his father paying for the duty 'on the first Wetting' may refer to the first of the season, but since he was selling malt before this it would not seem to be his very first batch (unless what he had been selling was the last of his father's malt). Perhaps his father promised to pay it to help set him up in business (it was not a loan as it was charged to his father's account). The pages torn out in the day book may indicate when he took over the running of the malthouse from his father. This is highly possible, since the ledger covers exactly the same period and early purchases, with no earlier additions. This ledger also records large sums of money paid to his father by a distiller and a brewer, which John was claiming back from his father. (The original sales are recorded by John, but obviously the two customers were used to sending the money to his father.) A possible scenario is that young John took an interest in his father's malthouse, was trained up in the business and accounting, and took over the business and his father's left-over stock in October 1799 when he was about 20 years old. All we know for certain is that he had started by then, and that it is likely that these were his first books. When he stopped malting is easier to say. His final sale was in September 1827, after a break of over three months, so the 1826/7 season was his last.

Barley

John grew barley for his own use, but his main suppliers were other, nearby farmers, including his father. Table 3 gives the details as far as they are known. The years up to May 1808 are detailed exactly in season date order at the back of one of the ledgers, clearly marked as bought in that season, and totalled in number of bushels and cost. For the

season 1803 to 1804 only a few purchases, all from his father and only in the first two months of 1804, are given under the title 'A List of Barley Bought for 1804'. This is surprising; surely the figure must have been higher, since it only totals 801 bushels? (In 1804 it is true that he only sold 950 bushels, but to that must be added what he was using in his own brewhouse.) For both 1811-1812 and 1812-1813 the figures are higher than those shown, but no quantities were given against the cost of some purchases.

His own barley was first specifically mentioned in October 1810, but in the season 1801- 1802 he noted the name of some particular fields rather than a supplier, and so it is just possible that this was his own barley. It was costed out so either he did this for accounts, or it could also have been fields of his father's (the field names are known to have been in the Murly family cultivation). In fact, there is evidence which seems to support the latter (see below). The known 'Self' quantities amount to over 2,653 bushels and come between 1810 – 1819; some of these were costed out so he was comparing the different sides of his businesses. Some were marked with the field they came from, e.g. 'Self Hr Barn Ground', 'Self Hallerpath', but some of these also have a name, e.g. 'Self G Hooper' and 'Self Dick', perhaps the name of the labourer who had been responsible for delivering to the malthouse. (Under his own barley I have not include those simply marked with the name of a field, e.g. 'Severalls Barn', since these may not have been his, but his father's crop.) In the most complete years, approximately a third of his supplies of barley came from himself, his father, or his brother (the latter two having to be paid for). The majority of his barley came from other farmers. Against this, however, a comparison between Table 3, Barley Purchases, and the 'barley money' he paid his maltster in the four seasons between 1810 and 1814 (see 'What is known of the Malthouse' above) shows that he must have had some more barley than he recorded. However, the purchases John made were a major proportion of his annual outlay to produce the malt.

The rates he paid for it (Table 1) varied enormously, depending on the crop and availability. The lowest was in February 1803 when he paid just 2s 6d per bushel to Thomas Murly of West Chinnock. (Thomas must have been a relative, perhaps a cousin.) By May of that year the price had reached 6s 6d (£0.325) per bushel. The highest price John had to pay was 14s 0d (£0.70) per bushel, in March 1801, for a total of 223 bushels from two different suppliers, one of whom was his own father. (The lowest price in the same season was 6s 9d. Interestingly 14s 0d was also the highest price he charged for his malt that year, so for this barley he made a loss.) Generally the rate he had to pay was lower at the beginning of the season, and rose steadily to

reach a peak at the end. Doubtless by then he would be in competition with other maltsters to get to best supplies they could. Farmers had to store it over the winter, and in years when there was a poor harvest it would have been in high demand by the end of the season. John acknowledged this in a payment to his father at the end of the 1801/02 season. He gave him an extra £133:10:9 'more than I could have bought it at ye time I wetted it.' He had come to some arrangement where his father had let him have the barley early in the season, but clearly felt that he should not be paying other suppliers later in the year a much higher rate than his father. Perhaps he felt his father's barley was a better quality. He calculated the total he had already paid as £286:9:3, and therefore the total he was paying his father came to exactly £420. (The total number of bushels detailed as coming from his father amounted to only 269 bushels – another reason for supposing that the specific fields mentioned must be his father's. If these were added it would make 1,368.75 bushels – a much more likely quantity for the payment John finally made and making a rate of just over 6s 0d per bushel. This was the rate he had to pay others.)

The rate paid did not seem to be affected by the size of the purchase he made. For instance, Mr Burdge was paid a rate of 7s 6d for 195 bushels in January 1812 – on the same day four other deliveries were received, varying from 76 to 168 bushels, but all at a rate of 7s 0d. A week later 2 different suppliers sent barley consignments, one for 51 bushels at a rate of 7s 3d, and the other of 100 bushels at 7s 0d. So John must have been agreeing the price he would pay on an individual basis.

The number of his suppliers shows that he did not rely on one or two local farmers, but had to negotiate with many to get what he needed. One or two of his suppliers were not providing much, for instance Lot Rendall of West Coker sold him just 18 bushels in 1817 (the only purchase John made from him). Some suppliers sent him a bulk amount, and then added smaller amounts a few days later, as though harvesting different fields. A few suppliers were not mainly farming. His own tenant at the Kings Head, Thomas Gear, must have been cultivating some fields as well, since he sold John 300 bushels over the season 1801/02 (one single amount being 200 bushels). He paid Gear between 4s 6d and 5s 6d per bushel – the same rate as others around the same date. Robert Rowsell, a carpenter and wheelwright in Merriott sold him 103 bushels in each of 1812 and 1813, so he too must also have had land. No specific barley variety was mentioned.

For a couple of seasons John made a note of the amounts turned into malt. From October 1813 to April 1814 he calculated that he had received 3,741.5 bushels (the figure in

Table 3 includes other purchases made before this, but in the same season). He sold 128 bushels to others, 10 bushels went for his pigs, 28 bushels went for seed for next year's crop, so 3, 575.5 was 'Made into Malt'. The rates he had paid for this barley had varied between 5s 3d and 6s 6d per bushel. Between December 1814 and March 1815 he received 3,221 bushels (including his own), sold on or returned 131 bushels, kept 36 to sow, and had 3,054 made into malt.

The returned barley was because he claimed it was underweight. This illustrates the problems in measuring by volume. From December 1814 to the end of March 1815 John recorded the weight of the barley as well as the number of bushels, noting the weight per peck (i.e. a quarter of a bushel) under an extra column. (The figures he used correspond with modern calculations; since a bushel of barley is usually considered to weigh 48lbs, a weight of 12 for a peck would be correct.) During this period, he had noted weights between 13 and 13 ½. Again, the rate given does not seem to vary with weight. He repeated the exercise in 1817, and using this year as an example, on 22 November he received two consignments, one for 79 bushels at 5s 6d, and the other for 30 at 5s 3d – both were recorded as being '12'. However, some consignments were marked as weighing '12 ½', yet had rates between 5s 0d and 6s 0d; one was recorded as being '13'. Some of his suppliers were giving him a good weight.

Once he stopped malting he continued to grow barley himself. In his general farming sales between 1831 and 1841 he noted various sales of barley. Some of these were small sales, but some large ones went to brewers and maltsters. Among the brewers were the Oakhill Brewery in 1831, 600 bushels (within 3 months, and some spirits received in return); Mr Norman of the Crewkerne Old Brewery 1833-1838, 1,026 bushels; and Mr Cave of Yeovil 100 bushels in 1835. Among the maltsters were Josias French – at this date malting and brewing at the Bell Inn in Merriott, who bought 330 bushels between 1838 and 1839, and John Budd of Crewkerne who bought 80 bushels on 1 January 1841 – the last sale of John's barley.

Hops

As was the case with other maltsters at the time, selling hops as well was a useful service to John's customers. For those who were brewing on a small scale, or who did not have access to cheaper supplies elsewhere, it was a benefit to have, in modern parlance, a 'one-stop shop'. Generally it was only brewers and publican-brewers who might have the necessary access to other, cheaper supplies. Since John was

Year	Malt £	Hops £
1799*	351.13	17.25
1800	1,088.70	59.38
1801	1,144.85	69.21
1802	597.72	45.41
1803	558.50	76.22
1804	406.14	125.16
1805	1,061.46	78.90
1806	780.98	147.32
1807	603.54	88.72
1808	790.62	79.60
1809	721.34	70.28
1810	960.28	68.58
1811	934.38	122.79
1812	1,454.43	145.91
1813	1,079.88	167.93
1814	956.17	189.05
1815	892.02	239.85
1816	719.17	149.10
1817	517.42	133.24
1818	465.59	92.06
1819	237.62	25.96
1820	176.75	9.06
1821	399.89	30.90
1822	356.47	36.68
1823	205.54	20.57
1824	462.59	27.65
1825	568.21	29.82
1826	286.65	26.67
1827	221.70	8.44
Total	18,999.74	2,381.71

Table 4. Sales of Malt and Hops per annum, values N.B. In addition to the above was a 'large' sale of 460 bushels of malt, in either 1817 or 1818. This was valued at £210.84.

These figures do not include the malt and hops taken by John Murly for his own brewing business.

* October to December only

a brewer himself, he would have needed to buy in pockets for his own use, so simply increasing his order covered the supplies his brewing customers needed.

Sadly, he did not record many of the purchases of hops he made, they are only mentioned in relation to credits given to customers. He must have been buying from the earliest times, since his first recorded sale in October 1799 is for both malt and hops. Likewise, his penultimate sale (June 1827) was for hops, so he had them available for customers throughout. John's purchases were recorded only in 1807, 1810, 1814, 1822 and 1825, and these were incomplete. They show him buying whole pockets (including two of Farnham hops) from different people in Crewkerne, and two purchases including a half pocket from Mr Lyddon, a maltster of South Petherton. (As the latter was noted in with his brewing accounts these must have been for his own use not for re-sale.) The 1807 purchase is only implied as he was paying a farmer for its carriage from Weyhill.

There is a single reference to a hop merchant. In a little memo book dating from around 1822/1823 he noted 'John & Robert Hesketh, 131 Borough'. There is no exact date beside, and no indication of whether this was someone he did use or simply of someone he might use. This little book contained a variety of notes, giving the impression of something he carried around with him to write useful things down. The Borough is synonymous with Southwark, and Borough High St was a centre for hop trading. The Kent's Original London Directory of 1823 listed J. & R. Hesketh & Co hop factors, at the Half Moon Inn, 131 Borough.

So, there is little direct evidence of the hop purchases John made. Additional evidence about the hops themselves comes from his sales. Table 2 shows the quantities he sold in each year. He occasionally mentioned specific varieties when selling. Country hops (from the area around Farnham) were sold to his tenant Thomas Gear and maltster John Budd of Crewkerne. Farnham/East Kents were noted between 1799 and 1817. Maltster Mr Lyddon of SouthPetherton bought both Sussex and East Kents, paying carriage and commission. Occasionally simply 'best' was marked – these were undoubtedly Farnhams (see below). Specific names of growers mentioned were Giles, Mills, Pain, Richard Legg, Smith, Trummer (?) and Stovold (?). In his own brewing records John only noted 'Kent' hops against seven brews (between December 1812 and January 1813), but nothing else. One sale of 'best' in 1803 attracted carriage and commission.

There is a little evidence of John's evaluation of the hops he sold. On 7 January 1800 John's tenant Thomas Gear, bought two different hops. The first, 37lbs of 'best Farnham' attracted a rate of 5s 0d (4s 6d was recorded as the rate, but the

total charge showed the higher rate); while the second, for 40lbs of Country hops was charged at only 3s 0d per pound. While this may reflect the relevant difference in cost to John in the first place, it also shows the perceived value of the Farnham hop. In addition to this, one ledger recorded the sale of 'best' hops to John Budd in 1804, while another date-order one records the same sale as for Farnham. For John the term 'best' was in fact synonymous with Farnham.

The same little memo book mentioned above dating around 1822/1823 has a list which also seems to refer to hop growing districts. 'Alton, Hohnbourne, Florle, Binstead, Bentley'. Alton, Binsted and Bentley are all in Hampshire, and it is just possible that Froyle was meant by 'Florle', and perhaps Holybourne by 'Hohnbourne' – both of which are in the same area between Farnham and Alton. So it appears that John had an interest in this particular hop-growing area.

There is no specific mention of any sales of Somerset-grown hops, though it is known that these were available at the time. (Hops were being grown at various locations across the county, and at Orchard Portman near Taunton until as late as 1845).¹⁶ A few farmers did occasionally deal in hops. These would be most likely to be those who made the journey to Weyhill themselves, perhaps taking cheese or other goods there. An example is Robert Marke of Bladgon near Taunton, who wrote to Samuel Burston in 1846 offering hops from different areas. He stated that he had bought 52 pockets and that they were nearly all sold.¹⁷

Weyhill was the major fair for hops and was made economic for the West Country by taking and selling cheese, and bringing hops back. It seems likely that John obtained much of his hop supply from there, and possibly via hop merchants, buying in extra from other maltsters as needed. That John did have personal dealings at Weyhill was evidenced by the loan from his father made at the Fair, but also shown by an undated reference in one of his books. A copy of a bill presented to an unknown customer noted 'A remittance before Wayhill (*sic*) Fair (10th inst) will oblige.' This shows that he wished to have the payment so that he had ready cash to spend at the Fair. It was an important date in his calendar.

When thinking of the quantities of hops John purchased, his own use as a brewer must be taken into consideration. The most complete year noted in his brewing details in the malt-ing books is in 1814. These equate to 1,334lbs on top of the 1,324.5lbs he sold to others, so doubling the figure he must have purchased originally. Although each year may not have doubled the sales of hops, the likely effect of his own use gives an idea of the volume of hops he was purchasing.

The largest single sale of hops was in 1815 when he sold 254lbs to Joseph Cossens, his tenant publican at the White Hart in Crewkerne. These were noted as being 'Richard Legg No 20'. Cossens normally bought 22 bushels of malt at regular intervals (usually each week in the season), sometimes with 12 lbs of hops. However, he occasionally bought in a pocket of hops, which he then kept and used up, so there were periods when he did not buy hops regularly. In 1811 he bought in a pocket of hops weighing 236lbs on 25 October, and bought no more hops until June of the following year. In the meantime he had purchased 389 bushels of malt. In October 1812 he purchased a pocket of Pain's hops from Farnham, weighing 234lbs, and only purchased a further (small) supply in June 1813, after buying a total of 444 bushels of malt from John. What Cossens was doing was buying in a pocket of hops as soon as they were available, using them throughout the winter, and once they were used up, buying small amounts as needed for brewing to tide him over until the next big purchase was available. In this way he made sure that he would not have been using hops of more than 12 months age. John noted the grower on other pockets bought by Cossens, so he was keeping a check in case his tenant passed comment on them.

In all John made 19 separate sales of over 200lbs of hops at a time. These were mainly to his own tenants, (who were using them as Cossens did), but a few of these sales went to publicans at more of a distance, such as Mary Perham of Bridport, and one to a farmer customer of his at Henley (who also supplied him with barley).

The smallest single sale of hops came in August 1800, when a linen weaver in Crewkerne bought a peck of malt (0.25 bushel) and just 2 ounces of hops (0.125lb). This was clearly for brewing a small amount. In all John made 76 sales of less than 1lb of hops. Most of these were with small amounts of malt, so for small brews, but 33 of them were for hops only. These latter sales are evidence for dry-hopping. As an example, for a total of six times Mr Abraham of Merriott bought 1lb or less of hops just a week or so after a purchase of malt and hops. John's own family, also regularly buying malt and hops from him, did it too. He did not note the growers of these small sales of hops, so we cannot tell if his customers had a preference for a specific hop for this purpose.

John's best year for sales was 1815 (see Table 2) when he sold 1,789lbs. In each of the years 1804, 1806, 1808 and 1814 he sold over 1,000lbs. 1804 is an interesting year, since it is the only year in which the number of pounds of hops sold exceeded the number of bushels of malt. (See under 'Malt' above.) Although he had sold pockets of hops before this date, for some reason this year he sold a larger quantity

of pockets. (6 in comparison with 2 and 2 half-pockets in 1803. In 1805 there was no sale over 100lbs in weight.) His worst recorded year was 1827 when less than 100lbs was sold. This was the year he gave up malting – he was obviously running down supplies. The table shows that the proportion of sales of pounds of hops to bushels of malt was low in the early years. As mentioned above, this was the period when he seems to have sold large quantities of malt to brewers. They would have had their own supplies of hops (either directly from Weyhill, or more economically as they were buying in bulk), so would not wish to buy in from him.

The rate John had to charge for hops varied from year to year; like malt, it was dependant on the crop. Table 1 shows the highest and lowest rates he charged each year. 1804 was a low year, with the lowest charge just 1s 3d per pound. In September 1823 he sold 6lbs of hops at 1s 0d, his lowest ever price, but this was marked as for old hops. The highest charge he made was 7s 0d (£0.35) per pound in 1818. There were several examples of this between April and August of that year, so it was a regular charge and not a one-off. It was a fine calculation to make the rate competitive enough to attract the smaller customers, (who doubtless were well aware of the rates they would have to pay other near-by maltsters for both malt and hops), and still make an overall profit.

Like John Budd of Crewkerne, John Murly did very occasionally take back unused hops from his customers. An example of this was in November 1806 when Mr Summers returned 17lbs and had 79lbs of new hops. A slightly different scenario was in 1816 when a new tenant of the Hare and Hounds, William Rendle of Hinton St George, took 45lbs of hops from another publican at Thorncombe. These were evidently credited to the other publican, perhaps a convenient arrangement agreed between the two landlords.

Unlike John Budd of Crewkerne, John Murly did not note that any sales of hops had been made at cost price. It may be that he did, but did not mention it. He did pass on the cost of carriage and commission on some pockets, which it would appear his customers had specifically asked for. But was he selling the pockets at cost, or adding on a percentage for himself? He did reduce the rate for some favoured customers, usually his own tenants. The evidence that he occasionally increased the rate for a few small customers gives an idea of the range of his mark-up. In 1804 one customer bought just ¼ lb of hops from John – he had to pay a rate of 4s 0d instead of the more usual 2s 6d per pound – perhaps because it made it easier for John to calculate, and saved dealing with small change. In 1811 he increased the rate from the more usual 3s 0d to 6s 6d on 3 ½ lbs – that cannot have been about calculations – it is a simple 10s 6d.

Instead Anne Masters was charged £1:2:9. In 1815 one customer was charged at rate of 5s 0d for 1 ½ lbs, instead of the more usual 3s 0d of the time. These are examples of how John inflated the rate for some small customers. He would have been already charging enough to make a reasonable profit.

Brewing

One important aspect of John as a maltster was that he was also a brewer. While he did not do the physical malting himself, he was involved in the brewing process. He may have employed others to help, perhaps with the more physical work, but the detail in his few brewing notes scattered through the books imply a personal involvement. His recording of the time he started (5am), the temperature, length of time boiling, calculations of the weight and gravity at various times in the process (so using a saccharometer), recording of the separate amounts of beer and table beer resulting from each brew, even his recording of different brewing recipes, all point to someone who was 'Head Brewer'.

Although his beer sales ledgers start in February 1806, it is known that he was brewing before, from at least 1804, as mentioned above. Also, there is a reference to beer bills brought forward from an old ledger. It may be that his father had been brewing as well as malting in the buildings behind his house, and that John took this business over from his father as well – but there is no evidence of this. It may have been entirely his idea to start up the complementary enterprise (as seems to be the case with James Mills's son at Limington).¹⁸

His last known beer sales are in June 1825 (Tables 5 and 6). There is a single reference to a cask costing £8:0:0 in May 1827, but from the value this was an empty cask. By comparing this with Table 2, the quantities of malt and hops sold to other customers, it would seem that John made the decision to stop brewing in 1825, and that he ran down his malting business in the following two years. However, for 1824 only one sale (76 gallons), was recorded in the ledgers. This is puzzling, since in 1825 he sold 1,421 gallons between January and June. In 1822 he had sold 8,356 gallons, but sales dropped in 1823 to 1,853 gallons. The answer may be that he had a problem in his brewery. Amongst the papers is a copy of a letter received from the Excise Office in London dated 28th April 1824, giving John leave to dispose of 'the stated beer' to a vinegar maker. It seems unlikely that he had a quantity of good beer to sell which he could not dispose of at a discount to one of his tenant publicans or a favoured customer, so the inference is that he was having problems, perhaps with a yeast infection.

Further evidence for a run-down date in 1824 is by the changing purchasing patterns of his tenant publicans and other customers. For example, Mary Gear of the Kings Head in Merriott only ever bought beer and ale from John up to 1824, but then began to buy only malt and hops from him. In September 1826 John 'bought' from himself just 3 bushels of malt and 2.5lb of hops. This was too small quantities for commercial brewing – it was for his own domestic use.

As discussed above, under both 'Malt' and 'Hops', there is only a little evidence of the quantities of these commodities he used for himself. Although he produced malt himself, he did buy in some from others in 1816; firstly, in September a purchase from a 'Mr Wislake', followed by 'Dorsetshire' malt in October which he had obtained via his brother Silvester. 'Wislake' may be Thomas Westlake of nearby Martock, who was known to be a maltster there by 1830. The provenance of the Dorsetshire malt is not known, but both references show that John was prepared to try other malts. (In these months there was no change in the pattern of his sales of malt to other customers, so he was not short himself.) The purchase of this malt in 1816 coincides with a gap in his brewing records until February 1817. This may be because he did not bother to record them or recorded them elsewhere. His beer sales continued, so he must have been brewing and he did continue to sell his own malt during this period.

In early 1814 John made a calculation of the costs of his brewing.

'To make 500 Bl Malt to Brew	
'500 Bls Barley cost 3/0d Bushl	75: 0:0
Duty on do 3/6	87: 10:0
Duty on 100Hhd Beer	75: 0:0
Hops 5 Hund @ £8	<u>40: 0:0</u>
	277: 10:0
100 Hhds Beer @ 54 Gall pr Hhd say £4.	400: 0:0'

This made his profit £122:10:0 (£122.50), but he had not included labour costs for his maltster, or his brewer/himself, coal, or even running costs such as cooper's repairs. (Also, he seems to have assumed that his barley would produce an equal amount of malt. Since the malt duty implies 500 bushels, he may have made an error.) The beer duty he allowed works out to £0:15:0 (£0.75) per hogshead, or £0:10:0 (£0.50) per barrel. £400 for 100 hogsheads of beer equates to just under 1s 6d per gallon. At this time, he was charging customers 1s 9d per gallon for porter, and 2s 0d for beer.

He carried out a similar exercise at an undated time; it is included in a rather disorganised pocket book dating between 1806 and 1818. In this he worked out that 500 bushels of malt and 400 lbs of hops would make 72 hogsheads of beer and 24 hogsheads of Table beer. He made the total

Year	Beer	Ale	Porter	Blank	total
1806	2,145.00			1,715.00	3,860.00
1807	808.00		72.00	6,779.50	7,659.50
1808	1,056.00		36.00	5,822.00	6,914.00
1809	1,613.00	33.00	1,130.00	6,081.00	8,857.00
1810	2,583.00	338.00	1,489.00	12,494.50	16,904.50
1811	7,398.00	336.00	346.00	6,342.25	14,422.25
1812	1,8147.50	244.50	670.00	8,479.00	27,541.00
1813	15,913.00	798.50	971.50	7,000.00	24,683.00
1814	14,110.00	1,861.50	823.00	2,263.50	19,058.00
1815	11,570.50	2,461.00	1,073.00	2,608.50	17,713.00
1816	3,344.00	2,428.00	132.00	4,734.00	10,638.00
1817	2,869.00	619.00		2,186.00	5,674.00
1818	2,567.00	1,819.00		2,994.00	7,380.00
1819	852.00	77.00		476.00	1,405.00
1820	1,533.00	00.00		00.00	1,533.00
1821	1,609.50	101.50		4.50	1,715.50
1822	2,117.00	6,181.00		58.50	8,356.50
1823	1,717.00	136.00			1,853.00
1824	76.00				76.00
1825	1,421.00				1,421.00
	93,449.50	17,434.00	6,742.5	70,038.25	187,664.25

Table 5. Beer sold – gallons. Beer includes Best Beer, Table Beer, 'S(*tock*) Beer' and 'Clubb Beer'. Ale includes Best Ale.

1816 cask beer sold no number galls or price

1818 barrel beer sold ditto

1820 3 casks, 1 barrel and an unmentioned amount beer ditto

1814 barrel porter sold ditto

1810 (Blanks) 2 sales marked as both ale and beer (i.e. mixed), but no quantities or price

1812 (blanks) 1 sale no amounts or cost

1816 (blanks) 1 sale mixed no amounts or cost, 1 sale barrel mixed beer ale valued at 8s 8d no amt or rate

1820 (blanks) 1 sale no amounts or cost

1823 (blanks) 2 sales, one of 100hogsheads – but most likely the cask itself rather than beer

Year	Beer	Ale	Porter	Blank	total
1806	170.46			132.92	303.38
1807	60.84		4.50	468.22	533.56
1808	85.55		3.30	459.83	548.68
1809	115.12	2.00	99.70	485.82	702.64
1810	212.76	12.68	138.68	1003.82	1367.94
1811	623.64	12.60	34.60	504.04	1174.88
1812	1689.96	10.35	66.00	670.43	2436.74
1813	1531.27	36.80	100.05	593.93	2262.05
1814	1292.20	69.28	76.10	184.54	1622.12
1815	1017.24	87.96	98.78	222.78	1426.76
1816	276.62	90.14	5.10	371.84	743.70
1817	265.96	38.18		175.55	479.69
1818	256.47	67.19		250.32	573.98
1819	79.29	2.89		43.79	125.97
1820	133.59	00.00		00.00	133.59
1821	121.07	2.58		0.11	123.76
1822	150.05	133.43		1.24	284.72
1823	104.56	3.08			107.64
1824	5.70				5.70
1825	71.05				71.05
	8263.40	569.16	626.81	5569.18	15028.55

Table 6: Beer sold – value £ (rounded to nearest 2 decimal places. N B in 1827 sale of a large cask for £8 – possibly the cask itself rather than beer.

1817 1 barrel ale sold no price – was 36 galls, so c £1.40 to be added

1816 1 cask porter sold no price -was 78 galls c.£6.80

1812 (blanks) 1 sale 20 gals, no price – c.£2

1813 (blanks) 1 sale of £0.54 – no galls given

1815 (blanks) 1 sale 76 galls, no price – c.£6.20

1816 (blanks) 1 sale of 235 galls, no rate or cost – c.£21.60

1817 (blanks) 5 sales totalling 183 galls no rate or cost – c.£16.78

1818 (blanks) 2 sales totalling 8 galls, ditto – c.£0.73

income £372, from which he deducted £250 in costs (malt, hops and duty), and made a profit of £122. Again, he did not include wages, coal or running costs. From the rates he gave for malt and hops, it could be 1808 or 1809, but he may have been giving himself preferential terms. He may have only been working this out to decide if he needed to increase his charges for beer.

As mentioned under 'The Books', some give details of brewing recipes/methods and quantities of malt and hops used. He used pale malt in his porter brewing. In 1812 he mentions using ginger and sugar in brewing of 'Good Table Beer'. Sugar was usually not allowed in brewing, but in 1800, 1812 and 1813, due to the poor crops, it was sanctioned. It was finally allowed generally from 1847.¹⁹ There are references to the use of isinglass (all purchases in 1813 from one of his publican-brewer landlords), and he did use a thermometer- he measured the air temperature before he started brewing and for the 2 mashes for each brew.

His products were 'Best Beer', along with porter (usually charged at the same rate as best beer) and 'Table' or 'ale' – the latter was always the cheapest. References were made to 'Clubb beer', but this may not have been a specific type of beer, but rather something he produced for a local club. (See below under 'Pubs' – the Hare and Hounds in Hinton St. George.) There is evidence that he mixed beers for customers. To give an example, on 12 December 1815 local blacksmith John Sanders had a barrel of ale and beer containing 15 gallons, and a barrel of beer containing 10 gallons. The latter attracted a higher rate per gallon than the mixed barrel. Many other examples occurred in the books.

Unsurprisingly, John had to keep a close eye on his barrels. Each was numbered, and he meticulously recorded their going out and return. Those not returned he attempted to charge the customer for. On some occasions he bought in barrels from others, some seem to have come from the Hams of West Coker, when they gave up brewing. There are references throughout to coopers bills for repairs such as 'heading and hooping', 'Riting' and 'staving' casks. He sometimes filled his customer's own barrels, but was very conscientious to gauge their contents, probably so that he would not get complaints from his customer about overcharging, as well as the potential to give more than he meant to or his customer had paid for. Customers may have used jars for small amounts, since he mentioned selling one customer a barrel of beer and 'jar 1 Gall' in 1813. In 1814 and 1815 he credited one of his tenant publicans for 'beer pitcher money', perhaps an early form of deposit.

John had headed bills for his beer since at least 1810. These were a very basic form with spaces left for the final digit of

the year, the customer's name, and the details of the purchases. One survived inserted into a beer ledger. It was completed in John's own handwriting (and had subsequently been used by him as scrap paper to make calculations on). Since the pre-printed matter read;
'Merriott 181 , Mr Bought of JOHN MURLY'
it is quite possible that he used it for malt and hops as well, but none of these survive.

Rather surprisingly, John also sold vinegar. Sometimes it is sold with other items such as potatoes, yeast, or malt, but sometimes on its own. The references all occur between 1813 and 1819, except for a single sale in 1839, long after he had given up brewing. Since John also made and sold cider, it is possible that it was a cider vinegar, rather than from beer. However, the Hams at West Coker went into vinegar-making when their brewery began to fail (with help from their nephew who had set up a vinegar business in London), but the costs of transport to Bristol proved too great. Into this melting pot must go the Excise letter mentioned above. Was John occasionally having problems with infection and selling 'off' beer as vinegar?

Certainly, there were periods when the beer was not all it should be. In 1813, 1815 and 1816 there are notes of returned casks and credit given in full. For example, in 1813 Ambrose Snook returned over 4 casks containing 332 gallons, and in 1816 two customers returned a total of 257.5 gallons (one of these, a publican at Wadford, went on to buy large quantities between 1817 and 1820, so he was not giving up his house).

A further difficulty at this time was the reduction in the price of beer. The poor crops of 1812 and 1813 had inflated the cost of malt. Table 1 shows the drop in the price of malt between 1813 and 1814, when the better harvest took effect. In February 1814 the Taunton Courier ran a piece on the fact that due to the low price of malt, some inn-keepers had already reduced their beer price from 8d a quart to 7d. 'Very proper conduct on the part of those whose stock of beer has been brewed subsequent to the decline in the price of malt The innkeepers, however, whose stock is considerable and who have brewed from malt before its reduction in value, are not at present enabled to meet the expectations of the public by lowering the charge for their beer ...'²⁰ The effect it had is evident in John's beer ledgers. Two of his tenant publicans' problems were mentioned. Mr Stoodley at Thorncombe was 'supposed to have 15Hhds Beer in stock when the price of Beer fell', though there does not appear to be a credit against this. (This would be in the region of 810 gallons.) Later in 1814 John commented 'I am to Allow Mr Timson 3d per Gall for all the Beer left in the large Cask at the time the price of Beer fell'. (Timson was his tenant at the

Hare and Hounds in Hinton St George – see under ‘Pubs’.) Despite this, no credit was shown for the reduction. John must have dealt with it face to face when settling their bills – but it is odd that he did not note it in his ledger, since all other credits are carefully recorded. There is no mention of concern for the other publicans who had bought in beer from him – presumably, since they were independent, John felt no moral obligation.

Coal

Since John would have used coal bought for brewing, malting, lime burning and domestic use, it is not possible to say how much was used for malting (or even malting and brewing) alone. Details are known through credits given to coal merchant customers, the lists John occasionally made in some books of coal purchased, and many bills from the merchants surviving in correspondence. As a result, some years are better recorded than others, for instance 1815 to 1820 which were listed in a ledger under the four different suppliers, whereas 1821 has a very sparse 40 sacks recorded against just one supplier.

Some of the details of these purchases are missing - cost noted without a quantity, or vice versa. (In Table 7 those with incomplete details are noted.)

His four main suppliers were Bradford, Stuckey & Bagehot, Lovibond, and William Andrews. The Bradfords were coal merchants at Thorney and usually supplied him with coal, culm, mountain coal and stone coal. (The company is still in business as builders’ merchants.) After he had stopped malting and brewing there were also two purchases of Newport and Bullo coal. Between 1808 and 1826 Bradfords made 207 separate deliveries to him. In 1816 John noted against one delivery of 10 sacks of stone coal ‘Bad’. Stuckey & Bagehot/Stuckey & Co delivered to him from Langport, Westport, Newport, Load Bridge and Thorney, between 1814 and 1841. They sold John coal, culm and stone coal during the period that he was malting and brewing, and afterwards supplied coal, stone coal, Bullo ovals and Bullo coal. 92 separate deliveries were recorded up to the end of 1826. The Lovibond family delivered between 1815 and 1820 only. They supplied John with coal, culm, stone coal, and Newport coal, in a total of 141 deliveries. Andrews only delivered to John in April and May 1818, when he made 12 deliveries of coal, culm and Mountain coal.

To explain the coals a little more, the anthracite from North Devon and North Cornwall was known as culm, while stone coal was hard anthracite which produced less smoke and soot than ordinary coal. These would have been suitable for

malting, brewing and the lime-burning. Bullo coal and Bullo ovals must have come from Bullo Pill in Gloucestershire. This had been developed as a port for the export of coal and stone from the Forest of Dean. The description of some of the Bullo as ovals may point to an attempt to process small coal. (One of the first works to produce this patent coal was at Maendy, Cardiff in 1846 – so much later than this, making the references to it interesting. The method involved processing small coal (which would otherwise be unusable) to make blocks, or briquettes. Earlier attempts had been made from 1799, but the works at Maendy were the first commercially successful).²¹ Because of the date of these latter purchases (1839-1841), they are too late have been used by John for malting or brewing purposes – perhaps they were used in his limekiln.) The Newport coal was the cheapest coal, followed by culm, Mountain coal, and the dearest was stone coal.

In a few cases John noted the name of the carrier who delivered his coal. One of John’s employees, Sam Randle, was partly employed delivering and picking up items by cart and was often paid for trips to Thorney and Langport so these may have been to pick up coal. So, the coal was not always delivered by the merchant.

Coal from South Wales and Gloucester was brought in by ship to the Port of Bridgwater on the Parrett. It was then transhipped to horse-drawn barges for the journey up to Langport and Thorney. Thorney was the furthest point that could be navigated up the River Parrett, but in reality, navigation above the port of Langport was restricted by the Bow Bridge there, meaning that goods for higher up had to be trans-shipped. Henry Lovibond had built a small railway under one of the arches at Bow Bridge to help with this, but the biggest improvement came with the Parrett Navigation Company works completed by the end of 1840. The major forces behind this latter scheme were the Stuckey and Bagehot families, who had banking and business interests in Langport, Bridgwater, Taunton and Bristol. Before these improvements, access to Thorney was restricted by the state of the tide.²² The references to Thorney come between the months of March and July in the years they occur and are all purchases from Bradfords. Langport is only mentioned in relation to Stuckey & Bagehot. They also occasionally charged for the toll at Burrowbridge – a bridge across the Parrett, so may have sometimes taken the coal by carrier rather than barge from Bridgwater to Langport.

On a few occasions John supplied others with coal. Mostly this was small amounts (from the cost charged) to a local smith, a widowed landlady, and his own father. There is also the example of his procurement of coals for his local vicar when helping him refurbish a malthouse. (see ‘The site(s)’ above.)

Year	Sacks	Types	Cost (decimal)	Number of Suppliers
1808*	10	m	0.58	1
1809	71	m, sc	7.74	1
1815	+483	c, cu	+37.33	2
1816	1,017	c, cu, m, n, sc	+78.76	3
1817	+1,477	c, cu, m, n, sc, smc	128.37	2
1818	+2,466	c, cu, m, sc	234.16	4
1819	2,153	c, cu	160.74	3
1820	1,162	c, cu, m, sc	88.94	3
1821	40	c, cu	3.00	1
1822	108	cu	8.13	1
1823	16	cu	1.27	1
1826	170	c, cu	10.17	2
1827	16	cu	1.33	1
1839	+222	bc, bo, c, sc	10.81	2
1840	137	bc, cu, n	7.69	2
1841*	40	bc	2.13	1

Table 7. Coal purchases. Years which have only 1 sale, with detail missing have been omitted.

* Partial year only

+ some amounts missing (quantity or costs as appropriate for the column), so the figure quoted is all that is known.

Key to coal types:-

bc – Bullo coal

bo – Bullo ovals

c – coal

cu – culm

m – mountain coal

n – Newport coal

sc – stone coal

smc – small coal

Pubs

An important part of John's business were public houses. Through ownership or rent of these he had a ready-made market for his malt, hops and beer. John Budd at nearby Crewkerne, tied his publicans for supplies.²³ However, there is no direct evidence of this in John Murly's papers. He was involved personally with at least five public houses:- the Kings Head and the Bell Inn both in Merriott, the White Hart in Crewkerne (2 miles away), the Hare and Hounds in Hinton St George (1 mile), and an un-named pub in Thorn-

combe in Dorset (over 8 miles by road). Each of these will be considered in turn, followed by other possibilities.

The Kings Head in Merriott was in Church Lane. (It is still running as a public house.) John appears to have part-owned this inn (on mortgage) for a period of time. The landlord, Thomas Gear, had been at the pub since at least 1798, and was also a part-owner. He bought malt and hops from John from October 1799 (at the start of the ledgers), and beer from 1807 to 1814. Malt and hops were purchased regularly, and in quantity – for instance in 1801 he purchased a total of

300 bushels of malt and 228½ lbs of hops. When he did buy beer, it was sporadic and relatively small. A lot of work was carried out on the Kings Head in 1813 and 1814, John paying for some of it. Gear died in December 1814, aged just 47. The inventory of his goods gives a good idea of the interior and mentions a fully equipped brewhouse. His widow, Mary, continued the inn until circa 1831. She had been left a widow with 6 small children – the youngest of whom was under 1 year old.²⁴ She bought only beer from John until 1824, when she started buying only malt and hops. (This coincides with John running down the brewing side of his business – see under ‘Brewing’ above) Evidently, she could brew, but, with the time pressures of a young family to care for, preferred to buy the ready-made product. An example of the size of her beer and ale purchases is 1816 when she purchased 2,176 gallons. Although the inventory had mentioned a spirit cupboard, there was no note of either of the Gears ever buying in spirits from John – they clearly got their supply elsewhere. In 1831 John went to a local solicitor to transfer the mortgage of the Kings Head Inn from Mary Gear’s executors and himself to a Mr Webb. (Perhaps William Webb the innkeeper at the Bell Inn in 1841 and 1842).²⁵ (There must be some mistake in the solicitor’s bill. It is clearly dated December 1831, but Mary did not die until 1851, after John. There was no other Mary Gear in Merriott. Perhaps what the solicitor meant was Thomas Gear’s executors, i.e. Mary Gear.) In 1832 John mentioned Mrs Gear owing him a half-years’ rent (£10) on the Bell Inn in Merriott, - the only note of either of the Gears paying John rent. She had evidently taken on another inn in the same village after 1827 (perhaps she ran both as she still occupied the Kings Head in 1842).²⁶ However, the Bell Inn is mentioned in 1833 as being ‘Late in the occupation of Mary Gear as tenant to Josias French’.²⁷ John seems to have had a very good relationship with the Gears – in 1814 for example, he gave Thomas Gear a gift of over £26 worth of barley.

The Bell Inn was under John’s control for a while as well, as Mary Gear’s outstanding rent on it indicated. The landlord, Samuel Bowditch, paid yearly rent of £21:10:0 (£21.50) for it from 1804 to 1812 (and was noted as the occupier in 1800 when it was advertised for sale²⁸). He bought malt and hops from John between 1800 and 1812 (so may have been his tenant from 1800) and beer between 1807 and 1818. His malt and hop purchases were always smaller than Thomas Gear – his greatest volume was in 1803 with just 198 bushels of malt and 195lbs of hops. He did not always buy hops from John, so had another source. While his beer purchases varied year to year, the most he bought in one year was 1,442 gallons in 1814, so again, smaller quantities than Mary Gear. He also bought both beer and ale, though a lot more of the former. However, he did buy £3 worth of ‘Liquor’ from John in 1804, and sold John ‘Brandy and Malt

Liquor’, ‘Brandy Rum and Barbon’ worth over £16 between 1804 and 1816. He evidently had a good spirits supplier for John. It is not clear if this was for John’s own consumption, or to pass on to other publicans. John also credited him for ‘Beer pitcher money’ - £3:7:9½d (£3.39) in 1814. This may have been a form of deposit on ‘carry-outs’. A list entitled ‘Acct of Saml Bowditch Creditors that have paid Jos Cossens’ came to £55:18:0 (£55.90), and revealed a lot of ‘tick’, the smallest amount being just 10½d (£0.04) and the largest £16. This was money owed to Bowditch and collected by John’s landlord Joseph Cossens at the White Hart in Crewkerne. Bowditch had evidently died in or after January 1818 and John was gathering in the monies owed to him. In 1813 John paid local carpenter Robert Rousell for timber for the ‘House’ and rack rungs ‘for the Stable at the bell’ which was for work carried out in 1812. Also, in 1812 John sold the ‘furnace’ from the Bell to William Patch of Hinton, a joiner. After Bowditch, the landlady was Mrs Ann Hodges. She was first mentioned in Alehouse Recognizances in 1819 (the one for 1818 does not now exist) and was followed by her daughter Alice in January 1822. Both only bought beer and ale from John, until April 1823, some two years before he stopped brewing. John had given Ann a barrel of 10 gallons of ale in 1818, no doubt as an incentive to buy more. Rent was mentioned in 1821, but the amount not specified.

The Alehouse Recognizances for 1823 and 1824 do not exist, but that for 1825 shows James Pattemore as the landlord. Pattemore took on 11 gallons of beer ‘left by A Hodges’, although her last recorded purchase from John had been in February 1824 (she must have been buying elsewhere in addition). He bought beer from John from February 1825 until John stopped brewing in June, and malt from 1825 until John stopped malting in 1827. (Interestingly, he was John’s last customer for both malt and beer.) One of his purchases was the Honey malt mentioned under ‘Malt’ above. He only twice bought in hops, one purchase of just 9lbs, and an unspecified amount in a pocket, both purchases in 1825. In an undated (but post 1809) copy of a letter John sent, it is clear that he was acting on behalf of Pattemore in a dispute over a bill for 3 pockets of hops costing over £29. Pattemore must have asked him to look over the bill and give his advice. John wrote to the supplier saying that he had checked the bill over and the quantities and prices did not match. So John accepted that his tenant was not tied to him for their supply. James Pattemore was noted on the 1842 Tithe Apportionment as occupying the Swan Inn on Lower Street in Merriott. It looks likely that he gave up the Bell shortly after 1827.

The third property was the White Hart in Crewkerne. John seems to have leased or rented this since at least 1808, when he paid rent of £38pa for it to ‘Mr French’, perhaps Josias.

When repairs were made to it in 1809 John charged the bill to him. The first known tenant referred to in John's ledgers was John Bishop. He bought only malt (no hops) from John, between 1803 and early 1806, in quantities of 10 or 20 bushels at a time – the largest quantity in a single year being just 80 bushels of malt in 1804. He purchased beer from John between late 1806 (a gap of some 9 months since his last malt purchase) until January 1814, though he was not at the White Hart then. Job Wilkins paid John rent of £22:5:0 (£22.25) for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year for the White Hart in August 1808. He purchased only beer and table beer from John, in 1809 this amounted to 1,567 gallons. John had repair work done to the bar and around the inn in early 1809 costing over £7, and which he charged to French. When Wilkins left later that year further repairs amounted in total to over £25. In late 1809 Joseph Cossens became the landlord and stayed until 1821. He paid rent of £30 pa. When Cossens took on the White Hart John paid Wilkins £46:5:0 (£46.25) for items there, and charged Cossens – he was helping Cossens with some ready cash for essential items. Cossens bought both malt and hops from John between 1809 and 1822, but left the White Hart in late 1821. John made a note in December of 1821 of a credit of £200 'By Cash when J C left the White Heart'. During the brewing season Cossens purchased every week, though this regularity declined in and after 1819. His largest recorded purchasing year was in 1813 when he bought a total of 621 bushels of malt and 291lbs of hops. Between 1809 and 1814 he was also purchasing beer and table beer, often once a fortnight. In 1811 he bought a total of 4,290 gallons, his largest yearly purchase. Repairs were credited in 1810 and 1811 costing almost £25. (This was in addition to the repairs noted above carried out at the time Cossens moved in.) He bought over £10 worth of spirits from John in 1812, and was credited for a clock, a painting, thatching and a 'Lid behind the Bar Chimnd'. Interestingly Cossens sold John 3 lots of isinglass costing over £6 in the following year.

It is known that William Webb was the landlord here from at least April 1825, since he was mentioned in Crewkerne maltster John Budd's books and on Alehouse Recognizances. This raises the question of whether or not he was the same person who was involved with both the Kings Head and Bell Inn in Merriott (see above). He bought malt (no hops) and ale from John in 1822, so it is likely that he was John's tenant landlord then. As John Budd's books did not start in earnest until 1825, the most likely scenario is that Budd took on the lease of the White Hart shortly after June 1822.

The fourth licensed premise was the Hare & Hounds at Hinton St George. It was called by this name from at least 1770 and became the Poulett Arms c1824.²⁹ John Timson paid

rent to John for this with lands at £70 pa in 1814 and 1815. He had moved here from a pub in West Coker, (mentioned as the licensee there in 1810³⁰) and John's customer for beer from at least 1812. The Hare and Hounds may not have been owned directly by John. Timson left the House in late 1815 and was succeeded by William Rendle who stayed until Michaelmas 1818, paying the same rent. Timson bought both malt (22 bushels at a time) and hops (usually 8lbs) from John between July 1813, and June 1815. In addition, he bought beer and a small amount of porter between March 1812 and October 1815, the largest year being 1813 when he bought 3,313 gallons. This dropped to 2,148 gallons in 1814 – when he was evidently brewing more of his own beer. He was also the purchaser of the 'Clubb Beer', buying 325 gallons of it in June 1814 and June 1815 – leading to a conclusion that it was for a specific club's event held at his House. There was evidently a storage cask at this house – there are several mentions of beer being sent 'To go in the large Cask'. The size of this cask is shown by two references in April 1813 when a total of 1,354 gallons was sent in two batches to be put in it. A similar set of references occurs in April 1814. (Other casks were purchased in between these, evidently intended for immediate sale.) This would make it the equivalent of about a 5-6 tun cask (given that some may have been sold in the interim between the purchases). Timson was one of John's tenants who were allowed a reduction when the price of beer fell – the beer remaining in the large cask being specifically mentioned. He did not seem to buy spirits from John.

William Rendle had been buying ale, beer and porter from John since 1809, though only in small amounts. In 1816 168 gallons was purchased, increasing in the first five months of 1817 to 290 gallons. Interestingly, in 1810, several of the purchases are marked 'William Rendle & Self', implying that John had some involvement with wherever Rendle was carrying on business. His purchases of malt and hops came in 1816 and January 1817. In 10 almost monthly purchases, he bought along the lines of 8lb malt to 8lb hops, with a few exceptions at the end, when he bought 45lbs of hops in one go (apparently acquired from Stoodley at Thorncombe – see below) and spread these out among 60 bushels of malt. (A William Rendall of Merriott bought very occasional malt from 1802 to 1812 (just 260 bushels over the whole period), and hops in larger quantities (one amounting to 217lbs) totalling 564½ lbs. The confusion over the possible spellings could lead to the conclusion they were the same person. However, there were several families with the same surname in Merriott, - the Victoria County History says that there was a paucity of surname in the parish in the 17th century.³¹ Some adopted nicknames or other spellings to avoid confusion – if this were so, John would have been very careful to ensure that he spelt the names correctly. There were several

customers of his with the surnames Rendall/Rendle, and also several with the same Christian name also, leading him to designate one customer by his trade 'Blacksmith Rendall', almost in desperation. So William Rendall and William Rendle were two different people.)

Unlike Timson, Rendle bought a quantity of spirits from John. 9¼ gallons of 'Rumb', 6 gallons 5 pints of gin (mostly noted as 'British Gin'), and just short of a gallon of brandy, all between December 1815 and February 1816. The smaller amounts were taken on from Timson, and the money paid to John. (Timson is not recorded as buying any spirits from John – perhaps he bought elsewhere, but the contents of the house reverted to John. Rendle did not purchase any more brandy, perhaps with the French wars it was difficult to get anyway.) The cost of taking on a House is shown by the amount that Rendle had to pay out when he took on the Hare & Hounds. He paid John £27:13:1 (£27.655) for goods bought 'at Timson's sale', plus £3:3:6 (£3.175) for the spirits, and £2:2:0 (£2.05) for the final part of the lease of the House. He quickly paid for more gin, and, had to pay the £70 for the next year's lease, as well as for the beer, malt and hops he purchased. Against all this was set a credit of just £1:17:6 (£1.875) for 'beer jibbing and things Cash at the House when Mr Rendle entered'. Although Rendle seems to have left in 1817, the payments of the bills once he had gone slowed up and came in dribs and drabs. Eventually most was paid off by 1823, although John noted in his book that a settlement was made on 28 December 1829, with £4 still owing.

John also had some interest in a House at Thorncombe, Dorset, eight miles away, the name of which was not divulged in the ledgers. John Phillips seems to have been the landlord, but he only made one purchase from John – 152 gallons of beer and 2 hogsheads of cider (and also noted as being 140 gallons) in April 1811. Perhaps this indicates the time John became involved with it. Phillips must have made purchases of beer and/or malt and hops elsewhere, as when Abraham Stoodley took over from him the stock of beer was 1,210 gallons. Stoodley took the lease on by October 1812. He paid rent of £30 pa, until 1816, when his last purchase occurred. By March 1813 he had racked up a beer bill of over £196, which he managed to pay off by the following May. His purchases of malt and hops started in January 1813 and continued until April 1816. Over this period, he bought 649 bushels of malt, and 403lbs of hops. The largest purchases were made in 1814 when he bought 330 bushels of malt. His purchases averaged 50 bushels at a time and tended to be every couple of months during the first half of the year, with only one purchase in the latter six months. His beer purchases covered the period October 1812 to April 1815. In this period, he bought just 2,443 gallons of beer. In

1814 he supplemented this with 2 hogsheads of cider, but did not buy spirits from John. The size of his storage capacity is shown by the fact that John had noted 'Mr Stoodley supposed to have 15 Hhds Beer in stock when the price of Beer fell' (1814). This would equate to some 810 gallons (around 23 barrels), and probably was in another large storage cask. One had been installed in 1812 when Stoodley moved in. John paid for some of the work on this including 'Pliming Cask and Racking Bear', and in 1814 further work - 'Bead to Cask Stuff and labor, Paint and Painting and marcking Do, Repairing the iern (*iron*) and Sum New'. In 1813 he credited Stoodley £11:16:0 (£11.80) 'By Expences about new bottom to Furnas etc', which must have been for his brewhouse. When Stoodley left in 1816 he was recompensed for a new bar for the furnace and £10 for furniture. It is not known who took over after Stoodley, as it is not mentioned again in John's ledgers, and nor is anyone else identified as being a landlord there after this date.

There are only a few other references which may indicate involvement with other licensed houses, but these may equally be for domestic premises and were only small amounts – furthermore the people mentioned were not named on Alehouse Recognizances.

These details show that John had ownership or control of between 2 and 4 licensed premises at any one time. There is no mention of the landlords being tied to him for supplies, although some of them seem to have bought a bulk from him. As the hops case of James Pattemore shows, John does not seem to have minded that his tenants went elsewhere for some supplies. He may have taken on the lease of the Houses seeing their potential for profit, but did not continue with them. Perhaps an explanation was that potential landlords came to John to act as an intermediary. He would take on the lease of the House, thus guaranteeing the owner an income, and would charge the landlord rent. If the landlord left before the end of his lease, he would get in a replacement. Once the lease ran out, unless he had some reason to continue it, he would allow it to lapse, and let others take on the expense, and anyway had no need of them once he decided to give up brewing and malting. If this is the case, John must have been seen locally as a man of some financial standing.

John also gave assistance to those publicans he sold to. In 1816 he lent Benjamin Williams of Burton £60 in return for a Note of Hand. He provided items some needed, for instance a thermometer for Mr Beal of the Pack Horse Inn at Bridport in 1806. He also arbitrated for them in disputes with their other suppliers, as the case of James Pattemore shows. The repairs to the buildings were no small expense, and he does seem to have had a policy of updating the buildings when he first took them on.

Even after he had given up malting and brewing, John still had an involvement with licensed premises. In 1833 he participated in a meeting at the Kings Head which resulted in a resolution to stop customers staying in public houses in Merriott 'beyond the time permitted by Law and to preserve good order in the Parish, all such houses to be visited once a week'. The signatories (21 men) were to carry out these visits in pairs, in rotation, to ensure that it was being followed.

Customers

Due to the dates of the ledgers it has not been straightforward to identify the occupations of John's customers for malt and hops. (Table 8.) Before the dates of both the census, Tithe map and Apportionments, and with less informative directories, some identities were only possible because of descriptions of people involved in leases and on wills. Some were found because of their occupation being noted on the baptism or marriage of children. A few John helpfully identified himself, such as 'Cooper Leach', doubtless because there was someone else with the same name and he wanted to avoid confusion with bills. Those whom he credited for 'shop goods' must have been tradesmen of some sort, and those who frequently sold John large quantities of barley must have been farming, although it cannot be assumed that it was their main occupation. (Problems with farming identifications arise because of the large number of people involved with agriculture to some extent. A good example of this was publican Thomas Gear (see under 'Barley' above, selling John 200 bushels). This makes it difficult to be sure that those who sold John barley were all farmers.) As a result, only those who consistently sold him large amounts of barley have been identified as being farmers.

Then there is the difficulty that on wills and legal documents the term 'Gent' seems to have been used when describing a wealthy man – whose wealth may have come from inheritance, farming, sailcloth manufacture and a host of other occupations. Because of this, where occupations have not been certain, they have been included in the 'Possible' column. Some 'Possible' identities were made because of the size and nature of purchases – regular buyers of larger quantities of malt only (and no hops), were most likely to be publican brewers. However, some farmers bought sizable quantities of malt only, but not regularly, and some publican brewers may have only bought occasionally from him, so unidentified customers with this type of profile have remained 'Unknown' rather than assumed to be one or the other.

Of the 365 customers mentioned by John, there are 96 whose occupation remains unknown – just over a quarter of

the total. A problem with such a large number is that it may be weighted – those with humbler trades and occupations would have left little behind in the way of wills and legal documents. There are also those who may have been publicans for a short while and then moved on, leaving no trace in records. (Several publicans could be identified through the Alehouse Recognizances, but these are not comprehensive (some years are missing) and one is known who missed the records as he only stayed for 9 months.) The profile of some of the 'Unknown' seem to be possible publicans; if others were also agricultural labourers, weavers or other less remunerative trades, then a spread across 'Agriculture', 'Associated trades' and 'Tradesmen' would seem to be the most likely. Gentry, those of independent means, and professionals such as solicitors, surgeons and vicars were much more likely to leave clues as to their occupation.

215 were positively identifiable (59%). Tradesmen, including the associated trades, made up the largest customer group. Those involved with farming and agriculture came second, with the 'Associated Trades' as a group of their own coming third. This was followed by the 'Independent' and 'Professional' groups in turn. Given that they were the two groups most readily identifiable, the inference is that these really were the smallest groups.

In fact, these figures, even given the large number whose occupation is unidentified, are very similar to those of John Budd in Crewkerne,³² and Thomas Hurman of Cannington (with the bottom two classes reversed).³³ Even though so many of Murly's customers' occupations cannot be identified, it would seem that it cannot be far different to the evidence shown by the other maltsters studied.

Only one corn factor is mentioned, - J. & S. Laws of Bristol. John Laws was described as such on a lease of 1837. John sold the business 460 bushels of malt in either 1817 or 1818 (the year is not clear), then a further 200 twice in 1821 and once in 1826, making a total of 1,060 bushels. These are marked as being on commission, so were sold to Laws for onward sale. They were all charged as at least 6d (£0.025) per bushel cheaper than the usual rate John sold to other customers. While this is a substantial amount of malt, it is over a period of almost 10 years. John was not reliant on corn factors for sales.

Some customers bought malt, hops and beer from him. This might be expected for some publicans, such as Joseph Cossens of Crewkerne. Examples of others who bought all three commodities include vicar Revd Langdon of Seabrough, surgeon George Jolliffe of Crewkerne, sailcloth manufacturer Richard Hayward of West Chinnock, and local cooper Samson Eason of Merriott. Farmer William

Main Occupation	Positive	Possible	Total
Agriculture/ farming*	69	27	96
Associated trades **	57	11	68
Independent	16	4	20
Professional	9	2	11
Tradesmen	64	10	74
Total	215	54	269
Unknown			96

Table 8. Occupations

*This includes a gardener and a lime-burner/farmer

** includes brewers, maltsters, publicans, distiller, corn factor and vinegar-maker/brewer.

Tradesmen include manufacturers.

Brooks sold John barley, and bought beer and malt from him. This shows fluidity – those who could brew for themselves sometimes chose not to.

Area covered

Most of John's malt customers lived within a 10-mile radius, as the crow flies. As might be expected, a large proportion of his customers were in Merriott, or its immediate vicinity. Of the 365 customers he identified, some 140 (38%) lived within 1 mile, or were close enough not to have a place designated.

The area covered Langport (11 miles) and Somerton (10 miles) to the north, round to Limington near Ilchester (8 miles NE), Yeovil (8 miles E), shrank to North and South Perrott (3-4 miles SE), down to the Dorset coast at Charmouth and Bridport (12 -13 miles S) and Lyme Regis (14 miles S), Thorncombe and Chard (7 and 8 miles SW), Horton (7 ½ miles W), and Ilton (6 miles NW). There were some exceptions to this. John supplied a brewer in the port of Bridgwater with malt – this was 17 miles to the north west, and undoubtedly went via Langport or Thorney moving up the River Parrett by barge. There were a few customers in the Bristol area, almost 40 miles to the north; one of these was to become his landlord for the Rectorial Tithes, C.P. Dowding, so he may have had some local connection.

The others were brewers and the corn factor in the city. Again, there is the possibility of sea transport, although it could also have gone by carrier as with John Budd. These sales were not a small side of his business. From 1799 he made 19 sales to Bristol amounting to 2,479 bushels, most of this before 1804. A sale of 100 bushels to James Morgan of Newport in Wales must have gone by sea via Bridgwater. Morgan may have been the owner or master of a ship, so may have been buying to sell on. Again, from the example of Budd who also sold to Newport, it may well have gone further once it arrived there. The furthest customer was Charles Pilcher in Rye, Sussex (see under 'Malt' above); this must have gone by sea, (Pilcher owned a ship), but there is no indication if it went from Bridgwater or one of the south coast Dorset ports.

While this area went deep into Dorset, it does not seem to have included Devon. (John Budd's had also gone into Dorset, but had included places in Devon such as Honiton.) The shrinking of the area to just some 4 miles to the SE is of interest. John Budd's had stretched to Cerne Abbas, some 14 miles from his base in Crewkerne. Budd may have had a further reach through his carrier contacts, and the higher lands and perhaps poorer roads may have been a deterrent to trade for Murly at this earlier date. His interest did not stretch as far as Taunton; perhaps there was too much local competition there. Given the number of maltsters in Bridgwater, it is perhaps surprising that brewer George Parker

bought from John. His 3 purchases, totalling 690 bushels of malt, were all made in the early months of 1801 and 1802. It may be that there was a shortage (see below under 'Weather'), or that John supplied a specific type of malt not designated in the ledgers, or that the price was very competitive. (The 1801 rates were identical to those he sold to others, but the 1802 rate was almost half.)

When the number of his malt and hop customers is compared by county, 81% lived in Somerset, 10% in Dorset, and 2% in Bristol. Including Wales (just one customer) some 6% cannot be identified as being in a specific county. As the latter were identified only by name it must be that John knew them well, indicating that they lived nearby, most likely in Somerset itself, though this has not been assumed. In comparison with John Budd of Crewkerne, he had a higher proportion of customers in Somerset (81% compared to 69%), and a smaller proportion in Dorset (10% against 24%). However, 18% of his total malt sales went to his Dorset and Bristol customers, while only 8% of his hop sales went there. The reason for this apparent discrepancy was that these customers included a higher proportion of brewers and publican/brewers who could source their hop supplies elsewhere, as well as the corn factor.

Transport

Some aspects of transport have already been discussed under 'Hops', 'Coal' and 'Area covered'. John used an employee (Sam Randle) to deliver and pick up goods. This could have included barrels of beer, malt and hops, and coal, as well as farming products. He also made use of local farmers. Meeting these regularly at local markets and fairs, he would learn where they might be going and be able to come to some satisfactory arrangement. While he charged others for carriage of goods such as Ham Hill stone, he credited a few for transport, such as the hops from Weyhill mentioned above. (He may have sometimes used his own cart for Weyhill, but he did not mention it.) Between 1809 and 1810 one of his neighbours, Samuel French, was credited for transporting cider to Thorncombe, malt to Bridport, beer to Lyme Regis and for collecting 30cwt of coal from Langport. He made use of his family contacts too – his father hauled '2 Load Malt' to Lyme Regis, charging him £4.

Before the coming of the railways, much had to be carried by road. In order to get to more distant markets, the alternative, shipping, was available to John via Thorney, Langport and Bridgwater, but he still had to take it there by road. The nearest, Thorney, was six miles away, but was only accessible when the tides were right, and meant transshipment at Bow Bridge in Langport to carry on to Bridgwater. Lang-

port, some nine miles distant was probably a better bet; Bridgwater was at least 17 miles away, but may have been the easiest, most direct and cheapest option. The Parrett Navigation Company's works on the River were completed too late to be a transport aid for John.

Although John had trade with ports on the Dorset coast, including Bridport, there is no direct evidence that he used them. His malt went to Bristol and Newport (the latter undoubtedly via Bridgwater which had a thriving trade with the Welsh coast and beyond). However, the 1803 sale to Mr Dowding seems to have gone by road. When sending it he 'Gave the Boy going to B 5s 0d, Carriage Home 4s 0d'. In the same year, when sending 200 bushels to Bristol for Roberts & Co. he was charged £5 freight, implying a sea voyage. He did sell to the ship-owner from Rye, but we do not know from which port the malt went. On balance, it is most likely to have been Bridgwater rather than Bridport – Bridgwater was the busiest port and John had some contact there.

A further instance of sea transport was in 1808. When charging Richard Bicknell, a publican in Hinton St. George, for a pocket of Giles hops, he included 11s 0d (£0.55) for 'Carrige & Portidge' and 10s 6d (£0.525) for commission - portage implying a sea voyage.

Perhaps the most intriguing delivery was not malt but beer sent to Guernsey with his maltster (see 'The Maltster' above). It cannot have been cost effective. He did not add the cost of the sea journey to Mr Draper's bill. Indeed, he initially wrote the cost of the beer against John Wheadon's account with him, evidently holding his maltster responsible for its safe arrival. Once he was sure it had arrived, it was added to Mr Draper's bill and credited to Wheadon. The £3 he gave Wheadon may have been for the cost of the return journey and his board and food while over there. The voyage must have started on one of the south coast ports, perhaps Lyme Regis, Bridport or even Weymouth. It is easy to imagine Wheadon returning home to Crewkerne and drinking out on the tales of his adventures for some time afterwards!

Despite the length of the journeys carried out, there was no mention of loss en route.

Relations with brewers and other maltsters

John's barley sales to various brewers and maltsters was mentioned under 'Barley' above. Perhaps the most remarkable of these was the connection with Oakhill Brewery. This was almost 30 miles away by road and up on the Mendip Hills. Quite how John had won a market for his barley at this

distance is not clear. Oakhill was a long-established brewery with its own maltings. At the time of John's sales it was run by Jillard, Spencer, Hollister & Co. He specifically mentioned a Mr Edwards as his contact there, who may have been their Head Maltster. (When John purchased spirits from Oakhill in 1831 the receipt was signed by Hollister.) The owners must have had a long reach into the surrounding countryside, soaking up the barley they needed, to make it economic to bring it from Merriott by road.

John's nearest rival was William French in Merriott itself. However, his occupation is a bit problematic. On the baptisms of his children, recorded in the church registers and covering the same period of time as his purchases, he is variously described as a maltster, yeoman, miller and brewer. He never bought malt from John, only hops, so it would seem that maltster and/or brewer would be the correct occupation for some of the time at least. He does not seem to have sold John malt at any time. He may be the Mr French who rented out the White Hart in Crewkerne to John in 1808 and 1809, at the time Job Wilkins was landlord there. John paid for repairs to the House and bar and was reimbursed by Mr French. (Again, this may indicate how important it was for maltsters to have some interest in public houses. Josias French, possibly a relative of William's, later ran the Bell Inn in Merriott, with its brewhouse and malthouse behind.)

One of John's nearest competitors as a maltster was Samuel Palmer of Hinton St George, just 1 mile away. He was referred to in the ledgers as 'Hinton Maltster', and then 'Mr Palmer'. In 1815 Palmer bought 76 gallons of beer from John, perhaps for the George & Crown Inn in Hinton which he is known to have owned by 1839.³⁴ It may have included his malthouse (none is mentioned on the Tithe, although Palmer was recorded as a maltster there until 1856). Palmer bought a small quantity of malt from John, just 30 bushels on 17 October 1825, and was given a discount. John also sold him 18 quarters of barley in 1836 – this came to a bill of £24:6:0.

The next nearest was John Budd of Crewkerne. Budd's first purchases from John were in 1800 and so small they must have been for domestic use. They were mainly malt and just one very small hop purchase. However, over 1803/4 Budd bought a total of 320lbs of hops in three purchases. These were noted as being Farnham and Country hops. He was known to have been malting from at least 1824, and perhaps back as early as 1793 when his aunt had died and left the malthouse in trust for him. These references in John Murly's accounts would seem to show that the date Budd started malting can be narrowed down to between 1800 (when he appears to have been buying malt for brewing on a domestic scale) and 1803 (when the size of his hop purchases would

seem to imply buying in for onward sale along with his malt). It is unlikely that Budd was buying in bulk for domestic use, given that his accounts show that he usually used around 50lbs of hops in a year for his own beer. The hops were sold to Budd at a discount.

Also three miles away, but at South Petherton, was Robert Lyddon. Lyddon is known to have been malting there by 1825,³⁵ but supplied John with hops in 1814, so was probably already malting and dealing in hops earlier. These were noted as Lyddon's in John's brewing records, - given the paucity of these brewing records it may well be that he had more. The cost of them was not noted. In 1815 Lyddon bought two lots of 'Best Sussex' hops from John, amounting to 206lbs (and was charged for expenses from Weyhill Fair), and in 1817 57lbs of East Kent hops. John gave him a preferential rate for these purchases.

The final maltster with whom he did business was James Mills at Limington, some 8 miles away. In 1824 John sold him 100 bushels of malt at a discount. It is not known why Mills made this purchase - later he went into brewing as well.

John's brewing customers were a bit more distant. At Chard, also eight miles away, he had two – James Cuff and 'Mr Lemon'. Cuff bought 120 bushels of malt in August 1822 at a discount. It appears to have been a one-off sale. 'Mr Lemon' was, in fact, William Leman, who was first mentioned as a common brewer in the town in 1817. He bought 200 bushels in October 1825, a one-off sale, and again John gave a discount.

12½ miles away, at Bridport the precursors of Palmers Brewery, Gundry & Co, bought malt from John in 1800 and 1827. Their first purchase of 120 bushels was charged at a rate of 9s 6d. Rather unusually, this was higher than John's regular charge at the time, which was only 9s 0d. It could be that the rate included an element of transport costs, or that John knew they were 'desperate', and upped up the rate accordingly. (See George Parker below and later discussion in 'Weather' on the effects of the poor harvest in 1799.) They did not buy again until 1827, when they bought a total of 200 bushels over one week in January. This time they were given a discount on the usual rate of 8s 0d, as they were only charged 7s 3d.

Bridgwater, 17 miles away, was home to several maltsters and brewers at the time. George Parker was first called a brewer in 1842,³⁶ though he must have been malting and brewing before. Within a fortnight of the latter end of January 1801 he had 290 bushels at a rate of 12s 2d. John's usual rate was somewhere between 11s and 12s, but prices

were rising sharply and by February his malt rate had reached 14s. Earlier in January 1801, Parker had bought 300 bushels of barley from John. He paid 12s 2d per bushel for it – the same price he had the malt for. John would not seem to be making much profit on the malt and it must have seemed a bargain to Parker to have the malt at the same price as the barley and not to have the expense of malting it himself. Parker may have found barley hard to obtain, and had thus gone further afield to source it for his malthouse. (There had been an exceptionally bad harvest in 1799 due to a cold wet summer, and crops in 1800 had still not recovered to average figures).³⁷ John may have mentioned after the sale of barley that he could have malt for the same rate, leading Parker to order at this cheap price. It may also be that it was the previous season's barley (1799), already made into malt, and which John may have wished to dispose of so that he could start on the new. Within two months John was selling barley to others at 14s 0d per bushel. (The implication of this would appear to be that John and his farmer neighbours were able to harvest at least a reasonable crop of barley; and that while prices rose, John was able to sell his barley and malt at a price which suited both him and a customer some distance away. Interestingly, at the same date he sold Parker the barley for 12s 2d per bushel, he was buying it in himself from local farmers for 10s 6d, so his sale of it made him a nifty £25 profit!) Parker again bought malt from John in February 1802. This time his 400 bushels were rated at just 4s 0d per bushel, a discount on the usual rate of 6s 0d. Prices had stabilised and dropped. The purchases Parker made may have been to provide for a shortfall in his own production or for brewing.

A Mr Davies bought large quantities of malt from John between 1799 and 1800. There were four purchases of 120 bushels and two of 140. No hops were purchased. This points to a publican-brewer, but unfortunately John did not record where he was.

There were other possible brewers. Roberts & Co/Roberts & Gifford (of Stanfield Lane, St Michael's Church, Bristol), Castle & Co. of Bristol, Peters & Stanton of Temple Back Bristol, and Mr Wall/Wall & Co. of Montacute St, Bristol. Roberts bought 300 bushels in 1800, and a further 200 in 1803. Castle & Co. bought 375¾ bushels between October and December 1799 and may have been distillers.³⁸ Peters & Stanton bought 270 bushels in 1800 and a further 300 in 1802. Wall bought 425 bushels in two batches in 1800 and a further 400 in 1803. (Peters & Stanton, Roberts & Gifford and Wall were on a single page in the name-order book, along with George Parker of Bridgwater, so John may have been grouping together brewer customers.) Of these unknown occupation businesses, if they were not common brewers, they were publican brewers, distillers or corn factors/dealers.

A final example is that of the Ham brothers at West Coker, just 4 miles away from John. William and Ralph ran a brewery, malthouse and flax mill there. The malthouse could turn out 30 quarters weekly, and the brewery contained a domed 70 barrel copper and 20 quarter mash tun. It could be that a shortfall in the malthouse would need to be compensated for by buying in. They do not appear to have been successful businessmen and the site was put up for sale in 1811.³⁹ John usually put the number of his casks in a separate column against the sales of beer he made (to ensure he got them back), but from 1812 started including 'Ham' in this column. This indicates that he had bought some casks from them, and that they were marked as such. William's nephew, John Ham, had set up a vinegar making business in London, and was persuaded to go to West Coker to make vinegar there. John sold malt to the Hams between 1822 and 1825, in 1822 noting 'Mr Ham' and later 'John Hamm'. The sales totalled 1,540 bushels and were often for 100 bushels at a time. In 1824, they purchased 700 bushels in total. In only a few instances did John sell at a discount, often he charged the usual rate, and occasionally he sold at a premium. This may have been because they wanted a specific type of malt, though one also wonders if they were not particularly canny businessmen? These latter sales went almost certainly into vinegar production. John Ham invented processes for manufacturing and using vinegar, and moved his vinegar business to Bristol by 1826.⁴⁰ This explains why he stopped buying malt from John. Given the date (1824) of the Excise letter allowing John to sell off beer as vinegar, had he got the idea from the Hams?

All this shows that John did give a discount to fellow maltsters and brewers. There seems to have been a friendly agreement between maltsters to help each other out with hops at cost price plus expenses and malt at a reasonable discount. The purchase of hops from other maltsters may have also been down to who had been to Weyhill. The example of George Parker at Bridgwater shows that John was quick to seize an opportunity for profit. When he had given up malting his barley was valued enough for him to be able to send quantities to Oakhill in the north of the county.

Bad debts v extended credit

Some customers paid fairly quickly – immediately or within a year or two. Some publicans had complicated entries on the credit side, paying off in sometimes quite small amounts, but they usually balanced out in the end. Against some John had credits of goods or services in kind to take into account, such as his own father, but these too balanced out within a year or two. A local wheelwright was credited for a new wagon; one had his beer bill set against taking a barrel of

porter to Hinton St George, and another for 60lbs of feathers. Very few took rather longer to pay.

Perhaps an example of someone John expected to have problems paying was Mary Gear at the Kings Head. When she was left widowed with a young family, John worked out what her husband owed, and told her that he would charge her interest on the arrears from that Christmas. She did have to pay the interest the first year, but had paid it all off by the next. (Although this may seem harsh to us in modern times, she was now, after all, his partner in ownership of the House, John doubtless felt that he was doing her a favour by allowing her to owe him the money over a period. Given her situation, he could see that she might have difficulties with cash flow.) It could be that he used the same tactics with others he felt might owe for a period, but it is not recorded in his ledgers if he did so.

One problem he had was the danger of his customer becoming bankrupt. While he had sold large quantities of malt to Wall in Bristol, the final bill for 400 bushels, costing £145, ran into some difficulty. Against this John deducted just £21 'Reed by Dividend'. Wall must have become bankrupt and this was all John got, leaving him £124 short – quite a sum. Other examples are Thomas Bowditch of Thorncombe (dividend 10s 0d (£0.50) in the pound), Isaac Lang of Dowlish (2s 6d (£0.125) in the pound), Samuel Davie of Lyme Regis (6s 8d (£0.333) in the pound). Davie, a vintner, had been declared bankrupt in the same year.⁴¹ Others took longer. Joseph Shutler's 1812 beer bill was not paid until 1822, when John was paid half by Mr Rousell. John had made no note about chasing this bill, but to wait ten years seems a bit extreme, unless he knew there was nothing he could do about it except wait. Whilst it was impossible to know who might die before payment of bills, there was a need to listen to the local grapevine to see who might be in financial difficulty. It was difficult to know who was creditworthy.

A very small number delayed payment as long as they could. George Genge of Chiselborough had a hogshead of beer in 1813, and against his account John noted 'not Reed Cash or Cask'. However, he did sell him more in 1816, so it would appear that Genge had eventually paid and returned the valuable hogshead. Some were slow payers, John had an agreement with Mr Turner of Dowlish to pay off his £22 bill by monthly instalments of £5. This was done for just 3 months, gradually getting further apart, then a longer gap before finally paying off. When John sold him more beer in 1814 he insisted on payment on the day. Again, local knowledge may have played a part in John's decisions about extension of credit. Poor-payers would be talked about between tradesmen and would have found it difficult to get credit from them in future.

Interestingly, in 1810 John sold William Chaffey of Bridport a barrel of porter, but noted beside this entry 'has not Acct with me', so he must have made agreements with those to whom he would be prepared to offer credit. Chaffey paid John's brother, Silvester, who was living in Bridport by then.

Unlike his fellow maltster, John Budd of Crewkerne, John made no reference to going to court to get settlement of debts. There is no evidence that any deliberately chose not to pay. Perhaps having two solicitor brothers proved very useful in several ways. Not only could he use their services to draw up watertight leases, as letters to his landlords show, (and perhaps their advice about just how far he could push matters with them), but the simple fact that local people would know his brothers' occupation would ensure that most customers who could pay did.

Lifestyle and character

Something of John's character has already been seen. He exasperated some of his landlords by constantly trying to push the boundaries. He often paid late and quibbled over payment dates. Furthermore, he constantly tried to reduce the cost of his leases, claiming reductions due to work done about properties, or that income from tithes had dropped. C.P. Dowding of Shirehampton, his landlord for the Rectorial Tithes commented in one letter in 1832,

Your present offer for the Rectory puts me in mind of the description which I have heard of a dutch Auction where they bid down. Your first offer was £420, when we parted last it was £410, & you have now in your Letter made it only £400. Four hundred Guineas is the price for seven years ...

When Dowding decided to try to lease the tithes to a group of Merriott farmers, they refused to pay the £300pa he claimed, and he had to accept John's offer. Even this John managed to reduce further, down to £150pa!

Whilst he may have been an astute farmer and negotiator, it seems that he could also be easily taken in. There is almost a sense of innocence about him, certainly a lack of understanding of human nature. In 1838 one of his landlords, C.P. Garrick of Richmond, wrote asking that he accommodate his son Christopher over the winter, as he wished to learn about farming. 'He is not particular, plainish food and drink.' He arrived in the November, his father stating 'I think with confidence that he will make himself companionable & perhaps useful.' By January it seems he had made himself too companionable! Garrick wrote 'I do not think that he ought to be spending money at the rate he has done.', and complained

that he had two riding accidents when hunting, ‘... It may be very kind of you and others to lend him a horse, but I never borrowed myself & least of all for hunting. I wish likewise to know how his general conduct is, and whether he conducts himself prudently ... Wd you be kind enough to give me yr unbiased opinion regarding him ...’ By March Garrick wrote ‘Much obliged by yr best acct and have only to regret what you have done at the instance of kindly and good feeling shd have been the cause of much anxiety & trouble to you ... He has written me a ltr acknowledging his duplicity of conduct to me. I have done with him in a pecuniary & every other way ... The cheque is for £20.’ On the outside of this letter Garrick had written (probably so that the message could get around) ‘all my son’s expectations are only for life & that little enough. I state this lest he may impose on any one credulous enough to lend him money.’ However, further monetary problems ensued with creditors writing to Garrick personally. Christopher left shortly after this, but continued to cause mayhem by lying about what people had said and what his intentions were. Garrick was so concerned about the possibilities for further misdemeanours that he wrote in July 1840 warning John not to trust Christopher if he should turn up in Somerset. If Garrick had been taken in by the charming con-artist that was his son, so had John, who was in a difficult position. If John did not accommodate Christopher and make his time in Merriott agreeable he might complain to his father, but if he complained of Christopher too heavily, he still might upset his landlord.

John had an argument with Farmer Brown over the tithes of seeded clover. When Brown complained to Dowding John defended himself and said that Brown was trying to stir up trouble ‘... being a Radical of the worst stamp’. John’s fury over this altercation is evidenced in the copy of his reply to Dowding by several attempts at some sentences, and unusual spelling mistakes. One can imagine him sitting and spitting his thoughts out onto paper, without thought of the niceties of punctuation and spelling.

The reference to radicals implies that John was conservative in his politics. There is further evidence of this conservative stance. He may have been a supporter of Sir Thomas Lethbridge. In 1818 he sent eight large casks of beer totalling 760 gallons to Ilchester for him, doubtless for plying the electorate at the general election. However, business was business, and John charged a premium rate for the beer, at least 3d (£0.0125) more than his highest rate per gallon at the time. (The beer does not seem to have had the desired effect, Lethbridge lost the election!)⁴² John advised his landlord of the results of the first County poll at Ilchester in 1826, ‘Mr Dickenson 419, Sir T.B. Lethbridge 397 Hunt 64’, adding that ‘... Hunt has but little or no chance of success how he could have the assurance to offer for so respect-

able a County as that of Somerset is astonishing to me or in short any other place.’ (This does not refer to the general election for Ilchester of 9 June 1826, at which there were different candidates.⁴³ The final results were Dickenson 1812, Lethbridge 1715 and Hunt 309). Lethbridge was a Whig, and in 1821 had voted with the Whigs for the repeal of the malt taxes, something which may have endeared him to John. Dickenson was independent, but tended to vote with the Whigs. Henry ‘Orator’ Hunt was a radical political reformer who advocated universal suffrage, the secret ballot and the repeal of the Corn Laws. He had spent 2½ years in Ilchester Goal, following his address to the meeting at St. Peter’s Field in Manchester which had resulted in the Peterloo Massacre, being blamed with others for ‘unlawful and seditious assembling for the purpose of exciting discontent’.⁴⁴ During the campaign at Ilchester Hunt wore prison clothes to remind people of his incarceration. In 1835 John Murly supported the setting up of the South Somerset Conservative and Constitutional Association, along with his brother Edward and several of his past customers.⁴⁵ John was no radical reformer.

He was also conservative in his religion. He attended and supported All Saints Church in Merriott. In one of the booklets he wrote out parts of the service, and immediately underneath what appears to be a rough of a speech of heartfelt thanks. He was buried at the church.

One other, perhaps unexpected side to his character, given his tussles with his landlords, was a certain charity. When one of his smaller beer customers in Merriott died in 1809, his bill for £2:12:0 (£2.60) was waived - ‘Gave to Mrs Wilkins after the deces of her Husband’. She does not seem to be a relation and did not make any further purchases on her own behalf. He must have understood the difficulties she faced and felt sorry for her. (Equally he may have recognised that he was unlikely to get payment and took the pragmatic step of writing it off.)

His lifestyle was one of comfort and general prosperity. There were butchers bills for various meats. He bought quantities of spirits, though these could have been mainly for his public houses, rather than all for his personal consumption. There are bills for regular local newspapers, particularly covering the Sherborne and Yeovil area. He liked to be informed of what was happening locally. In 1821 he had a major re-vamp of his garden, as a bill included work for up to 3 people, and items such as Frome potatoes, ‘frame pease’, onion seed, carrot, parsnip, radish, and peach and ‘green gage Plum’ trees. There were constant repairs to his house and other properties – bills for these pepper his accounts. His tailor’s bills give an idea of how he dressed; one for ‘a pair of best double milld Kerseymere Br(ee)

ches ... a Kerseymere waistcoat...making & trimming a pair of Breeches....making & trimming a Great Coat' came to a total of £8:1:6 (£8.07). Kerseymere was a fine woollen fabric with a fancy twill weave – a type was made at Dunster in the county and known as 'Dunsters'.⁴⁶ One bill was for gold earrings and a small garnet brooch for his (married) sister Ann, perhaps a present.

Weather

The weather played an important part in John's business. The effect on the harvest resulted in fluctuating prices for his raw material of barley, which in turn affected the rates he could charge for the finished malt and for his beer.

The early years in John's books are of interest because of the difficult harvests. There had been poor ones in 1799 & 1800. (In 1798 the Society for Promoting Arts and Commerce had offered a gold medal or a premium of 30 guineas for the best method of harvesting over four acres of corn in wet weather).⁴⁷ There was a severe storm on 17 August 1799 when the West Country suffered huge loss of crops. The crop years 1812 and 1813 were so bad that the Government relaxed the rules forbidding the use of sugar in brewing – John did use sugar in his brewing in 1812 at least. 1816 was particularly noteworthy – the year without a summer, leading to the phrase 'Eighteen Hundred and frozen to death'. The latter is thought to have been the result of the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia, following on from other volcanic eruptions. In addition, there were already food shortages in the UK as a result of the Napoleonic Wars.⁴⁸ So can anything be seen in John's sales figures?

Table 2 shows sales of malt and hops. The high sales from 1799 (only 3 months) to 1802 would seem to show that John and his farmer neighbours were not suffering loss of crops. Indeed, the volume of large sales that he was making to brewers, including George Parker at Bridgwater, indicates that others had suffered and that he was benefitting. (See under 'Malt' above.) The slightly lower malt sales in 1809 may be a result of the hailstorm of 15 July 1808 which affected Dorset, Somerset and Gloucester. This is said to have produced the largest hail diameter known for Britain – some 11 cms.

By 1812, John's sales of malt reached their second highest level. However, the spring and summer of that year were cold, and the harvest of low yield. It is true that there is a drop in John's sales for 1813. If the 'year without a summer' of 1816 had any visible effect, it should show up in the sales in 1817. These did drop, by some 60%. However, what looks far more significant were the low figures from 1818 to

1820 inclusive. The summer of 1818 was claimed to be the longest, driest and warmest in (then) living memory. This was followed by a wet autumn. In May 1819 crops were damaged by a severe frost; in October snow fell across southern England, and it was a cold winter.⁴⁹ These conditions would have affected the availability of barley at a reasonable price, with a resultant drop in excess malt available for other customers after his own brewing needs were satisfied.

The weather affected the rates John charged for malt. If barley was more expensive, he would have to put up the price. In 1801 it reached 14s 0d per bushel (£0.70), yet his sales figures only dropped slightly. Buyers were prepared to pay the going rate to obtain their supplies – one wonders if he was pushing his rate just high enough to be tempting, since he does not seem to have had a problem with quantity. In 1809 (so after the 1808 hailstorm crop), his highest rate did rise from the more usual 10s 0d (£0.50) to 11s 0d (£0.55). In 1813 and 1814 the price reached his highest – again 14s 0d. In 1817 the price reached 11s 0d, again in contrast to the 10s 0d of the previous two years.

As mentioned above under 'Brewing', the poor crops of 1812/3 inflated the cost of malt. When the better harvest came, it resulted in a sudden drop in the price of beer, and some publicans found themselves caught out. If they already had a good supply of beer or malt in, the price they had paid for it meant that they could not be competitive with those who had the new and would be left with beer on their hands. It could wreck financial havoc.

So, there is evidence that the weather played a significant part in John's production and charges. Early on it played into his hands, allowing him to profit from an apparent good local harvest, and pushing his sales a wider distance. Later, the general weather problems meant that he was in the same boat as others. He had to juggle his charges with what the market would allow and what the barley had cost him.

Conclusions and Possible Reasons for Closure of Business

John Murly's books give an idea of how a maltster and brewer ran the two businesses together. It would seem that there had been family involvement in malting before, since the malthouse was already on the farm.

There are hints of how a maltster might cope with the calamity of a fire – John was fortunate to have another available (perhaps through a family link). John ran his businesses along with some farming interests, concentrating on malting and brewing. He appears to have kept the books for both

malting and brewing himself. He employed a maltster, taking him on annually at Crewkerne Fair. However, there is evidence that he mainly employed the same person – John Wheadon of Crewkerne. The maltster was paid a weekly wage, but also at the end of the year a bonus of ‘barley money’ calculated on the number of bushels processed in the season. When the fire interrupted things, he seems to have also paid at least some of the wages of the maltster at the malthouse he rented to ensure continuity.

While he and his family supplied some of his barley needs, much of it came from other nearby farmers. The price he had to pay for it varied considerably, depending on the crop and availability, but he ensured that his own father was paid a fair rate, even if this meant an adjustment at the end of the season. He kept an eye on the weight of the barley purchased and returned at least one lot which he considered under-weight. Not all the barley was converted to malt – some went for seed for the following season, or for animal fodder. The rate he paid his suppliers did not vary according to the quantity purchased, or the weight per bushel. No specific variety was mentioned. When he gave up malting he continued to grow barley, and sold it to other brewers, most notably the Oakhill Brewery. The weather played an important part in the availability of barley and the pricing of his malt.

John produced at least two different types of malt. A third possibility is ‘Honey malt’, which he mentioned, but which it is not possible to identify, other than a sweeter malt. He gave the designation ‘Harvest’ malt to release of the new season’s malt. It was only released once the previous season’s malt had been sold off, varying between October of the same year to March of the following. Malting did not commence until the old malt supply was running down, e.g. one year it began in October, another in December. He was malting from at least October 1799. His final season was 1826-7. His malthouse appears to have been in the buildings behind the house he lived in. Some details of it were given, also for his brewhouse.

On occasion he made malt for some farmers from their own barley. This was not a regular thing. His pricings give an idea of what it would have cost him, but there is evidence that he inflated the final charge. Allowing for bags, fuel, his maltster’s wages and the duty, it came to around 3s0d (£0.15) per bushel; to this would need to be added the cost of the barley in the first place to get an idea of normal profit. In addition, he did once use his kiln for drying wheat for a customer – he may have done so for himself as well, but this is not recorded.

There is evidence of his payment of the Excise Duty, including a note to be sent to the Excise man to inform him of

when wetting was to take place. While there had been concern in Parliament that West Country maltsters might be avoiding the duty, there is no evidence for that in John’s accounts, or that he had trouble paying it. He mentioned paying for his maltster’s licence.

As with other maltsters, John supplied hops to his customers. Since he would have needed these for his own brewing purposes, it was a simple thing to add a few pockets for sale to his malt customers. As shown with other maltsters, some of his brewer and publican brewer customers were able to source supplies cheaper elsewhere, so in the main his sales went to customers with other occupations. He mentioned hops from Sussex, Hampshire (Country) and Farnham, considering the latter to be the premium. He made notes about a particular area of Hampshire, around Alton, perhaps favouring the hops from there. He did buy at Weyhill Fair, sometimes mentioning commission there, and attended personally at least a couple of times – borrowing money from his father whilst they were there one year. He may have occasionally used a hop merchant – the name of one in the Borough was recorded in his note book. He does not appear to have used hops grown in Somerset.

He had good relations with other maltsters. Although he does not record purchases of malt from them, he did usually give them a discount on any malt or hops they bought from him. Palmer also bought barley and beer from him, although in a small quantity. Lyddon seems to have ordered hops from Weyhill through him, being charged for the expenses John was put to. There seems to have been a friendly agreement between maltsters to help each other out with hops at probably cost price plus expenses, and malt at a reasonable discount. The purchase of hops between maltsters may have also been down to who had been to Weyhill.

John was quick to see where profit might be made from brewers. The evidence of his sales to George Parker at Bridgwater, and the Hams at West Coker, point to an astute businessman. When he had given up malting his barley was valued enough for him to be able to send quantities to Oakhill in the north of the county.

Because of John’s other business interests, namely brewing and lime-burning, we cannot ascertain how much of his fuel purchases went for malting alone. During his malting years he purchased from four main suppliers, and deliveries were made to Langport, Thorney, Load Bridge, and Westport. He recorded purchasing coal, culm, stone coal, Mountain coal and Newport coal. While most of his coal would have come from Wales, after he finished malting there was mention of coal from Gloucester (via Bullo Pill), so it is possible that some might have come from there. The delivery destinations

point to river transport, but since payment of toll at Burrow-bridge is mentioned in one year, some must have come by road direct from Bridgwater. Picking up these deliveries was another aspect. Several carriers are named against some deliveries, including 'Self'. He employed one carter, Samuel Randle, on regular trips to Langport and these may have included picking up coal.

Some of John's customers paid up-front. Those who did not were recorded in the ledgers. John did not always seem to record payments in these – some customers must have paid since they were allowed credit again. Others accounts were crossed through as though paid. Some paid in kind – set against their bills for goods, or services. Some, especially his publican tenants paid in dribs and drabs. Those with whom he had problems fell into two categories. First were those who were made bankrupt, or perhaps died. In these cases he noted the dividend he received; one payment was delayed for ten years. The second category was the very few who deliberately delayed their payments. One of these agreed to pay £5 per month, but even renegeed on that, and John insisted on payment up-front when his errant customer asked for further supplies. Poor payers would have been remarked upon by tradesmen amongst themselves, so that would be a disincentive to the practise. Sometimes John may have suspected customers might have problems. When Thomas Gear (landlord of the Kings Arms) died, he got his widow to agree to pay interest on the outstanding bill of £65. She had to pay interest the first year, but not afterwards. He may have been unsure of her capabilities of running the pub on her own as well as her husband had, and felt that by offering her continued credit he was doing her a favour. What John did not do was to resort to litigation. Unlike Budd in Crewkerne he does not mention chasing debts beyond personal contact. Given that two of his brothers were solicitors, it may be that customers did not test things out too far.

John had at least five tenanted public houses. These do not appear to have been tied to him for supplies, but on the whole did buy malt, hops and beer from him, and a couple bought spirits. John's relaxed attitude to where his tenants got their supplies meant that he did not expend energy on checking up on them, in contrast to John Budd in Crewkerne. The houses were not all in the immediate vicinity, one was at Thorncombe, 8 miles away in Dorset. John often re-imbursed his tenants for repairs, and seems to have carried out renovations and repairs when first taking on a pub. He helped his tenants by supplying them with other things, such as a thermometer, and even buying in items from an old tenant for the new. They went to him for help – he arbitrated for one in a dispute with another supplier. His relationship with his tenants was cordial, as the examples of the Gears and Cossens show. When the price of beer

dropped in 1813/14, he noted it on two of his tenants' accounts. There was no mention of the credit given to them, but on one he had noted that he was to allow 3d per gallon – it may have been sorted out between them when the bill was paid.

His customer base was mainly 10-15 miles around Merriott, stretching into Dorset, but not Devon. One brewer customer was at Bridgwater, 17 miles away, a few customers were in Bristol, a single small sale was made to Wales, and a large one to Rye in Sussex. The latter was probably transported by the customer who was a ship-owner. While the majority of his customers lived in Somerset, a higher percentage of his malt went to Bristol – reflecting the fact that it was going mostly to brewers and a corn factor there. The majority of his sales went by carrier; there was no railway to ease transport yet. Farmer customers proved useful in the transport of goods – they were sometimes credited for it. There was no mention of loss on the way.

Fairs and markets were important dates in the calendar, not only of value for hiring employees and buying and selling, but also a melting pot of ideas and information. Farmers and others would exchange news, of those who owed money, had useful items for sale, where they were planning to travel to in the near future, and what was the local and national gossip; all useful information for future possible use.

John's character shows all the contrariness of human nature. He could be the astute negotiator when it came down to business, squeezing his leases down to the barest cost, and pushing up prices to what he felt his customers could afford, but seems to have been easily taken in by others. Even given the delicate problem of how to deal with his landlord's wayward son without upsetting the father, he seems to have been taken in by the lad's easy nature. He had a certain charity – waiving one small bill for a widow after her husband had died, though this may also have been pragmatic acceptance that it might not be paid anyway. On the other hand, he insisted on the payment of interest from the widow of the landlord of the Kings Head – with whom he had had a cordial relationship. He was conservative in his politics and religion. He was seen as someone who had spare cash – he very occasionally loaned money to others. His lifestyle was comfortable; he could afford little luxuries for himself and his family. He paid for a doctor to travel to Bridport twice for his brother, an act which shows the closeness within the family. Perhaps it is surprising then, that he did not marry – he surely would have been considered 'a good catch' at the time – a hard-working man with a good income. Perhaps here too, his innocence had let him down – he may have misread the feelings of one young lady, or she had deliberately led him a dance.

Because of the dates he finished brewing and malting, his business was not affected by the later 1830 Beer Act. The first part of his business to be given up was the brewery. He had been brewing from at least 1804, and most probably before. When he gave up brewing in 1824 (perhaps due to a yeast infection), he attempted to sell a quantity of beer for vinegar. His last sales of it were in 1825. He had begun malting before the end of 1799 (when he was aged 20), and seems to have run it down from 1825, with the final sales in September 1827 (so from the season 1826/7). As a proportion of his malt had gone into his brewing business (perhaps up to 68%), it may well be that it was less economic for him to continue malting. His decision does not seem to have been caused by poor health, since he lived for a further 14 years, much of that time spent in energetic dispute with his landlord for the Rectorial Tithes; one almost gets a sense that he enjoyed the sparring. He had no son to pass the business on to.

Another motivator in his closing of the malting business may have been the 1827 Malt Act. This stringent legislation regulated every aspect of malt production, which was already so complex that 'few contemporaries could find their way through the legislation with any degree of confidence'.⁵⁰ In 1826 John would have been aware of the impending legislation and its possible clauses, and it may well have had an influence in his decision to pull out of malting.

Many rural maltsters did not brew commercially, concentrating on building a steady clientele for their product. If the maltster were a commercial brewer too, he would have a ready outlet for a good proportion of his malt. However, if brewing ceased, continuing to malt may not have been so economic. He would still have to pay his maltsters wages, his licence, and Excise duty, buy in barley, coal, etc, and make it worthwhile to keep his maltster employed all the season. Would he be able to sell so much more malt, perhaps with already considerable competition from others close by? Looking at John's sales figures in 1826, he may have tried reducing output for the 1825/6 season. His figures for sales were down, and he was not taking any himself for brewing. The impending complications of the 1827 Malt Act were looming. His barley sold readily enough to others, perhaps the reputation of his malt ensured that. So, in his late 40's he adjusted his business plan, came out of brewing and malting, and made income from other sources.

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figures for them, which occasionally used decimal points, sometimes a comma instead of a decimal point, and sometimes no decimal point at all!

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