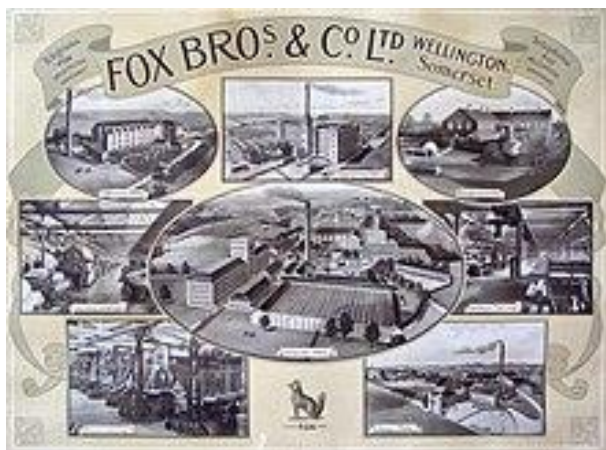




Victorian Wellington

Year 5 History Knowledge Organiser Spring Term 2024

This term, in History, we will explore how Britain changed during the Victorian period at the growth of the British empire. As part of our local study work, we will look closely at how Wellington has developed overtime dating back to Victorian Wellington. We will study census records, historic maps and understand the importance of industry and trade. We will learn about the Fox Brothers and the mill in Tonedale, Wellington. In addition, we will look at how the town has grown to accommodate the rise in residents and how this differs from the Victorian era. We will look at evidence which can be found today, dating back to the Victorian period e.g. the town layout and historic buildings.



History of Fox Brothers, Tonedale, Wellington.

Credit to: <https://www.wellingtonmills.org/history>

In 1772 the young Thomas Fox joined his grandfather Thomas Were's weaving company at Trade Court, South Street, Wellington. Thomas went to Europe studying languages and the woollen trade, and on his return the company began its growth from a cottage industry into one of Britain's successful family-owned cloth manufacturers, run by the Fox family for the next seven generations.

In 1796 Thomas Fox, by now middle-aged but still ambitious, relocated the business to larger premises at Tonedale Mill, close to the vital water supply from the river Tone. Fox Brothers grew rapidly for the next 150 years employing around 5,000 people at its height, largely in Wellington, and including the wet finishing works known as ToneWorks. By 1919 Fox Brothers' turnover peaked at £1.5M - £350m at current prices.

But by the late 20th century Britain's woollen industry was declining and in 1992 Fox Bros ceased production at Tonedale. Much of the sprawling 11-acre site became a temporary home to a wide variety of small businesses from book binders to micro-breweries and a violin-maker. But these have now gone, leaving just empty buildings.

In the past 25 years a series of speculative owners have bought and sold Tonedale, each with plans for residential redevelopment but nothing has happened and the dereliction has increased year by year.

Key Vocabulary:

Wellington industry growth British Empire
Victorian era Fox Brothers cotton mill