

Thursday 29th April

Thomas Fox

Thomas Fox of Tonedale died on April 29th, 1821, at the age of 74. In almost 60 years in Wellington, Mr Fox had become one of its most influential residents by developing the woollen manufacturing business - Thomas Fox & Sons. Although not the only woollen business in the town – Mr Elworthy’s mill in Westford was also a significant employer – Mr Fox’s factory at Tonedale is of greater significance, employing hundreds of men, women and children.

Thomas Fox was born and raised in Wadebridge, Cornwall, the second son of Edward Fox, a successful merchant, and his wife Anna, the daughter of Thomas Ware, Wellington. Thomas Ware was the owner of a well-known woollen manufacturing business based at South Street – now the site of Wellington Prep School. Mr Ware had several sons who might have carried on the business, but they seem not to have produced any suitable grandsons and so he approached his married daughter Anna and Elizabeth to see if they would like a son of theirs to join his business – and so in 1753 Thomas Fox from Wadebridge and Stephen Matravers from Wiltshire arrived in Wellington.

Thomas, aged 16, was immediately sent to Europe for three years to learn the business. He showed great aptitude for business and innovation gradually taking over the direction of the firm so when his grandfather died in 1776 he was already the driving force of the business. He then changed the name of the business to Thomas Fox.

Retrieval

- 1) Who owned the woollen business in Westford? Circle the answer.

Mr Ware Thomas Fox Mr Elworthy

- 2) Where was Thomas Fox born and raised?
- 3) Why was Thomas Fox sent to Europe?

Vocabulary

Using a dictionary, look up the work innovation.

Write a definition:

Manufacturing : Tick the verb it means.

sell make run

Inference

‘he was already the driving force of the business’ – what do you think this means?

Aptitude



A natural ability to do something