

North East Group

for the Study of

LABOUR HISTORY

NORTH EAST GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY

BULLETIN NO. 4

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Vice-Chairman	S. Chaplin	
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	A. Potts	(Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic)
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BULLETIN EDITORIAL BOARD: D. Bythell (Chairman), J. F. Clarke, A. Potts

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THE NORTH EAST GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY

- Name The name of the group shall be the North East Group for the Study of Labour History
- Objects (a) To bring together those interested in research into labour history in the north east.
(b) To encourage and help organise such research.
(c) To assist in the preservation of existing records.
(d) To organise support for these aims by such means as seminars, lectures, bibliographical guides etc.
- Membership Membership shall be open to all those actively interested in the aims of the Group.
- Subscriptions The annual subscription shall be 10s. per individual or institution. This shall fall due on 1st October each year.*
- Officers and Committee The business of the Group shall be conducted by a committee composed of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, two Secretaries, and two ordinary members. The committee shall have the power to co-opt additional members. The committee and officers shall be elected at the annual general meeting.
- Finance All money raised by or on behalf of the Group shall be applied to further the above objects. An audited account shall be presented to the annual general meeting.

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* Alteration proposed at AGM on 20th November 1970

Draft Report from January 1969 to 30th September 1970

It was decided by the Committee to adjust our year to the "academic year", that is to begin normally our Programme from October 1st of each year. This report therefore covers a period of twenty-one months.

Committee

At the annual general meeting on 24th January 1969 the committee was elected as follows:

Prof. E. Allen (Chairman); S. Chaplin (Vice-Chairman); T. P. MacDermott (Treasurer); J. F. Clarke and A. Potts (Secretaries); C. Barnett; D. Bythell; D. J. Rowe.

During the year Mr. Barnett moved to Lancashire and resigned from the committee.

The committee has met six times, 7th March, 2nd July, 30th September, 17th December 1969 and 11th March, 30th September 1970.

Group Meetings

The following meetings were held:

1969

- 24th January C. G. Hanson on "The Royal Commission on Trade Unions 1867-9" Rutherford College of Technology - attendance 25
- 17th May Half-day school at University of Durham - attendance 28
R. Moore and Rev. R. Collins "Methodism and the Working Class"
- 28th November D. W. Lindsay on "Frederick Maurice - the meaning of Socialism to the Christian Socialists" Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic - attendance 16

1970

- 13th February John Foster on "Working Class Politics in South Shields 1800-1850" Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic - attendance 33
- 16th May Half-day school at University of Durham - attendance 31
Dr. N. McCord; Miss P. Mawson; R. Barker; R. P. Grace on "The Poor Law Amendment Act and the North East"
- 13th June Half-day school at the Teesside Polytechnic - attendance 24
Dr. A. Mason; J. Feeney; J. Leonard and tape recordings made by J. Adamson. "The General Strike and Teesside." This our first meeting on Teesside was very successful and at least one meeting will be held there each year.

The committee wishes to express its thanks to the University of Durham, the Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic and the Teesside Polytechnic for their hospitality.

Bulletin

A third issue of our Bulletin in enlarged format was issued in November 1969. The number of orders from Universities and other educational institutions and libraries is now 50. Mr. MacDermott was appointed Business Manager for the Bulletin. The committee accepted with reluctance the resignation of D. J. Rowe from editorship and expressed its thanks for Mr. Rowe's excellent work. The editorial board was formed D. Bythell (Chairman), J. F. Clarke and A. Potts.

Membership

Thirty individual paid subscriptions and two from trade unions. Eight to ten non-members are usually attending our meetings.

Preservation of Labour Records

Mr. Feeney, a retired railwayman, has given us two items of interest. Due to the kind efforts of Mr. Coker (USDAW) a copy of one day's minutes during the General Strike have been located and saved from destruction. We are very pleased to note the addition of certain items in the County Archives offices.

Tape-recordings

This activity has not advanced as rapidly as the Committee would like. We have the names of a number of people we should like to record and would welcome volunteers. At its September 1970 meeting the Committee decided to invite Mr. John Adamson (Consett Technical College) to take charge of this activity.

Centenary of 1871 Strike

The manuscript of our commemorative study is now complete and it is hoped the book will appear in the summer of 1971.

National Society

The National Society has agreed to meet in Newcastle upon Tyne in November 1971 and we have forwarded certain proposals in regard to a possible programme.

Income and Expenditure Account 1969/70

<u>INCOME</u>	£ s. d.	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£ s. d.
Members:		Secretarial Expenses	6 4 3
Individuals	12 2 6	Treasurer's Expenses	2 11 3
Institutions	1 10 0	Bulletin:	
Bulletin Sales	39 10 7	Dispatch 1969/70	2 0 10
Day Schools:		Dispatch 1969/70	1 12 11
Durham 1969	9 15 0	Other Costs 1969/70	8 0 0
Durham 1969	9 7 6	Day Schools:	
Teesside 1969	7 2 6	Durham 1970	5 10 0
Balance from 1968	3 0 4	Durham 1970	4 4 0
		Teesside 1970	4 7 6
		Expenses of Speakers	4 10 0
		Bank Commission	8 0
		Balance	43 9 8
	<u>£82 18 5</u>		<u>£82 18 5</u>

T. P. MacDermott Honorary Treasurer

PROGRAMME FOR 1970-71

- 20th November 1970 7.30 p.m. Keith Harris: "Joseph Cowen - The Northern Tribune" Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic
- 12th February 1971 7.30 p.m. Dr. Norman McCord: "The Nine Hours Strike - 1871" Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic
- May 1971 (afternoon school date to be announced) "Education and the Working Class" at University of Durham

MEETINGS WILL ALSO BE ARRANGED AT TEESSIDE AND SUNDERLAND - details later

SOUTH SHIELDS LABOUR MOVEMENT IN THE 1830's AND 1840's

A summary of the Paper read to the group meeting held on 13th February 1970 at the Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic.

The paper attempted to relate the experience of South Shields' working class movement to one of the major problems facing contemporary labour historians: that of Chartism's class content. Recent years have seen several challenges to the accepted view of Chartism as an early expression of mass class consciousness. Critics have argued that the 'class struggle' language of its leaders was no more than a rhetorical top-dressing, and that the movement itself did not go beyond a confused reaction to economic distress. The paper offered some local evidence to dispute this claim. By comparing Shields with two other communities in which the Chartist movement achieved considerably greater success - Oldham and Northampton - it sought to show that hereat least the movement's success or failure depended not so much on the actual extent of the economic distress as on the degree to which labour's pre-existing understanding of the immediate industrial situation had already prepared the ground for a larger class analysis. This, it was claimed, seemed to indicate a conscious, ideological base to Chartism's mass support. The argument was developed in the following stages:

Reasons for believing South Shields less militant

First, the formal weakness of Shields' Chartism itself: its failure to send delegates to the 1839 or March 1848 Conventions, or to supply National Rent in 1839; the lack of a permanent headquarters and the low level of subscriptions to the Land League (only seven in two years as against weekly subscriptions from Oldham and usually monthly ones from Northampton).

Second, the lack of continuity within the town's working-class leadership and its isolation from organised labour. Apart from Lowery (based in North Shields) only John Peacock - a newsagent - appears to have been active for more than a decade, and the only labour leader to have taken a prominent part was George Charlton of the miners (nothing from the shipwrights or seamen). This contrasts strongly with Oldham where there was active support from organised labour and a dozen leaders with experience going back to the 1816-19 period.

Third, lack of social solidarity among Shields' labour population (a possible - though not necessary - concomitant of low political solidarity). Marriage and housing patterns (from marriage certificates and census schedules) show a comparatively high level of ethnic and occupational segregation: marriage between craft and labourer occupations stand at 70% expectation in Shields, 77% in Northampton and 80% in Oldham; and in housing 80%, 100% and 100% (1841) respectively. There was also a high level of segregation between English and Irish - and of church attendance. (A brief explanation of these measures can be found in Foster, 'A class dimension', Studies in Urban History, ed H. Dyos, 1968.)

Finally, a qualification: saying that the Shields' movement was relatively weak is not meant to imply that it was a total failure. On occasion - like early 1839 - the town's Chartists seem to have staged quite effective campaigns. The significant thing is that despite this they achieved so little.

Reasons for discounting directly economic explanations

Conditions of work in terms of death and disease rates were shown to be quite as bad as among Shields' seamen, miners and alkali labourers as those among Oldham's mill workers or Northampton's shoemakers. Earnings were no better: a survey of family incomes - based in the 1851 census - shows a quarter of Shields' working families below Bowley's poverty line as against a fifth in Oldham and a third in Northampton. Cyclical unemployment was if anything - in shipping and shipbuilding - worse. Nor can lack of solidarity be blamed on any wider spread of incomes. In fact, the overlap between craft and labour families in terms of distance from the poverty line was over 50% in Shields and only 17% in Northampton and 9% in Oldham.

Specific features of South Shields' industrial situation

The exceptional timing of the North East trade cycle has already been emphasised by W. H. Maehl: generally - though not in 1841-2 - out of step with that in the rest of the country and with the high-points of Chartism's national development. Just as important, however, for Shields' political development would seem to be the reasons for this: the degree to which the area's basic industries were at once technologically undeveloped and very sensitive to political pressure. Technological stagnation in shipping, ship-building and dependent trades (employing three quarters of Shields' labour force) meant that unlike the dominant industries of Yorkshire and Lancashire their sequence of prosperity and slump did not directly derive from the characteristic cycle of capitalist development. There was no locally demonstrated link between labour-saving investment, lower commodity values and the crisis of profitability. Instead, it was politics themselves that were seen to be the key factor: the parliamentary battles over imperial preference and the navigation acts, the building of railways and the siting of their terminals. This situation demanded joint sectional action by both capital and labour, and in Shields seems to have formed the industrial base for class collaboration. The paper ended with some quotations from James Mather. Mather, a middle class radical, enjoyed a considerable popular following in the 1830's and 40's, and in 1852 won wide support from organised labour for his abortive parliamentary candidature. Though he advocated an extension of the suffrage and improved conditions, his main political theme in the 1840's was the need to maintain Britain's colonial empire and to build up a navy strong enough to defend it.

LABOUR IN SOUTH SHIELDS 1800-50: An Interim Bibliography

A. EXISTING STUDIES

Among published material starting points must be William Brockie, History of South Shields (1851), Thomas Salmon, South Shields, its past, present and future (1856) and George Hodgson, Borough of South Shields (Newcastle 1903).

Particularly relevant among the recent spate of academic studies are J. M. Fewster, 'Keelmen of Tyneside in the eighteenth century', Durham University Journal XIX 1957-8, W. H. Maehl, 'Chartism in North East England', International Review of Social History VII 1962, Norman McCord and David Brewster, 'Some labour troubles of the 1790's in North East England', International Review of Social History XIII 1968, Norman McCord, 'Seamen's strike of 1815 in North East England', Economic History Review XXI 1968, and Norman McCord, 'Tyneside Discontents and Peterloo', Northern History II 1967. David Rowe brings Fewster's work on the keelmen into the nineteenth century with 'Strikes of Tyneside keelmen in 1809 and 1819', International Review of Social History XIII 1968 and 'The decline of the Tyneside keelmen', Northern History IV 1969. McCord's 'The murder of Nicolas Fairles' (1958) is one of several useful articles to be found in South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society Papers. Among unpublished work G. E. Greenwell's MEd thesis 'The history of education in South Shields' (Durham 1935) is directly relevant, and much local information can be obtained from N. R. Elliott's PhD thesis 'Tyneside' (Durham 1955).

B. SOURCE MATERIAL

No major archive from the labour movement itself has so far come to light. There are, however, several rich (and as yet largely unexploited) sources from which information on it may be drawn. In addition to those listed by W. H. Maehl in the Group's Bulletin 3, the main ones are: the mass of printed bills and leaflets in South Shields Public Library, the books of South Shields Vestry 1822-36 (in St. Hilda's church), of the Poor Law Guardians (in the Welfare Department) and of the Improvement Commissioners (in the Town Clerk's Office), the mass of local evidence given to parliamentary enquiries and recorded in parliamentary papers (PP), and the records of religious bodies still to be found in the area's churches (particularly important are those of the various Methodist congregations in the custody of Mr. Ellis of South Shields).

C. PARTICULAR ASPECTS

Seamen

The Loyal Standard Association (founded 1824): Rules and lists of members for 1825-6 in Home Office (HO) 40/21 f 633; defence of strike action by its secretary Woodroffe Tyne Mercury 20th January 1827; 1834 controversy between Woodroffe and Lackland in Newcastle Press 15th February 1834 and South Shields Library Bills folder Kelly; Accounts for 1850-1 and Alteration in Rules (1852) in Bills folder case 1; a brief history in North and South Shields Gazette 18 and 25 January 1850. North and South Shields Seamen's Association: Newcastle Journal 25th April 1840. South Shields Seamen's Friendly Association: Gazette 24 and 31 January 1851 and Bills Folder 'Miscellaneous 3'. Tyne Seamen's Friendly Society: Gazette July-November 1853 passim. HO 42/22-4 (1792-3), 42/171 (1817), 42/196 (1819) provide information on labour disputes. Evidence on wages, organisation and conditions can be found in SC combination laws PP 1825 V (evidence of Richmond, Wawn and Heath), SC manufacturers PP 1833 VI (Anderson, Roxby, Young and Forsyth), SC shipwrecks PP 1836 XVII (Anderson and Woodroffe), SC merchant seaman's fund PP 1840 XIII (Woodroffe), SC British shipping PP 1844 VIII (Anderson and Straker), SC navigation acts PP 1847 X (Anderson and Richmond).

Copy of the resolutions, rules and orders of the Sailors' Fund, South Shields for mutual relief (South Shields 1798) BM 8275. bb. 2.
Copy of the rules and orders of the Seamen's Eligible Association for mutual relief (South Shields 1810) BM 8275. bb. 2.

Documents and letters in the Place collection BM Add 27803. f. 123
Dialogue between Tom and Harry on the duties of seamen (South Shields Joseph Clark 1825). ff. 22, 53, 77, 79, 92, 100, 102, 103, 106, 110, 114, 118 for correspondence between Henry Woodroffe and Francis Place 1825-6.

Shipwrights

Copy of articles of association of shipwrights association (1795) South Shields Library Lp 334.7/4. 1823 Rules (with names of committee) printed in SC combinations PP 1825 IV page 523. 1827 List of members (615 names) in South Shields Library Bills 'Shipping and seamen'. References to disputes: Durham Advertiser 21st May 1824, Journal 23rd February 1839, Northern Star 13th August 1842, Journal 17th September and 5th November 1842, Newcastle Chronicle 7th December 1844, Gazette 6th December 1850, 7th February 1851 and 14th March 1851. 1850 dispute placards in South Shields Library Bills 'Miscellaneous 3'. Also useful Philip Rathbone, 'An account of shipwrights' trades societies', Transactions of National for Promotion of Social Science 1860. Place collection BM Add 27803 ff. 82 and 119 correspondence between George Rippon (secretary of South Shields shipwrights union) and Francis Place 1825.

Working class politics

South Shields Working Men's Association is first mentioned in the Northern Liberator 28th October 1837 (with reports of speeches by Lowery and Gilmore). The Political Union (secretary John Peacock) was established in September 1838, and extracts from its rules and minute book can be found in Brockie, History page 190-1. Other early references are Northern Liberator 1, 15 and 29 December 1838, 13 and 26 January and 23 February 1839. The Union's Appeal for aid to victims of the St. Hilda colliery disaster (dated 1st July 1839) is in South Shields Library Bills Case 1, and its memorial in support of Cooksons alkali works in Journal 2nd February 1839. The visits of O'Connor and Harney are described in Northern Star 29th June 1839 and Northern Liberator 5th October 1839. The Female Political Union is first mentioned in The Charter 10th March 1839, and the Working Men's Joint Stock Provision Store in Northern Liberator 5th October 1839. Shields' Chartist were reorganised in October 1839 (Northern Liberator 5th October 1839), and there is a long report to the Border Convention meeting in Northern Liberator 16th December 1839. In November 1841 there was a further reorganisation managed by Binns and Williams of Sunderland (Northern Star 13th November 1841) followed by a revival of meetings (15th January 1842 and 17th March 1842), a visit by O'Brian (19th January 1842) and a petition signed by 3,000 (9th April 1842). Northern Star 17th December 1842 describes the eventual split between the Chartists and the Suffragists, and Durham Advertiser 20th October 1843 the confrontation between O'Connor and Mather. There is a list of the local Chartist executive in Northern Star 13th April 1843. The Home Office papers contain very little. What there comes mainly in HO 40/42 ff 370, 375, 391, 411, 473, for 1839, and for 1841 - more shipwrights than Chartists - in HO 43/61. The few references to Shields' Chartism in 1848 (including Dickinson's election as National Assembly delegate) come in Northern Star 6th May, 10 and 17 June and 9th September 1848.

Radical politics

James Mather (1799-1873), a wine and spirit merchant, was South Shields' leading (if not unchallenged) radical politician throughout the 1830's and 40's. Son of a local shipowner and educated at Edinburgh University, he became chairman of the 1832 Political Union that sponsored Place's local nominee, Captain Gowan. In 1839 he was appointed secretary of the committee of inquiry into the St. Hilda disaster. His principal political writings were The constitution of Great Britain . . . (London 1834) and Ships and railways (London 1846). Newcastle Chronicle 14th January and 31st March 1848 records his campaign in defence of the navigation acts (there are also some memorials in South Shields Library Bills 'Miscellaneous 3'), and South Shields Library 1852 Election folder gives details of his abortive parliamentary candidature (including a list of his non-electors committee). A brief obituary can be found in North and South Shields Gazette 15th December 1873. The South Shields Library Gowan correspondence throws useful light on the 1832 campaign, and includes an important letter to Place from Woodroffe (a supporter of the Whig candidate Ingham) on local political allegiances. The Reports of the Mechanical Institute (for 1826 and 1852) can be found in South Shields Library as can the 1860-5 minute book of the Working Men's Institute - founded in 1850 by Solomon Sutherland, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce (Gazette 22nd March 1850 and 7th February 1851). Another middle class organisation with hopes for popular support was the National Parliamentary and Financial Reform Association (Gazette 9 and 23 November 1849).

Social Control

Undoubtedly the biggest task facing any historian of labour in Shields must be to discover why the town's workforce remained so unusually subservient. The MS census schedules for 1841, 51 and 61 (Public Record Office) provide opportunities for examining labour's lack of solidarity in geographical terms - and following up Thomas Potts' unique description of occupational segregation in the appendix on South Shields in RC state of large towns PP 1844 XVII (there is also a draft copy in the Improvement Commission minute book). Labour's social fragmentation can also be studied from another direction through the Registrar General's marriage certificates (from 1839), and given a cultural dimension from descriptive material in the local press. On the actual manipulation and control of these subcultures, a whole range of possibilities open up. Some occupations themselves involved wider sanctions for good behaviour: for seamen the Trinity House pension was undoubtedly an important factor (see Journal 14th February 1835 and SC merchant seaman's fund PP 1840 XIII); for miners there was the threat of eviction (newspaper sessions reports); and for employees of Stevenson's Jarrow Chemical Company a paternalism that extended to control of reading matter (see anti-Stevenson bills in South Shields Library 1868 election folder). For the churches' records (sometimes only of office-holders) survive in the vestries of St. Hilda's, Ocean Road Congregational, Horseley Hill Baptist, and St. John's and St. Paul's Presbyterian (as well as those of the Methodist Congregations referred to earlier). Charities and missions are best tracked down through the press, but A. Flagg, 'Ingham infirmary' (typescript South Shields Library) provides a useful guide to one of the more blatantly grace and favour institutions, and G. Greenwell notes the

social uses of some of the educational charities in his thesis. However, the richest field of all must be local government. The whole underworld of Shields' politics awaits excavation in the minutes of the Improvement Commissioners, Vestry and Guardians, in the South Shields Library collection of bills on Incorporation and Local Elections, and in the local newspaper police reports.

John Foster
University of Strathclyde

* * * * *

F. D. Maurice (1805-72) - A Short Bibliographical Study

F. D. Maurice is generally regarded as the intellectual leader of the Christian Socialists in mid-nineteenth century England. His political views, however, derive directly from his theology and it is not easy to detect his political philosophy among the large volume of his writings. Perhaps the earliest writings with a bearing on politics are found in the series of articles in the Westminster Review: "Pelican Island" (October 1827) and "Wolfe Tone" (January 1828) illustrate the beginnings of a liberal political point of view. These are supported by a further series of articles on literary figures including Southey, Wordsworth, Cobbett, James Mill, Brougham, Shelley, Scott, Sir J. Mackintosh, Maria Edgeworth and Byron in The Atheneum (January-July 1828). These early writings do suggest that the young Maurice was closely in touch with the leading ideas of his time and that they played an important part in the formation of the Socialism and Romanticism which he typifies.

Maurice's first large scale publication was his only novel Eustace Conway (1830). In this he seems once more to be groping for answers to the apparent injustices of his day. The book is interesting for its strong Coleridgean Romanticism. Coleridge, along with Plato and the Bible, was the major intellectual influence on Maurice, though he blended the Romantic into a form of Christian Idealism a step or two beyond what Coleridge himself, might have agreed to.

Kingdom of Christ published in 1838 (revised edition in 1842) was Maurice's first and probably his most important major contribution to Theology. In this book, ostensibly a reply to the questions of a Quaker on religion, we can find one of the two important elements of Maurice's theology which are politically important. The whole tenor of the book indicates both a political and a theological universalism. Good and the Good Life are for all men not for the elect few. A useful commentary on F. D. Maurice's theology is F. D. Maurice and Company by A. R. Vidler (SCM Press 1866). The Kingdom and Maurice's other major theological work Theological Essays (1859) are the basis of his political ideas. The Essays together with What is Revelation? (1859) and A Sequel to the Enquiry "What is Revelation?" (1860) demonstrate two important strands in Maurice's philosophical position. The first is that of the brotherhood of man; the second is the philosophy of history as a continuing revelation, by both sacred and secular means, of a Divine purpose in history. This theme is also found in Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament (1853).

- One of Maurice's main interests was education. He first stated his view that education should be the function of the Church in Has the Church or State the Power to Educate the People? (1839). The interdenominational struggle in this field caused him to change his mind and by 1870 he was supporting state education in Secular and Denominational Education. Further studies of education are to be found in Queen's College London, Its Objects and Methods (1848), Queen's College London (1850) and Learning and Working (1855).

Maurice's association with the Christian Socialist Movement derives from his experiences at the time of the Kennington Common meeting of 1848. Together with Charles Kingsley and J. M. Ludlow he instituted a series of Tracts on Christian Socialism (1850) in which he stated the political philosophy which he abstracted from his theological position. In the first Tract Dialogue between Somebody and Nobody Maurice sets his concept of co-operation by which his socialist ideal was to be achieved. This theme is continued in all the tracts but particularly in Reasons for Co-operation, in which he attacks the idea of competition as a social motivation and supports co-operation as both instrumentally superior and historically more in accord with Divine Will.

The Christian Socialist position was further defended in a leading article in the Christian Socialist in which Maurice replies to an article in the Times. In this article Maurice attacks the idea of equating freedom with competition. Another important work in a similar vein is the eight Socialist tract Grounds for Association.

A major source of Maurice's political philosophy is another series of tracts of Politics for the People (c.1848). In the first of the series he once again outlines his support for co-operation and more particularly his belief in the need to associate politics, i.e. Socialism, with a proper religious basis. "The World is Governed by God; this is the rich man's warning; this is the poor man's comfort" (No. 1 6th May 1848). The sixth edition of this series on Equality is also worthy of consideration. The series also contains an interesting article in issue No. 7 in which Maurice recognises that he is not so much a Radical as a Conservative. There are interesting notes on education in the article on "Is there any hope for education in England?" (29th July 1848).

The three sets of papers Tracts on Christian Socialism, The Christian Socialist and Politics for the People are essential reading for the study of Christian Socialists. But much of Maurice's philosophy is also to be found in The Life of F. D. Maurice: told chiefly in his own letters (1884) edited by Maurice's son Sir J. F. Maurice. This work is a very valuable source of Maurice's ideas, careful study indicates many side-lights on Christian Socialism not easily obtained elsewhere. It is a major source of my own study The Political Thought of F. D. Maurice D. W. Lindsay (unpublished thesis University of Durham 1969). This work includes an extensive list of Maurice's publications.

(1)

- (1) Max Beer in "A History of British Socialism" one volume edition 1940 (reprinted 1948) wrote of "Politics for the People" that it "was exceedingly well written, had about 2,000 subscribers, its career was cut short after four months". Page 185 and on page 187, "The Christian Socialist" changed into "The Journal of Association" in 1852.

Although Maurice claimed to be a Christian Socialist he was not an out and out democrat. His best work on this is found in The Workman and the Franchise (1866). Written at the time of the agitation for the extension of the franchise it outlines his concept of social orders by virtue of which political rights could be extended to various sections of the population. This is a fundamental part of his political position, attempting to reconcile the conservative and radical elements of Maurice's philosophy. It contains also a useful summary of his concept of political development by gradual maturation of a social conscience. A more detailed work on this theme is The Conscience (1868), Social Morality (1869) is another important book on this idea. In this Maurice starts from a view of private morality dependent upon family relations and extends this in ever increasing social dimensions to incorporate a universal social conscience as a basis for all social and hence political actions.

Throughout his life Maurice was much influenced by his study of philosophy. He eventually wrote a large study of the subject published under several titles but finally as Moral and Metaphysical Morality (1871). In this work he studies a very wide range of philosophical views, attempting to illustrate the importance of both secular and religious philosophical positions. At worst it demonstrated the enormous width of the man's scholarship. At best it indicates the receptiveness of an immensely acute mind. It certainly gives many clues as to the origins of F. D. Maurice's somewhat unorthodox Socialism.

An interesting study of both F. D. Maurice and J. H. Ludlow and their part in the Christian Socialist movement is to be found in P. R. Allen's article F. D. Maurice and J. M. Ludlow: A Re-assessment of the leaders of Christian Socialism ("Victorian Studies" June 1968). This is one of the rare studies of Maurice as a political, rather than a theological figure. Professor Allen suggests that Maurice did not make any effort to encourage changes in social structure but worked solely, or at the least mainly, through moral and educational reform. My own study, noted above, questions whether such a dicotomy between the moral and social is valid. Certainly Maurice's insistence upon co-operation, rather than competition, as the only valid social motivation calls for structural reform of a kind scarcely encouraged in mid-nineteenth century England.

Two important works on the history of Christian Socialism are C. E. Raven: Christian Socialism, 1848-54 (1920) and T. Christenson: "Origins and History of Christian Socialism 1848-54" (Aarhus 1962). A further article of interest is P. N. Backstrom: "The Political Side of Christian Socialism" in "Victorian Studies" Vol. vi 1963. A study which is somewhat critical of Maurice's political action, regretting his lack of "barricade manning" and distinguishing a social Gospel from a political creed is S. G. Evans; The Social Hope of the Christian Church (1965).

D. W. Lindsay
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(Mr. Lindsay spoke to our Group meeting on 28th November 1969 on the theme "Frederick Maurice - the maining of Socialism to the Christian Socialists")

THE POOR LAW

The following are summaries of papers read at the Group's half day school on "The Poor Law Amendment Act in the North East" on 16th May 1970 at Durham.

The Introduction of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act on Tyneside

The history of the 19th century Poor Law in Britain presents many difficulties, some of them due to the cloud of polemic generated by both the champions and the opponents of the 1834 system both at that time and subsequently. Yet the subject is one of the most important aspects of 19th century social history, and one in which local studies of what actually happened in a given locality are indispensable pre-requisites to any fuller understanding of the subject. One thing which is already clear is that the answer is not going to be an entirely simple or one-sided one, for local experiences seem to have varied considerably.

As far as Tyneside is concerned, certain features are clear enough. The introduction in the late 1830's of the new unions was not accompanied here by anything on the scale of the strong demonstrations and obstruction which delayed the introduction of the new system in, for example, parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire. On Tyneside the 1834 Act's structure seems to have been brought into being with comparative ease. Some of the reasons for this are obvious enough. There was at the time little in the way of adult unemployment in the area. The poor dependent on the poor law were for the most part the aged and the impotent. It was not until the early 1840's that unemployment among adult males was serious on Tyneside; by that time the new unions were already in existence, and various schemes of outdoor relief were approved to meet the difficulties of these years, which in any event did not reach on Tyneside anything like the gravity of the 1837-42 years of depression in some other industrial areas.

Another factor making for ease of introduction of the 1834 system on Tyneside was the nature of the principal agent involved. By the time the new Tyneside unions were being created the Assistant Commissioner responsible for the region was Sir John Walsham, Bart. He was a man of considerable ability and humanity, but in addition operated from a position of assured social strength in that very unequal society. Himself an aristocrat and landowner, his local position was strengthened by his marriage to a sister of Matthew Bell of Woolsington, a very prominent local figure in the North East. With such prestige and connections Walsham's task of managing local vested interests was made very much easier. On occasion he made mistakes, but on the whole he acted wisely and successfully in these years in which the 1834 system was coming into operation. He faced virulent attacks from the more extreme groups among Tyneside's divided radicals, but their attacks never had enough force behind them to present any serious threat to the new poor law.

In the early years of the new system poor rates on Tyneside were cut by some 10%, the champions of the new system attributing this with some plausibility to administrative economies rather than to any deterioration in the treatment actually accorded to the poor. The increased expenditure in the more difficult years of the early 1840's brought rates back up roughly to the figure they had reached before the 1834 system was introduced. One of Walsham's main objects in the early

years of the new unions was to persuade the boards of guardians to create union workhouses of a satisfactory kind. Some of the structures erected then can still be seen - the Hexham Union Workhouse is an especially good example - and they appear to have been solidly constructed of good materials. Life within them does not seem to have been unduly harsh by the prevailing standards of the 1830's, though obviously very far from Welfare State standards.

There were some notorious scandals in the early years of the 1834 system on Tyneside, and some obvious improvements, but it seems that over all the change in system had no particularly drastic results in this area, either for good or ill. Much of the old arrangements survived under the new, many of the old staff were employed in the new system - though the derelections of some of them were soon found out with the more thorough checks of the new system - and it would seem that on Tyneside the introduction of the new poor law did not in its early years produce major social difficulties which had not existed earlier.

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Poor Law Administration in South Shields (1836-1847)

Prior to the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 poor law administration varied considerably throughout the country. Wide differences were present even within a small area: not only were there practical differences in the administration of relief but also differences in the attitudes of administrators towards relief. Under the new Act, six previously independent administrative areas came together to form the South Shields Union (SSU) in 1836: South Shields, Westoe, Whitburn, Harton, Boldon and the township of Hedworth, Monkton and Jarrow. Twenty-five guardians were elected to organise poor relief and they set about their new responsibilities immediately.

The first eleven years under the Poor Law Commissions (PLC) were relatively peaceful in South Shields. This is not to suggest that there were no problems or crises during the period but rather to emphasise the overriding efficiency with which the guardians performed their duties. One of the main reasons for the smooth functioning of the new system was undoubtedly the continuity maintained among the Board members. In any one of these eleven years there was a permanent corpus of between seven and eleven elected representatives who were intimately aware of the problems involved in organising and administering poor relief. Newcomers could, therefore, be gradually introduced to the workings of the poor law while the corpus ensured a continuity of policy and unanimity among the guardians. A situation such as this could well have led to tyrannical behaviour but fortunately the gentlemen concerned were of the highest and most reputable standing and were scrupulously fair in their dealings with both employers and recipients of relief; in fact it becomes obvious in later years that they were rather too lenient.

To allay any fears of complacency, having established the personnel of South Shields to be such a conscientious group of fair minded individuals, a serious indictment voiced against the new poor law as a whole and its implementation in South Shields in particular was considered. The three main accusations of James Mather, were dealt with in their turn:

1. That the power of the PLC was unconstitutional and that the local Board of Guardians were "... the mere instruments of their authority and puppets of their will."

The Poor Law Amendment Act vested the PLC with considerable authority and powers but it also ensured a delegation of authority, through the Assistant Commissioners, which created a practicable division of responsibility not only at central but also at local government level. The Commission, for example, had no absolute power to compel new unions to build a workhouse, one of the most crucial factors in the new law; they could only order a workhouse to be built with the consent of the majority of the guardians. A general set of rules governing the provision of relief - both indoor and outdoor - were contained in the Act but section 52 states that: "... overseers may delay operation of such regulations under special circumstances and make a report to the Commissioners." Thus, the degree of local discretion which could be exercised in times of great stress or emergency was quite considerable and the guardians were certainly neither agents of infliction nor puppets at the command of the PLC.

2. "That confinement in a prison built workhouse is cruel in the extremest degree."

The PLC intended the workhouse to be managed on the 'less-eligibility' principle but a close study of the South Shields workhouse shows that in practice this was far from the truth. William H. T. Hawley, successor to Walsham, reported in 1847 that a number of the older men and women were allowed to leave the workhouse every Saturday afternoon and did not have to return until 7 p.m., and it appears from an earlier record that this was not an exceptional case. The general standard of care in the workhouse was surprisingly high and the guardians showed great sensitivity in their treatment of special cases and circumstances. There was much consternation in 1837 when the workhouse was found to be damp and an extra £14 3s. 4d. was spent on coals to 'dry the house'. Wine was recognised as an essential medicine for sick paupers and the annual beer bill formed a substantial part of in-maintenance expenditure. As with everything else, great care was taken to provide the inmates with an adequate diet and tenders were carefully considered with a view to quality as well as quantity. Life in the South Shields workhouse was neither harsh nor luxurious, but the inmates were certainly not illtreated.

3. "That the spirit of the whole act is not to grant relief to the unfortunate poor, but to obstruct and deprive them of it."

This charge can best be answered in the light of the treatment of the able-bodied unemployed. In the early 1840's, owing to the unsettled state of the trade the number of able bodied unemployed increased. A special Board meeting was held at which they issued this directive to all Relieving Officers: "That each able-bodied single man, out of work, be relieved exclusively in the workhouse. That every able-bodied man

having a wife and two children be allowed relief at the rate of 4s. per week, that is to say, to be provided with work for four days in each week and to be paid for such work at the rate of 1s. per day, and that for every child above that number, one days work more to be given, but in no case shall the extent of relief granted exceed 6s. per week however large the family may be."

This resolution, together with a comprehensive list of the 95 applicants for relief was sent to the PLC to be sanctioned. Hawley endorsed the letter: "These papers require the immediate attention of the Commissioners."

The early years of the SSU serve as an illustration that the new poor law, despite the predictions of its critics such as James Mather, could be administered efficiently with humanity, sensitivity and understanding. The division of responsibility between the central and local government proved to work very well in practice, with the intermediary services of the Assistant Commissioner in times of particular difficulty. Interaction between central and local authorities was quite considerable during these years but there are indications that this is becoming less frequent as the new administrative machinery becomes more established. Although expenditure on poor relief does increase during this period the cost efficiency of the service cannot be doubted - the guardians were always conscious of their dual responsibility, to the rate payers and to the recipients, and even though some discontent was voiced, the general impression of these early years is that both the rate-payers and recipients were well pleased with the new local administration.

Pamela Mawson

The Hendon and Pwllheli Unions, 1835-1871

The Hendon Union was on the whole an efficient union running its affairs mainly as the central authority advised, filling the gap caused by the lack of an elective local authority, with a professional body of servants before the County Council Act of 1889 - Public Health matters, education for pauper children, hospitalization and outdoor medical care, vaccination and provision for pauper lunatics bulked as large in its affairs as indoor and outdoor relief.

Pwllheli, in North Wales, on the other hand, was an inefficient union, with no interest in public health matters, no provision worth speaking of for education and the care of pauper lunatics, little regard for proper hospitalization and with grave deficiencies in the field of out-door medical relief; by the 1860's the workhouse was in a state of decay.

To study two unions with such contrasting stories is to ponder the effect of environment on social administration. The Hendon Union was compact, relatively wealthy, near to the central administration, with a fair supply of people with enough leisure to take up union politics. Pwllheli had none of these advantages - communications were eighteenth century,

and the farmers who made up the bulk of the Guardians were tenant farmers of the two big landowning (and fending) local County families. Andrew Doyle, the Poor Law Board Inspector described the farmers in 1850 as "in most respects in nearly the same situation as the English farm labourer". In their stubbornness in refusing to repair the workhouse in the 1850's and 1860's, one can entertain thoughts that they were inarticulately arguing that their regional economy could not afford the large expenditure on workhouse services and buildings which Hendon could. Moreover, one could not really expect in a situation in which, to quote another inspector, "even those who paid poor rates (in Wales) seldom ate meat and some of the Guardians are little removed from pauperism," diet and accommodation to be on a very high scale.

However, what the Hendon paupers gained on the roundabouts of efficient management, they lost on the swings of personal freedom. The Pwllheli paupers might be badly housed, but at many times they could come and go as they pleased. One Hendon inmate got three months in jail for nipping over the wall to "The Bald Faced Stag".

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THE GENERAL STRIKE IN THE NORTH EAST

The General Strike on Teesside

How did the local trade unionists organise the strike? There had been no preparations for the strike and once it had begun it was by no means generally accepted that strike activities should be centrally directed and co-ordinated. The Secretary of the Middlesbrough Trades Council later acknowledged that many trade unionists were anxious lest the 'domestic affairs of individual unions should be interfered with'. The traditional independence of trade unions made them reluctant to delegate authority to a central strike committee. In Stockton, however, the central strike committee claimed that 'this is the headquarters of the strike and all unions concerned recognise our instructions'. Unfortunately no evidence has been discovered to check that statement.

How did a central strike committee function during the nine days? The annual report of the Middlesbrough Trades Council provides a useful description. 'The Central Strike Committee met each day at 3 p.m. whilst from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. various delegates arranged to be at the headquarters to deal with any emergency. The attendance of the delegates was not as good as it might have been ... the delegates were also members of their Trade Strike Committees, whose meetings they also had to attend.' Loyalty to one's own union came first. The central strike committee set up sub-committees to deal with problems such as permits, picketing, publicity, etc. but failed to produce a strike bulletin due largely to lack of resources. The committee's total strike expenses were less than £9! If the strike had lasted longer then the central strike committee would have had more opportunity to develop and historians might have had a more detailed record of its proceedings.

The Government had prepared an emergency services organisation which aimed to minimise the effect of the strike. Teesside was in the Emergency organisation's Northern Division. Volunteer Service Committees in West Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Stockton saw to it that essential services were maintained. About 3,000 people volunteered to help the Government on Teesside but we know neither who they were nor what they did, although public transport, docks and police seem to have been the main sectors employing them.

Historians have emphasised the lack of violence during the General Strike but violence was present and had the strike lasted longer than nine days, might have led to a more serious situation. The two major violent outbreaks on Teesside arose out of the running of trains by volunteers at West Hartlepool and Middlesbrough. This is not surprising because transport workers bore the main weight of the general strike and it was the movement of transport which was likely to produce most resentment among strikers because militants knew that if transport could be moved, then the impact of the strike was automatically diminished. Worse still, it might have an adverse effect on the morale of workers who were ostensibly not striking for themselves, but in order to obtain justice for their comrades in another industry.

The more serious disturbance was at Middlesbrough where the railway line was blocked for a time and some damage was done to railway property. This was on the night of May 6th. On the following two nights, crowds clashed with the police, shop windows were broken and some looting took place.

Several arrests were made on these last two occasions and all save one of those charged had a long list of previous convictions. This does suggest that local criminals took advantage of a tense situation to resume their private battle with the law. Nevertheless, whether trade unionists were involved or not, the clashes illustrate the dangers brought about by the strike and could easily have taken on a political colour.

The one arrest in the area which was unquestionably politically inspired was that of the locally well-known Communist Jack Bell. Many members of the Communist Party suffered a similar fate during the General Strike. Their activities were already well known to the authorities, their language was inflammatory and they were easy targets under the Emergency Regulations which gave to the police very wide powers. Bell was the organising secretary of the Middlesbrough Communist Party. He was charged with committing an act likely to cause disaffection among the civil population and HM forces, and with having on his premises certain documents likely to cause sedition and disaffection among the civilian population or the armed forces. He received a two months prison sentence. Bell's arrest and trial illustrate how easy it was to pick off known militants. The authorities were taking no chances even though Communist strength was low and their connection with the mass of the labour movement tenuous. It was safe to arrest communists in a way it would not have been to arrest more orthodox strike leaders.

On May 11th, the so-called 'second line' of strikers, mainly engineers, were called out. Twenty-four hours later, the strike was called off. It would be interesting to learn how well these men responded to the strike call but neither companies nor unions seem to have any idea. Save for a few press reports, Teesside is as blank on this subject as elsewhere.

If many engineers did join the strike they must have been confused and upset by the collapse of May 12th. Returning to work, especially as the coal stoppage continued, was going to be difficult for all strikers but especially so for those who had only just stopped work. The way the strike was terminated made some victimisation inevitable. May railwaymen on Teesside were put on short time and the Middlesbrough dockers did not return to work until May 25th on terms a good deal less favourable than before the stoppage. There must have been many individual cases of hardship which will never be uncovered.

It is hard to assess the effect of the General Strike on Teesside. The fact that no coal was being mined in the United Kingdom from April 30th 1926 to more or less the end of the year seriously hampered the traditional Teesside industries already in a depressed condition. About 30,000 iron and steel workers were unemployed on Teesside by the end of May 1926. On the eve of the shutdown of the coal industry 147 blast-furnaces had been in operation in the area: only eight were still working at the end of July. By October 25th 1926, Thornaby had 48% of insured workers registered as unemployed, Middlesbrough 47% and Hartlepool 45.4%.

The effect on the political thinking which the strike had on Teesside workers is even more difficult to assess. The Communist Party does not appear to have made the ephemeral gains it did on Tyneside. The first local elections after the strike did not show any noticeable swing to the Labour Party as occurred at Hull. Nor did more people bother to vote.

It was well into the thirties before Labour began to dominate the Parliamentary seats in the district. Of course these are not precise indicators of increasing political awareness but they are suggestive. The strike may have had a considerable impact on individuals.

About 25,000 workers joined the General Strike on Teesside. The relatively small number of trade union activists got down to the job of organisation, the remainder waited to see what would happen. If the strike had lasted longer than nine days, the Government, as well as the TUC, would have been faced with a serious dilemma. More violent clashes were probably inevitable had the Government insisted that supplies get through and had the strikers been determined that they should not.

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The North Eastern Daily Gazette and the General Strike

It is interesting to summarise my recent paper on the Press and the General Strike on Teesside at a time when the work of a group from the Centre for Mass Communications Research at Leicester has just been published as a Penguin Special.* This concerned an event of only two years ago, and the way in which the media predetermined the nature of that event; a scrutiny of the Gazette over the brief period before, during and after the General Strike supplies material for a case study in systematic misrepresentation.

Initially there was the question of whether or not the Strike would take place. Negotiations took place and the principal parties were evaluated. We can see from our generally accepted historical accounts, quotes from Cabinet ministers showing that however inept were the miners leaders, the owners were worse, and the Government worse still.** But compare the Gazette: in face of the lock-out notices due to come into effect two days hence the men are 'unalterably opposed to a reduction in the existing wage rates ... or an extension of hours. But they have not given unmistakable evidence of their readiness ... to consent to considerable sacrifice for the common good'.***

The owners are extorted to 'see that the men enjoy the wages necessary for the maintenance of their working efficiency and for the modest contentment of themselves and their families',**** and they are commended

* Halloran, Elliott and Murdock - Demonstrations and Communication: A Case Study (Penguin Special 1970)

** See Comment by Lord Birkenhead on the Mine Owners, and further comment by L. S. Amery on the Government

*** 28th April, editorial comment

**** 28th April, editorial comment

for their flexibility in that they seemed more willing than the miners to accept Baldwin as a negotiator, who saw the choice between longer hours or shorter pay.* Any implication that the recent economic policies of the Government had worsened the coal export situation are not to be found, rather the reverse. Comment of Churchill's second budget ran 'What he needs is a level head and a stiff upper lip ... When a private citizen cannot afford a motor car or a country mansion or a steam yacht he goes without ... in so far as Mr. Churchill's management of the Treasury is really humdrum, that is a cause for sincere thankfulness'.**

Once the Strike had begun the newspaper's response became more shrill. Responsibilities were fixed in the most extreme forms, and the labelling was constantly reinforced as the nine days of disruption progressed. The moderation of the owners is taken for granted and the Government emerges in the guise of St. George; the dragon is personified by the leaders of the TUC but hope remains for all those who resist the policies of their trade unions; the task for the ordinary citizen is unmistakably clear.

Under a heading 'Coal War Ushers in the Merry Month' the final peace bid of the Prime Minister is seen to be frustrated by the obstinacy of the miners: an obstinacy stiffened by the support of the TUC.*** On the first day of the Strike the position was summarised, 'Great Britain is face to face with an immeasurable calamity. Let there be no mistake about that. The General Council of the TUC has presented an ultimatum to the nation: 'the miners must have what they want. If you don't give it to them we will take you by the throat and choke you into submission, even if we have to kill you in the process'. The role of the Government is then clear: to 'preserve civilised law and order, and the nation must lend its whole-hearted active support'.****

The minority position of the strikers is stressed in a number of ways without any real analysis of what could constitute a majority and a minority in such circumstances. The Durham mining community is reported: 'I don't want any strike' remarked a grey-haired miner to a Gazette reporter. 'We had enough in 1921. Most of us had something in the purse to start off with then, but we've got nothing now.' After commenting that this statement probably represents a pretty general view, a (presumably) minority view is given, 'We simply cannot stand any reduction,' said one young fellow, 'If we have to starve we may as well starve here as down the pit'.*** A numerical assessment of the minority position appears two days later when out of an adult population of 25 millions, the TUC represents only 5 millions; and even if dependent females are accounted for, the main body of citizens face the malcontented third.

These themes reoccur in the succeeding nine days. Under an editorial entitled 'The Call of Duty' it was stressed that the crises was one of

* 27th April, news item 'negotiating for Coal Peace with Tied Hands'

** 27th April, editorial comment

*** 1st May, news item

**** 3rd May, editorial

'democratic constitutional government versus the dictatorship of an irresponsible minority',* and four days later under the heading 'How It Began', it was stressed that the Government stopped talks with the TUC over the Daily Mail having been inconvenienced, but really the advanced preparations for the strike on the part of the unions forced the hand of the Government.

Encouragement to break the Strike came in a number of ways. On the 6th May an editorial item under 'Blacklegging' pointed out that under these circumstances, such behaviour is patriotic because industry is thus held together for the aftermath; and on the following day under 'Obedience' it was pointed out that this is a virtue, sometimes: not when it is to come out on strike. For those remaining on strike two aspects opened up: the real (sorry) nature of their characters, and the hopelessness of their struggles.

After reference to a philosophic calm in Middlesbrough on 6th May, the Gazette described the attempt to prevent the crossing gates at Sussex Street being closed on the following day as 'Riot at Middlesbrough'. Alongside an account of the incident were hints of Red Intrigue at many levels. The editorial comments on the following two days both returned to the incident at Sussex Street and to shop window breaking in Linthorpe Road. The first referred to irresponsible youths in Middlesbrough, and to 'a gang of several hundred men (young and irresponsible)' in Stockton; the second put the blame for the Middlesbrough 'riots' on 'hooligans' and exonerated the TUC. On the same day, however, under the heading 'The Next Step' a demand to call off the Strike was made, and the nature of the dispute described as a revolutionary attempt to set up a sectional dictatorship.

Regarding the hopelessness of the struggle from the TUC point of view, two themes in particular are pursued. One is the advanced nature of the preparations made to beat the Strike alongside the rush of volunteers from the common people. Two days before the actual start of the Strike the Chief Constable of Middlesbrough (Henry Riches OBE) is reported as having acted on Home Office instructions, which although confidential from the press, elicited a comment from Mr. Riches 'this time we are ready'. The Town Clerk (Preston Kitchen) similarly confided that a special committee of the Corporation had already met on several occasions. Appeals for all sorts of volunteers were made, and on the second day of the Strike, it was reported that 'as early as seven this morning men were waiting outside the Municipal Buildings, Middlesbrough, to enrol for voluntary service'.

The second theme concerned signs of early failure on the part of the Strike. The local news of 6th May reported that the General Strike was weakening and that essential supplies were being restored. Large numbers of private buses were reported from Stockton in spite of some peaceful picketing, whilst a number of trains were arriving at both Stockton and Thornaby. In Middlesbrough, the Chief Constable was reported as being pleased 'at the sane and balanced behaviour of all classes'. Again on 11th May a news item declared that the Strike was weakening, and stressed the declaration of its being 'illegal' (by

* 4th May, editorial

Sir John Simon in the House of Commons). The next day of course saw the end of the Strike. Reports contained no hint of the excessive moderation of the TUC leadership but stated quite starkly: 'General Strike Called Off - TUC Hauls Down the Flag'. There was little notice taken of the Samuel proposals but there were plenty of dark hints regarding the future of prominent strikers.

Throughout these two weeks or so a clear pattern of news handling emerges. Events are not reported as such but are interpreted in order to fit a given formula; if there is no matching then the events are ignored. The reader is not informed but presented with a point of view the subjectivity of which should interest the historian when a less partial record of events is placed alongside these issues of the Gazette.

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Mr. J. Feeney, a retired locomotive driver who was a member of the first strike committee set up in Middlesbrough in 1926, spoke to the Group's Teesside meeting. His speech was recorded and the following are brief extracts from his stirring address.

Before the strike

"... I would like, if I can, to create the atmosphere which prevailed among the working class in those years. The war had resulted in 800,000 of my generation and the preceding generation being slaughtered in France ... at the end of the war strikes broke out in the armed forces ... Due to the conditions following the war one could see and feel the development of a political consciousness (among the working class) that so far as Teesside was concerned resulted in the election of "Red Ellen"* in 1924 ... at this time in Middlesbrough in fine weather you could not possibly go out any night unless there was a political meeting somewhere, a favourite place for meetings (was) down at the Station. On Sunday it was outside the Park gates ... We used to take the Town Hall Sunday night after Sunday night, if we got somebody like Jim Thomas or Arthur Henderson we could not only fill the main hall but the crypt too and then we had them waiting outside. It was remarkable how much money they would put in the hat when we went round ... (Mr. Feeney commented on the events in coalmining in 1921 and 1925 and continued) in 1924 my own union had to come on strike in defence of our existing wages and conditions ... as May 1926 approached I may say we were very conscious that a strike was imminent ... when I say 'we' I mean people like myself an ordinary rank and file member of a trade union ... This atmosphere ... had been created by the methods by which our society was being operated (and) when it became quite clear that the Baldwin government was behind the coalowners then we began to prepare for a strike ...

The Strike

"Now I want that to be clearly understood because this was a fact that the working class of this country did prepare for a strike and did prepare in this town. John Bromley† came to Teesside to present the TUC's case ...

* Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) was Labour MP for Middlesbrough East from 1924-1931 and for Jarrow from 1935 till her death.

† John Bromley was general secretary of the ASLEF and prominent as a national level leader of the TUC.

Speakers pointed to the consequences of the proposals for the miners (but also) if this was to go on unrestricted then inevitably we would go back to the conditions of the pre-war 1914 days and that dream of Lloyd George that this would be a country fit for heroes to live in would collapse and disappear completely. There was a feeling in the workers that we are not going to go back when the strike started ... (There was) never no question of it being unconstitutional ... the strike itself was of a purely defensive character, nothing political at all about it ...

"The strike as far as Middlesbrough was concerned was conducted by a strike committee that consisted of the five NUR branches ... the dockers ... the tramwaymen's union ... and the riverside workers. We had a strike committee that went into operation at precisely midnight on 3rd May. It had its first meeting at what was then the Labour Party headquarters in Middlesbrough ... because the rooms were inadequate the strike headquarters was moved to the Railway Club in Southfield Road. The Committee chairman was a member of the NUR called Frank Lewis, commonly known as 'Cockney' Lewis ... The committee had the whole of its machinery in operation ... There was a qualified clerk from the railways and telephones. We immediately got down to work; we created the whole machine in order that we could keep in contact with every other district in Great Britain as far as we were able to do with the mobility we had, particularly with the lads on the motor cycles. As a member of my branch committee I was automatically a member of the Teesside Central Strike Committee. The strike was being conducted very efficiently in order that the necessary road vehicles could transport the goods that were necessary to the hospitals and places of that sort they came to our Strike Committee to ask us to give permits to their drivers to enable their drivers to move their vehicles on the streets of Middlesbrough ... that was authority and that authority was growing ... It was this committee which decided whether the Middlesbrough dock gates should be manned or not ... No train passed Sussex Street crossing unmolested ... Whether you call them hooligans, or whatever name you give the, is completely immaterial; the fact that the strike was on, the fact that they had to stop anything from being done, in order that we could compell something that was a bit more realistic in terms of justice ... to the miners ... Anything that we could do to implement that decision was fair game ...

"When the looting began to operate on the scale that it did ... the Mayor went to the Captains of the destroyers .. what good did that do? ... But (when) he came to our Strike Committee and appealed to the Committee to organise a meeting for him. We organised a meeting early on Sunday evening ... it was packed to overflow ... 'Cockney' Lewis was chairman ... and saw to it that the appeals of the Mayor got a fair hearing ...

"The Trades Council now began to come into the picture and sent a letter to the Transport Strike Committee inviting representatives (for their committee). The old timers, veterans of many strikes, looked at me and said 'you go ...' (Mr. Feeney explained that there were 'many stonewallers' on the Trades Council, the return of Samuel, the national efforts to end the strike and commented 'the determination was undermined and we began to see that waffling...").

The End of the Strike

"Even so when it came to the ninth day there were none of us prepared to have the strike called off. We believed we had the power to save the miners in the way that we wanted to save them. I remember leaving a meeting of the Trades Council when the news came through together with Alderman Ramsay, old Alf, and he said to me 'we've had it, we've been sold down the bloody river'; and he was the most moderate of men. These sentiments were echoed throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain because the rank and file of the trade union movement were determined to continue the strike providing that the leadership had remained solid. I

walked down that street with old Ramsay rather broken hearted that we should have ended in that way. For myself the next days work that I did was in August of that year. I had to go and get assistance from the Guardians to the tune of about £23 and every penny of that £23 I had to pay back. It took me a long time to do it, I finished up paying 6d. a week. I was working in Leeds during the Big Slump when I paid the last tanner and that was only as a result of getting a letter threatening me with what would happen if I did not pay up. And that is what happened to many more people ... I believe that that strike in 1926 was the highest level that the working class have reached in this country since the Chartist Movement."

Extracts from replies to Questions

Q. If the basic cause of the Miners' distress was as you said the capitalist system, why did you not try to politicalise the strike?

A. "... considering the atmosphere following the Zinoviev letter and other factors ... to have given the strike a political atmosphere or a political directive would have been suicidal ... We have to give due regard to the real situation the total membership of the trades unions (about) four millions* at that time (and) the general workers were not in the main in the trade unions."

Q. I would like to ask you something about the atmosphere in the strike committee itself - was it an exciting one, was it a feeling of being depressed ... or expectant really of getting something ...?

A. "Something that really happened to me (will best illustrate this). Round about 1923 someone watched me play football and thought I was a bit good and they signed me up so I stopped buying "Woodbines" in order that I could get a little more wind. In 1926 as a member of that strike committee because of the attention, excitement and so on on the second day of the strike I went home and I said to my Missus have you got tuppence for a packet of "Woodbines" .. I started smoking and I smoked for a long time after that .. because of the terrific tension that there was in that committee room .. It was open 24 hours a day there was always someone on duty and we took it in turns who would do the night work... the atmosphere was one of real determination, (as Charlie ... said "us railway men are not going back until the tramwaymen go back ..."). The whole atmosphere of the place must be the atmosphere, I think, of a military headquarters when there is an offensive being developed and you are confident you are going to succeed that is the sort of atmosphere I experienced certainly it cost me a lot of tuppences for "Woodbines" after that ..."

Q. In reply to a question on the riots.

A. I am not sure that it would be altogether right to describe them (the rioters) as hooligan elements. The tension was in the town the fact that we had two destroyers in the river and everyone knew they were there and the purpose of their being there ... Efforts were made to move transport ... strike pay was inadequate to live on ... poor relief only available to wives and children ... There was general tension ... something was bound to go ... a plate glass window .. one arm in to be followed by more ... a crowd would hear there is a bus in 'so and so' and in no time you have probably a couple of hundred people and they be away like greyhounds to where it had been reported. It would be upturned and and these were the kinds of thing that were happening. They were happening because there was a genuine belief that what they were doing was helping the cause .. The strike leadership had to say they did not countenance this sort of thing but we had to accept it because it was part of what we were doing ..."

*1926 numbers of trade unionists affiliated to TUC 4,163,944 of total in trade unions 5,219,000

A COMMENT BY JAMES STEPHENSON OF WINLATON

Mr. Stephenson, after the first World War, was a member of the Independent Labour Party. Soon he became Chairman of Victoria Garesfield Miners. He was Chairman for four years. Then he moved to Rowlands Gill where he was elected checkweighman and was Secretary of the Rowlands Gill Miners' Lodge for ten years and was Secretary during the 1926 strike. Later he moved to Blaydon where he was Secretary of the Lodge of the Blaydon Burn Colliery and he was also checkweighman. He was also a member of the Gateshead Board of Guardians for their last five years and has been a Blaydon Councillor for 36 years. He has also taken part in a BBC broadcast on the 1926 General Strike.

Q. Was Rowlands Gill colliery a large one?

A. Rowlands Gill was only one of the smallest of the collieries in Durham county but it had its own importance, I think, in the annals of the Durham Miners' Association. It was always one of the more progressive collieries. They always looked to Rowlands Gill for a lead on a lot of problems as they came up.

Q. Do you mean technical problems or labour problems?

A. Labour problems and problems connected with the industry.

Q. Where did the men live?

A. The men lived in colliery houses in Lily Terrace and Carl Terrace and they also had some colliery houses at what is locally known as "The Bottoms" at Rowlands Gill which has now been cleared for a camping site. They also had some colliery houses at the village of Highfield. The rest, I should think, were scattered in private houses and in a few council houses that there were in the early days.

Q. Do you remember any of the stoppages before 1926?

A. Well, I remember them all, the minimum wage strike and several others. Before the first war I remember I was a putter at the Chopwell Colliery and they had a most unusual stoppage there. It was a restriction of output, where the men had agreed to fill one tub per day and I remember going to work and nothing coming out except one tub for each man. That went on, I think, for over a week and finally the Lodge found a solution to it.

Q. Where did you hold your meetings at Rowlands Gill?

A. When I first went there the Rowlands Gill Lodge had their meetings in the small Co-operative Hall. I do not think it is there now. Afterwards, after 1926, they built a hall of their own and had meetings there. In 1926 they were held in this small Co-operative Hall.

Q. Were the meetings large?

A. From the point of view of the number employed there I would say the meetings were very well attended. There was quite a lot of interest taken in the problems as they arose.

- Q. That would be especially the case in 1926?
- A. Yes. Every time there was a meeting in 1926 one could say that 75 per cent of the men attended. Obviously they had nothing else to do. Meetings during the stoppage were held during the day when there was plenty of time.
- Q. Did you ever go and hear A. J. Cook?
- A. Yes, I attended that historic meeting which Cook addressed at Burnhope while the Lodges marched in with bands and banners and was greatly impressed by Cook. As a matter of fact he and I, over the years, built up quite a personal relationship. I did have quite a number of letters from A. J. Cook and I knew him rather well personally. He was a man of great character. I should say also a man of great courage because you have to remember that the whole of the Press and the organs of publicity were all mobilised against Cook and he was built up as some terrible ogre while actually, of course, he was the kindest and most gentle of men that anyone could meet and to have described Cook as he was described by some of the Conservative people was absolutely ridiculous.
- Q. Can you remember any incidents connected with your relationship with Cook?
- A. I remember being at Highfield and somebody saying to him that an old lady who couldn't get out of the house had been asking after him and he said "Where does she live?" and off he went. We called on her and had a long chat. She was delighted, of course, that he went out of his way to meet her.
- Q. I believe you knew Mr. Maxton as well?
- A. Yes. Aye, I spoke with Maxton in the Palace Theatre in Newcastle and I had quite a few letters from Maxton at one time. I am sorry I did not keep them now. I also spoke with Cook in the Theatre Royal at Stanley.
- Q. Can you remember any incidents in your relationship with Mr. Maxton?
- A. I remember the organiser of the meeting at the Palace Theatre said to him "Look, Jimmie, you must be feeling tired, I have booked you a sleeper so that when we go back to London you will be able to get some rest." Maxton said "and how much does that cost?" I think the cost of a sleeper at that time was about 12s. 0d. He said "put the 12s. 0d. in the funds, I'll sleep propped up in my seat."
- Q. Were there many skirmishes in the area during the strike?
- A. Well, minor skirmishes. One or two who had drifted back to work were taken there in a wagon with wire netting over the top. The wagons were nicknamed "covered wagons" but the Police came down the streets and made everybody go into the houses until they got these men up to the pit. But I don't think there was anything very much in the way of skirmishes with the public.

Q. Was there any picketing of food vans?

A. Yes, well there was the famous case of Will Lawther who afterwards became a Member of Parliament and President of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and Harry Bolton who picketed a van at Winlaton Mill and were sent to prison, I think for about three months. The van that was to take some food to a shop in Chopwell belonged to a particular tradesman. It was picketed by the women in the Chopwell village and I think, after the first day, they found they were wasting their time, because nobody went near the shop, and after two or three weeks the firm closed the shop. From that day the firm has never dared to open a business in the village of Chopwell.

Q. Where did the Police come from?

A. The Police we had in the Rowlands Gill and Highfield area were great big fellows from the docks in Hull and I am bound to say, from my dealings with them, that they behaved themselves a good deal better than the Durham Police, because I remember the Durham Police coming through the village of Highfield when I and a group of men were standing at the corner, and they disgraced themselves by putting their fingers up to their noses. I do not know what that was supposed to signify but you would expect policemen to behave themselves differently.

Q. Were there many arrests at the time, besides Henry Bolton?

A. Yes, there were quite a few arrests. I know one case in Highfield where they arrested a man supposed to have made an attack on somebody's car and it was well known in the village that they had got the wrong man. It was the chap's brother who was guilty. But as this other chap's wife was fairly ill, he said "you keep your mouth quiet and I'll go to prison", which he did. He accepted a prison sentence for his brother.

Q. How long was the sentence?

A. I think about a month.

Q. Were there many blacklegs?

A. At Rowlands Gill? Very few. Very few anywhere, I think, in the Blaydon district.

Q. I believe, after the strike, there was a non-political union?

A. Yes, we had a non-political union which started at Rowlands Gill. There was never more than about half a dozen of them and I think the Manager at our place had very little use for them. In fact, the Agent said to me "Look here, Stephenson, I can't trust them." You couldn't. "People who can't play fair and can't be trusted by their own kind are not likely to be very much use to me", and he washed them off as being of no value either to him or to anybody else, and after a month or two they simply faded away.

Q. I believe you were the editor of the news sheet called the "Northern Light" at that time?

A. Yes, this was quite an adventurous piece of my life because we started and published this thing. It was done on typewriters and afterwards run off by duplicators and we published it every day. I should think, during the time of the general strike, it came out from a different place almost every day, because the Police were after us and they almost sat on my doorstep hoping to catch me with it, and we functioned from empty houses and all kinds. Strange to relate, we always knew when the Police were going to raid, and by the time they got there, the birds had flown and gone elsewhere. A chap by the name of Edward Wilson was one of the most harmless men I ever knew. He was given three months for selling "Northern Light" and described by the Police as one of the most dangerous communists in the district.* If Ned was a dangerous communist, then he was a peculiar communist so far as I am concerned, because I don't think he would have said "boo" to a goose.

Q. Did he live at Rowlands Gill?

A. He lived at Rowlands Gill and was a member of the Rowlands Gill Lodge.

Q. Over what area was the paper circulated?

A. It was circulated right up to Chopwell, High Spen, Highfield and Rowlands Gill; probably a few hundreds each day, which we sold, I think, for a penny - sufficient to get us enough paper and duplicating material to turn it out for the next day.

Q. I believe some of the Courts were strongly against the miners at this time?

A. Well, that's putting it mildly. Ellen Wilkinson wrote a book on the general strike. She mentioned the savage sentence that was meted out to Ned Wilson as being a classic example of the panic which struck the people who were in control of justice or what was supposed to be justice. Andy Lawther, who was a brother of Will, was sent to prison and the Chairman of the Gateshead Bench said to him - looking back now it is almost laughable - before he sentenced him to prison, "I'm sorry I cannot send you to Soviet Russia." What Soviet Russia had to do with the miners' strike I fail to know, but it showed of course that he was like a lot of other people who were looking for communists under the bed.

* Sir Alfred Palmer, Chairman of the Gateshead magistrates, said in passing sentence: "The manner in which Chopwell has been governed for some time past is a scandal, and this bench is determined to see that that state of things is put an end to. If you think that the Council of Action can hold us the inhabitants in a state of tyranny you are very much mistaken. Why you and those associated with you don't go to Russia, I don't know. I am sure the Government, and I personally, would subscribe willingly to get rid of the whole lot of you and let you go and live in that country where everything is so blissful and so happy. We don't want you. Nobody wants you. You are just a source of danger to the community and the sooner you make up your minds to either reform or to get away, the better for all concerned." Newcastle Chronicle May 21st 1926. (Quoted by Dr. A. Mason in his thesis "The Miners' Unions of Northumberland and Durham, 1918-1931, with special reference to the General Strike of 1926" - University of Hull 1967.)

Q. What kind of activities were there in the area? Sporting activities - at that time?

A. There were one or two football matches. One of the things which actually sprung up was ladies' football matches. I remember some of the girls playing football. I remember also at Blaydon hearing about a sports day that the Blaydon miners had organised but, generally speaking, they had quite enough to keep them occupied in their meetings and their gardens and other things during the time of the general strike.

Q. Were the communists active? Did they demonstrate at that time?

A. The communists, as such, had a fairly active communist branch in Chopwell, but they were absorbed into the general scheme of things and communists and non-communists worked side by side and I should think you would have been a very clever man to distinguish a communist from an ordinary individual. I have always said, and I say again, there are two ways of making a communist; one is reading Karl Marx and the other is by being kicked around by the employers. Consett Iron Company made far more communists than ever Karl Marx made.

Q. What kind of assistance did the men get during the stoppage?

A. I think the most important assistance came from the Gateshead Board of Guardians to which I was elected as a member way back in 1924. By Law, of course, you couldn't give assistance to the men, but what we did was to give assistance to the women and children, and even then we were told by the Ministry of Health that we were giving too much, and we defied the Ministry of Health and continued to give it. The whole of the Gateshead Board of Guardians, with the exception of the Moderates, which is another name for Conservatives, who voted against the proposal, were all surcharged and I remember about thirty of us were lined up, in two great rows, at the Gateshead Police petty sessions and were all charged with giving excessive relief. We were all surcharged to the tune, I think, of about £250. It was too funny for words, because I stood there, and my total wealth, I think at about that time, was about 15s. Od. - and they surcharged me £250.

Q. You didn't pay this surcharge?

A. It was eventually paid by the Trade Unions and the Labour Party after we got back to work, but I never paid any of it.

Q. How was the relief paid? To the people?

A. It was given 50 per cent cash and 50 per cent food vouchers. I was, of course, a member of the Board of Guardians and I couldn't receive any relief. They took collections and gave me exactly what they got themselves. I never got any more than what they were given and on that we had to carry on.

Q. I believe people in the area also gave gifts?

A. Well; one incident happened to me. I had a brother-in-law who had a shop - boot repairing - and used to sell boots. I remember going up there and calling in to see him and he looked at my shoes and said "Your shoes are getting a bit thin", and I said "Yes, there are a lot of things getting thin just now". He said "Are those the only shoes you've got?". I said "These are all I have". He went away and brought a pair of shoes back. He said "Try them on; they'll cost you five shillings and you can pay me when you get back to work". After a bit he came with a better pair and said "Try these on. I'll give you the first pair and you can pay me five shillings for that pair, but I'm not letting you go from here with a pair of rubbishy things like the first ones you had". So I came down home and my wife nearly fainted when she saw me arriving with two pairs of new shoes - in the middle of an industrial dispute. She thought I'd gone mad.

Q. Did the Union help at all?

A. The Union had, from time to time. From time to time there were grants made because it was obvious that the miners funds were soon depleted; there was spasmodic payment of relief from the Union funds. There was also, I think, in the Chopwell area, a certain amount of money supposed to have come from Russia. A woman by the name of Mrs. Helen Crawford I remember coming to Chopwell and helping its distribution.

Q. Were there any soup kitchens?

A. The school children were fed by the Durham County Council while the schools were open which, of course, was a tremendous help. It meant that the children had a meal. It wasn't just soup, it was a midday meal which was given to the children in the schools.

Q. And there were soup kitchens as well?

A. I do not remember any soup kitchens in our district other than what was done as school feeding.

Q. Did the doctors give their help free at that time?

A. My mind is a bit vague on what the doctors did but I cannot remember any objections that people weren't being attended by doctors and I can only assume that the doctors carried on and did what was necessary to be done without expecting any pay.

Q. In your area, though, the money wasn't taken off the wage packet was it? There were collectors.

A. As far as I was concerned they collected because I wasn't paid by the Colliery Company. I think it was off the pay packet in this district as well but people like myself had to pay to collectors.

Q. Was there any coal digging organised?

A. Yes, that was quite an achievement. We in the Highfield district, just on the edge of Chopwell wood, had our own private drift going and this was worked on a rota system. It was timbered up and you could get in. Coal was dragged out in old bath tins on the end of ropes and they had a proper organised system and people got so many barrow loads of coal in turn. It was perfectly organised. Wonderful organisation. All done on the edge of Chopwell wood. I believe in another district they even formed a coal drift underneath the floorboards of a colliery house.

Q. The owners, obviously, did not know about this?

A. Oh no.

Q. What were conditions like at home in those days?

A. Well I never could remember being hungry, because we never lived extravagantly in any case, but we were never without a meal of some kind. I kept a fairly good garden, still do, we always had potatoes and cabbage, and if the meat was a little short, well, we managed somehow.

Q. What about savings though?

A. Savings were, naturally, gone. My wife and I hadn't been married very long, we hadn't many savings to start with. The few pounds we had of course quickly went down the drain.

Q. Were there many debts in the area? For example to the Council?

A. Well, yes. We were buying our own house, with a mortgage on it; a house in a terrace, and when it was all over I only had a fairly big list of debts that were owing to Blaydon Council. I remember coming in one afternoon and my wife saying "Here's another bill, what are we going to do about this?" and I said "Well, have you read the "Daily Herald" this morning?" Hannan Swaffer said (it was Derby Day) a horse was going to win the Derby which had an English name and was owned by a foreign gentleman. I said "That is obviously Windsor Lad, owned by the Aga Khan". So she said "Well, here's 2s. 6d., put it on". I had 4s. 6d., so we put that on, and it won 12½ to one. That is the first time ever I bet on horses and I never bet since, because I always believed the law of averages was against it ever happening again.

Q. I believe Will Driver in Chopwell helped the men a lot at that time?

A. Yes. Will Driver loaned the Chopwell miners a lot when they were out (they were out of course before the general strike started). He let them have leather on credit, nails, hammers, lasts and everything so that they could repair their own boots. Will told me (he was a brother-in-law of mine) that he had actually advanced the Chopwell miners several hundred pounds. He was in business as a shoe repairer and he actually let them have this leather and materials, and in twelve months Chopwell miners had paid him back, had paid back every single penny he had advanced to them. They loyally paid back every single penny.

Q. Was there any help from the voluntary societies and the Church at that time?

A. Never heard of any. Churches, I think, were too middle class to be worried about the miners.

Q. Even the Methodist churches?

A. I never heard of them doing anything.

Q. When the men ceased the strike and they all went back to work, was there a feeling of bitterness?

A. Well, if there was, it was well kept down. I didn't find any bitterness. There was disappointment but they were determined that there would be another day. This was only the first round of the battle that would be continued later on. They said "We are not defeated, this is only the first round of the battle, and the people who will win will be those who win the last battle". I think that finally, when the mines were nationalised, they could say they had won the battle.

(This tape recording was made by John Adamson, of Consett Technical College.)

Publications of Interest to Members

About to be published:

Dr. A. Mason "The General Strike in the North East" 40s. (University of Hull)

Next year:

Prof. E. Allen, J. F. Clarke, Dr. N. McCord, D. J. Rowe "The Engineers Strike of 1871" (Frank Graham) 50s.

Already published:

D. Bythell "The Handloom Weavers" 75s. (Oxford University Press)

THE NOTEBOOK OF AN ENGINEERING CRAFTSMAN H. GARDNER

(earnings data related to 1881-1893)

In Bulletin No. 1 I briefly outlined some of the contents of the notebooks of a South Shields engineer who kept a week by week account of his earnings between the wars. It is hoped to reproduce this data in a future Bulletin but a much earlier notebook was located in the Northumberland County Records Office. This notebook (ref. NRO 456) is about 13.5 cm x 8.5 cm contained miscellaneous entries but also a record of earnings which will be of interest to labour historians. Mr. Gardner worked as a turner in local engineering works and noted his earnings in sequence between May 1881 and April 1883, between February 1884 and December 1885 and finally between November 1891 and December 1893. This return is of special interest because timework and piecework is distinguished and two piecework price lists are included. The tables on the following pages give this worker's earnings in payweek sequence for simplicity of presentation, in the notebooks the dates for each pay are given. The hours or days spent on piecework are also reproduced from the notebooks and two years are graphed in diagrams 1 and 2.

When considering the data that follows it is worth noting some of the more general data available to us in regard to wages on Tyneside in the 1880's and 1890's. Up until 1890 the ASE rates for Newcastle upon Tyne were lower than for Manchester, and of course London. The ASE rates for Newcastle were as follows: (from Cd. 1761 pp. 216)

<u>1875-6</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1882-3</u>	<u>1884-6</u>	<u>1887-8</u>	<u>1889</u>	<u>1890</u>	this was equal to
31s	28s	30s	32s	30s	33s 3d	34s	the Manchester rate

The ASE evidence to the Royal Commission on Labour gave the Tyneside rate for 1891 as 35s while on Teesside, Manchester and Liverpool it was 34s. Mr. T. P. MacDermott in his "Centuries of Conflict" quotes the survey by the Newcastle District Committee which gave an average wage of 32s 3d for 914 members in Newcastle and Gateshead on 7th May 1883. The managing director of the Wallsend Slipway Co. in his brief history of the company provided data of average earnings in this company as follows:

	<u>Men employed</u>	<u>Earnings per Man</u>
1879	640	£76 10s
1883	1,245	£89*
1884	812	£71
1885	854	£68 10s
1886	846	£69
1887	1,033	£72 13s
1888	1,172	£74
1889	1,465	£82 10s
1890	1,565	£82
1891-3	1,264 (av)	£75

† There is an unclear entry from 1867 and some notes as late as 1905 indicating a use for this notebook extending over nearly 40 years.

* This is the figure on p. 12, on p. 19 he gives an average of £53 for 2,050 men; this is probably the maximum number at the height of the boom but £89 is the more typical figure for boom earnings, see W. Boyd "The Story of the Wallsend Slipway and Eng. Co." (1911).

These figures are a useful guide to the trade conditions of this period, the numbers employed reflecting the rise and fall in demand for engineering products.

Mr. Gardner was employed in turning wheels very probably in railway workshops and his notebook records two sets of piecework prices, one is clearly dated 28th April 1881 and a second which preceded the earnings for 1891 probably refers to that date.

Piecework Price List 28th April 1881

Size	Old		New	
	Iron	Iron	Steel	Steel
ft in	s.	d.	s.	d.
7			12	1
6 6	5	0	9	11
6	4	10	8	4
5 6	4	7	7	7
5	4	1	7	0
4 6	3	7	5	4
4	2	7	5	4
3 6	2	5	3	10
3	1	8	3	7
3 (trucks)			2	0

Pieace (sic) Work (1891?)

Size	Old	New
ft in	s.	d.
7		9 4
5 6	6 3	7 4
5	5 9	6 4
4	4 0	5 0
3 6	3 3	4 0
3	3 0	3 8

The details of one weeks work are recorded thus:

				£	s.	d.
April	Friday	29th no. 1337	3 prs at 2/6	7	6	
	Saturday	30th truck	2 prs at 2/4	4	8	
May	Monday	2nd	3 prs at 2/4	7	0	
	Tuesday	3rd	3 prs at 2/4	7	0	
	Wednesday	4th no. 1328	4 ft. at 2/7	2	7	
	Thursday	5th 1½ days on time		7	3	
				£1 16 0		

During that week timework earnings were 4s. 10d. a day and the average for the four and a half days on piecework £6 4s. 6d. Mr. Gardners highest earnings for the first group of data was 45s. 3d. (13th July 1882) this followed a week with five days at time-work when his wages were 26s. 8d. The highest earnings recorded is 52. 6d. in July 1884.

J. F. Clarke
Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic

(I hope on a future occasion to provide a full survey of engineering earnings

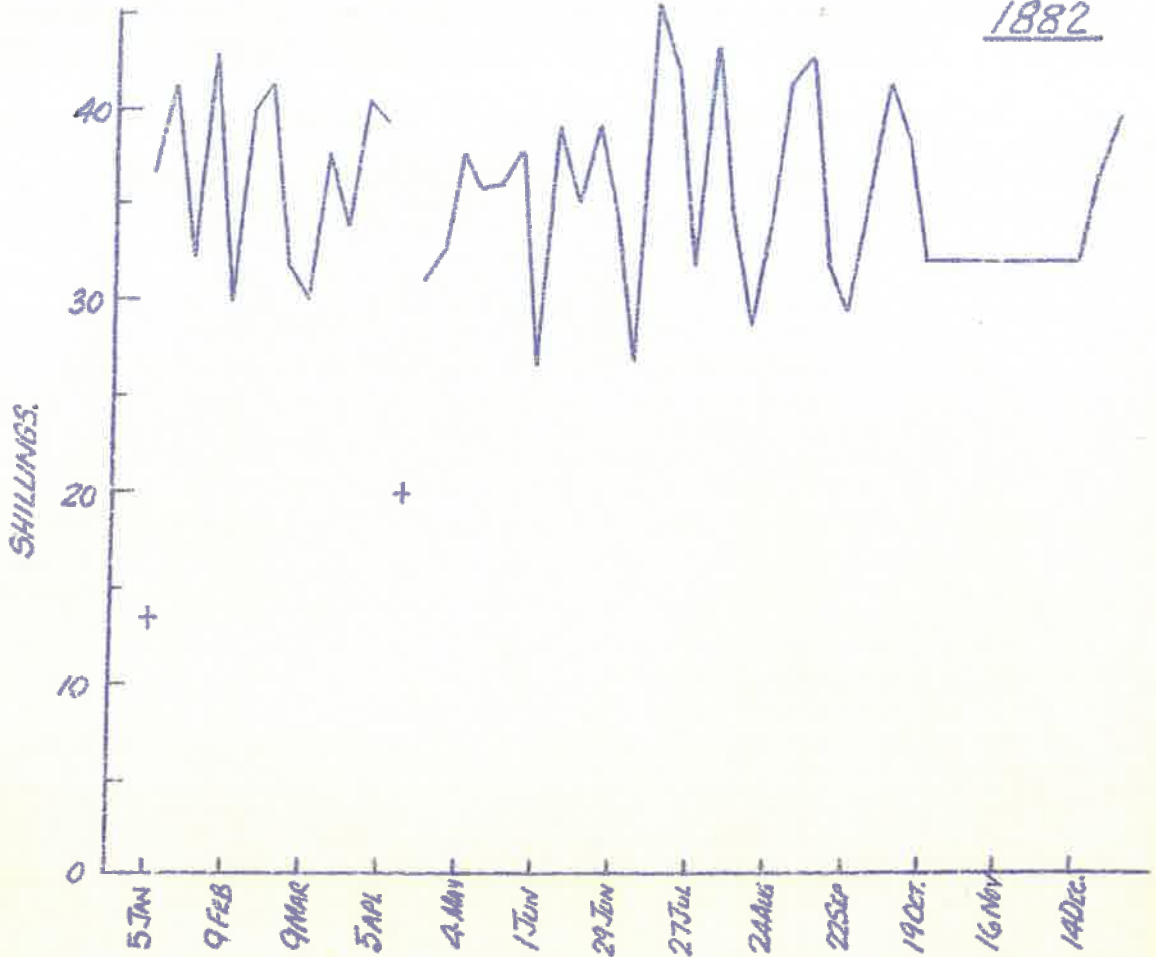
Pay Week	1881		1882		1883	
	Time Work	Earnings s. d.	Time Work	Earnings s. d.	Time Work	Earnings s. d.
1			2	13 7	2	10 8
2			3	36 10	6	32 0
3			1 $\frac{1}{4}$	41 3	6	32 0
4			5	32 2	6	32 0
5			1 $\frac{1}{2}$	43 0	6	32 0
6			6	30 0	6	32 0
7			2	40 0	6	32 0
8				41 4	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	40 0
9			3 $\frac{1}{4}$	31 9	6	32 0
10			6	30 0	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	32 3
11			1 $\frac{1}{2}$	37 9	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	34 6
12			5	33 10	6	32 0
13			3 $\frac{3}{4}$	40 4	3	33 3
14			2 $\frac{3}{4}$	39 5	4	37 4
15			4	20 0	6	32 0
16			6	31 0	6	32 0
17			1 $\frac{1}{4}$	32 6		
18	(DAYS)		2 $\frac{1}{4}$	37 9 $\frac{1}{2}$		
19		36 0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	36 1		
20		36 3	7	36 2		
21		35 0	3	37 9		
22	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	34 3	5	26 8		
23	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	37 10	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	39 2		
24		32 2	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	34 11		
25		38 9	4	39 2		
26	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	34 8	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	33 10		
27	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	34 11	5	26 8		
28	6	30 0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	45 2		
29	6	30 0	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	42 1		
30	5	25 0	6	32 0		
31	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	37 11	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	43 3		
32	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	33 5	5	34 4		
33	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	31 3	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	28 8		
34	6	30 0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	34 5		
35	6	30 0	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	41 8		
36	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	37 10		42 8		
37		40 10	6	32 0		
38	6	30 0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	29 4		
39	6	30 0	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	35 2		
40	4	39 4	3	41 3		
41	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	36 9	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	38 4		
42	6	30 0	6	32 0		
43	5	25 0	6	32 0		
44	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	28 9	6	32 0		
45	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	32 5	6	32 0		
46	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	40 8	6	32 0		
47	4	30 10	6	32 0		
48	6	30 0	6	32 0		
49	4	36 0	6	32 0		
50	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	31 4	6	32 0		
51	6	30 0	4	36 7		
52	7	35 0	4	36 7		

Pay Week	1884		1887	
	Time Work	Earnings s. d.	Time Work	Earnings s. d.
1			1	24 8
2			3	38 5
3			5	33 11
4			5	33 11
5			$5\frac{1}{4}$	40 7
6	5	33 11	4	32 10
7		43 1	6	32 0
8	5	32 11	$4\frac{3}{4}$	35 5
9	$6\frac{1}{4}$	33 4	6	32 0
10	6	32 0	6	32 0
11	6	32 0	6	32 0
12	$3\frac{1}{4}$	38 4	$5\frac{3}{4}$	30 8
13	$3\frac{3}{4}$	42 1	6	32 0
14	$1\frac{1}{2}$	42 0	3	16 0
15	$2\frac{1}{4}$	36 0	6	32 0
16	2	38 7	6	32 0
17	$3\frac{1}{2}$	39 9	6	32 0
18	2	42 5	6	32 0
19	$3\frac{3}{4}$	36 0	6	32 0
20	$3\frac{1}{4}$	35 3	6	32 0
21	3	43 3	4	21 4
22	$3\frac{1}{2}$	30 2	6	32 0
23	$6\frac{1}{4}$	46 4	6	32 0
24	$6\frac{3}{4}$	42 2	6	32 0
25	$1\frac{1}{4}$	29 4	6	32 0
26		43 8	$3\frac{1}{2}$	18 8
27		46 3	4	21 4
28	5	52 6	6	33 4
29	$3\frac{1}{2}$	31 8	6	32 0
30	2	31 8	5	26 8
31		33 0	6	32 0
32		43 4	6	32 0
33	$1\frac{1}{4}$	33 4	6	32 0
34	$1\frac{3}{4}$	42 8	6	32 0
35		39 3	6	32 0
36	$2\frac{3}{4}$	37 0	6	32 0
37	$6\frac{3}{4}$	36 0	6	32 0
38	$6\frac{1}{4}$	36 0	6	32 0
39	$5\frac{1}{2}$	32 8	6	32 0
40	$1\frac{1}{4}$	42 2	6	32 0
41	$3\frac{3}{4}$	38 0	6	32 0
42	$3\frac{1}{4}$	36 0	6	32 0
43	4	35 4	6	32 0
44	$1\frac{1}{2}$	42 11	6	32 0
45	6	32 0	6	32 0
46	$1\frac{1}{2}$	44 2	6	32 0
47		38 11	6	32 0
48	2	37 9	6	32 0
49	$2\frac{1}{4}$	36 11	6	32 0
50	$2\frac{3}{4}$	39 3	6	32 0
51	2	34 9		
52	$1\frac{3}{4}$	18 0		

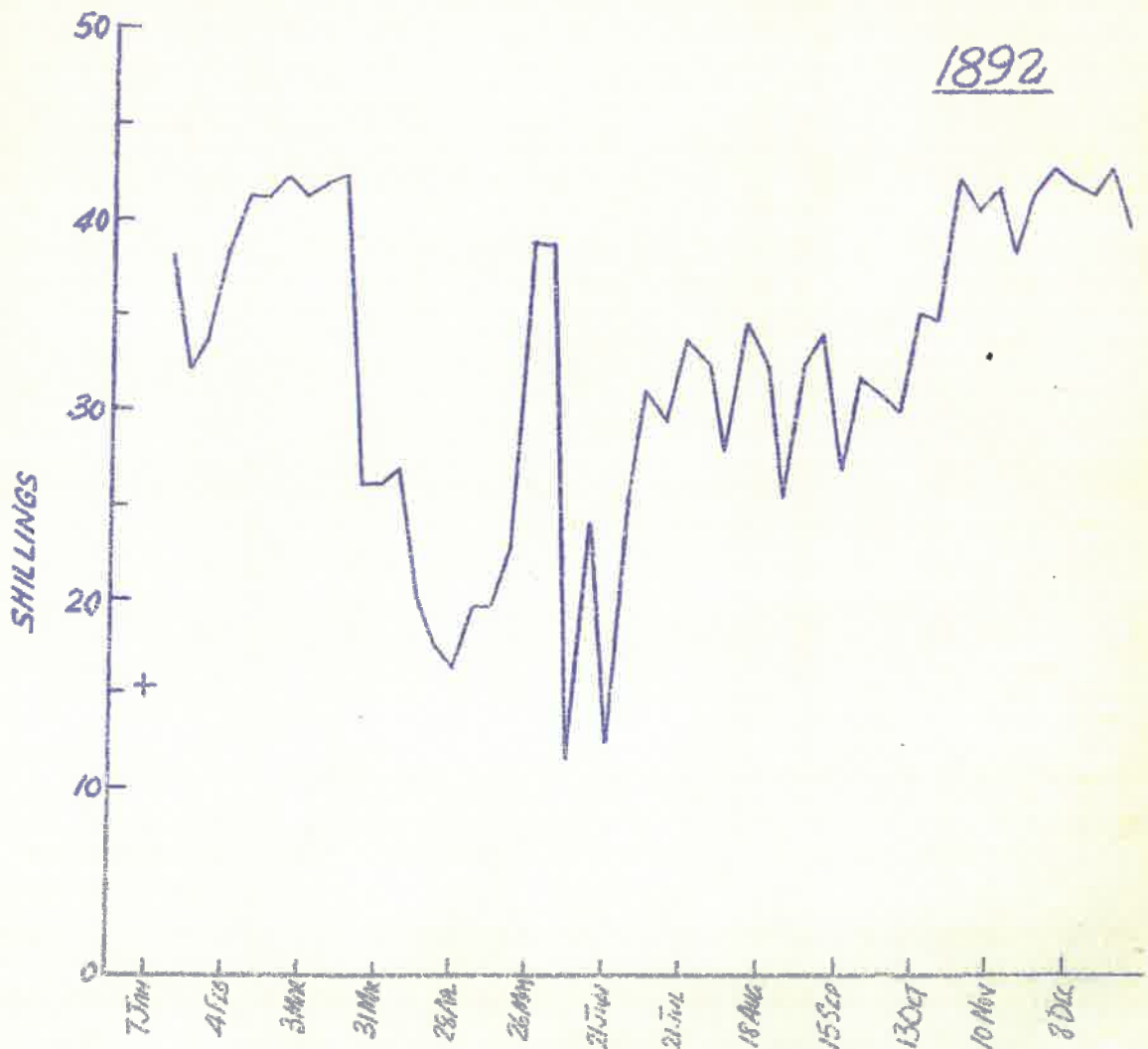
Pay Week	1891		1892		1893	
	Time Work	Earnings s. d.	Time Work	Earnings s. d.	Time Work	Earnings s. d.
1				15 3		12 8
2			15	38 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	42 6 $\frac{1}{2}$
3			53	32 0		40 1
4			18	33 7 $\frac{1}{2}$		40 3
5				38 4 $\frac{1}{2}$		41 2
6				41 3	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	34 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
7				41 3		41 8
8				42 3		43 5
9				41 3		41 0
10				41 9	28 $\frac{1}{2}$	37 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
11				42 3		42 8
12				26 0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	37 11 $\frac{3}{4}$
13				26 0		42 8
14				26 9		
15			6	19 10 $\frac{1}{2}$		41 2
16			18	17 4 $\frac{1}{2}$		42 8
17				16 3		41 2
18				19 6	21	35 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
19				19 6	14	40 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
20				22 9	17	41 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
21			19	38 8 $\frac{3}{4}$	15	9 0 $\frac{2}{4}$
22			17	38 6	19	27 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
23				11 3	28 $\frac{3}{4}$	29 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
24			17	24 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	21	28 10
25			20 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 2 $\frac{3}{4}$		10 6
26			3 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 11 $\frac{1}{4}$		26 10
27			19	30 11 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 5 $\frac{1}{4}$
28				29 3		34 10 $\frac{1}{4}$
29			12 $\frac{3}{4}$	33 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	33 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
30			5 $\frac{1}{2}$	32 6 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	32 10 $\frac{1}{4}$
31			13 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 7 $\frac{3}{4}$	20	29 10 $\frac{3}{4}$
32			15 $\frac{1}{2}$	34 4 $\frac{1}{4}$		41 2
33			10 $\frac{1}{4}$	32 2 $\frac{1}{4}$		28 6
34			4	25 2	14	31 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
35			21 $\frac{1}{4}$	32 4	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	33 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
36			4	33 9		35 7
37			43 $\frac{3}{4}$	26 5 $\frac{1}{2}$.	34 10
38			19	31 5 $\frac{3}{4}$		35 7
39			18 $\frac{3}{4}$	30 10		35 7
40			22 $\frac{1}{4}$	29 9		41 2
41			26	35 0		34 10
42			24 $\frac{1}{2}$	34 5 $\frac{1}{2}$		41 2
43				42 0		43 5
44	15 hours	38 3 $\frac{3}{4}$		40 2		9 8
45		42 3		41 4	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 1 $\frac{3}{4}$
46	21 hours	35 5		38 0	24 $\frac{1}{2}$	35 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
47	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours	37 6 $\frac{3}{4}$		41 2		42 8
48	24 hours	37 3		42 6		39 1
49	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours	36 5 $\frac{3}{4}$		41 9		40 3
50		39 0		41 2		39 9
51		41 1		42 6		40 1
52	13 hours	18 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	3	39 4 $\frac{3}{4}$		27 5

EARNINGS OF H. GARDNER (OF GATESHEAD) ENGINEER

1882



1892



Book Reviews

The Durham Miners' Association 1869-1969: A Commemoration by E. Allen, National Union of Mineworkers (Durham Area), 1969, 68 pp. For private circulation.

Mostly Mining by William A. Moyes. Frank Graham, 1969, 226 pp. 45s.

The Death Pit by Eric Forster. Frank Graham, 1970, 88 pp. 12s. 6d.

The Durham Miners' Association celebrated its centenary last year, and to mark the event the Executive Committee of what is now the Durham Division of the National Union of Mineworkers commissioned two histories. The first to be a short popular history of the Durham Miners for distribution among the Union's membership, the second to be a two-volume history. Professor Edward Allen was commissioned to write the short history and Dr. W. R. Garside the longer work. Professor Allen's account is now available in the form of an attractive commemorative brochure and the first volume of Dr. Garside's history should be published in the near future. As Mr. Gladstone once observed at the beginning of a lengthy speech on the Irish Question it is difficult to be brief when speaking, or writing, on a subject of which one has great knowledge. Professor Allen has made a close study of the Durham Miners and his problem in writing this history must have been that of condensing his extensive knowledge into sixty-eight pages of readable narrative. He has been successful, however, in combining scholarship, readability and brevity: a trinity too infrequently found together. Unfortunately, copies of the brochure are not on sale to the public, but members of the Labour History Society are unlikely to be refused a copy if they write to the General Secretary of the Durham Miners at Red Hill.

Another volume of Durham mining history to be published in 1969 was William Moyes's Mostly Mining, which is a social and economic history of the Easington district in County Durham. This book has proved to be one of Frank Graham's most successful publications to date, large numbers being bought by Durham County Council for use in its schools. There is clearly a great demand for local histories of this kind and it is surprising that so few are published. In his history Mr. Moyes traces the development of the Easington district from ancient times to the present day, and includes chapters on John Wilson and Peter Lee, both of whom were closely associated with the Easington area.

Mention of Easington immediately invokes the memory of the Easington Colliery Disaster of 1951 in which 83 men lost their lives, and the incident is among the events described in William Moyes's book. Another mining disaster is the subject of Eric Forster's The Death Pit, which tells the story of the West Stanley Colliery explosion of 1909. The book is based on a series of six articles by the same author originally published in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle in 1969, and the book suffers from being written in journalese. This is a pity because Mr. Forster has made good use of primary sources and he has an interesting story to tell, not only of the explosion itself, which claimed 168 victims, but also of the efforts of J. B. Atkinson, Inspector of Mines for the Newcastle District, to bring about a fresh inquiry into the causes of the disaster. This book is also published by the enterprising Frank Graham.

The Lead Miners of 'The Dales'

Students of labour history in the north of England will welcome the publication of C. J. Hunt's Durham University thesis under the title The Lead Miners of the Northern Pennines in the 18th and 19th centuries (Manchester University Press, 1970, 63s.). The lead miners of the upper valleys of the Tyne, Wear, and Tees were not numerically an important group during the 'industrial revolution', but they were certainly a distinctive one, and their presence as a semi-rural body of industrial workers added a special flavour to the blend of working-class experience in this region. They were not notably active in the development of 'mainstream' labour institutions - strikes were isolated affairs, permanent unions unknown, and radical political movements unsupported - and the more radically-minded labour historian might be inclined to write them off as a hopeless lot who were stupified by their benevolent but autocratic employers and who, to make matters worse, usually appear in the text-books in the unpopular role of blacklegs during miners' strikes on the north-eastern coalfield. But there is more to labour history than the class-war, and any serious student of the social and economic condition of this isolated but fascinating group of workers will find much to interest him in Mr. Hunt's book. In the early part, the author gives detailed accounts of the organisation of work in the mines and of the complicated 'bargain system', and analyses the effects of this system on the miners' earnings. In later chapters, he provides valuable information on food-supply, demographic changes, poor relief, health, religion, education, and many other aspects of social life. Altogether, this is a good example of how sound local history should be written.

D. Bythell

The Durham County Local History Society is organising

A Weekend School on

LEAD-MINING IN THE NORTH-EAST

on 20 and 21 March 1971

at St. Aidan's College, Durham

Speakers include: C. J. Hunt (University of Manchester)
F. Atkinson (North-East Open Air Museum)
D. S. Reid (University of Durham)

If interested, write for details of enrolment to the Chairman of the Society, at 32 Old Elvet, Durham, or to the Secretary of the Society, at The County Record Office, County Hall, Durham.

ARCHIVE TEACHING UNITS AND LABOUR HISTORY

Over the last two years the Education Department of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne has published a series of Archive Teaching Units under the general editorship of J. C. Tyson. Each of these contains material of some interest for the teaching of labour history. The following is a brief comment on these publications.

No. 1 COALS FROM NEWCASTLE

This collection of 23 items includes the following:

Pitmen's bond of 7th October 1774 (19" x 27")

Keelmen's bond 19th January 1827

Three documents provide data on pay (a) a resolution of owners dated 10th September 1805 states binding money for the Tyne (b) the pay returns for Wylam Colliery 3rd-17th February 1802 (c) prices for Hewing Driving etc. at Felling Colliery 12th March 1812, with some comparative prices from Fawdon Colliery.

An abstract from the Coal Trade Minute Book provides various details for Tyne collieries for the period 1811-15 including numbers employed, earnings, average family size and accident deaths. One of the abstracts on Felling Colliery lists those killed with their ages on 25th May 1812. There is also an interesting letter from William Potter to John Buddle proposing a fund to aid the Pitmen which it was hoped would be "Productive of the happiest consequences both to employees and employed"...

No. 3 RAILWAYS IN THE MAKING

There are three items of particular interest in this collection:

An annual hiring agreement with the waggonmen at Wylam Colliery dated 15th December 1804 (these men like the pitmen were subject to yearly hiring.

An estimate for leading coals from Coxlodge and Fawdon which gives weekly wage rates and other costs (date 12th November 1812).

A pay bill for Wylam Colliery April 1813 gives some details related to external charges.

No. 4 POPULAR EDUCATION 1700-1870

The theme of this unit is likely to be of general interest to labour historians so only a few items are noted. The accounts of the Blue Coat Charity School, Durham, for 1720 includes the salary for teachers and sums paid for shoes and other items.

Various items indicate the problems of the teacher, and the conditions for the schoolmaster at Wylam are set out for December 1848. A number of printed items such as "Rules for School of Industry for Sixty Poor Girls" (Bamburgh Castle 1804) and "The only Method to make Reading Easy" (Newcastle 1839) also the "Report on Popular Education in Mining Districts of Durham etc." 1859.

The resolutions at Hexham in 1812 establishing a school set out the contemporary social aims "the education of the poor is favourable to industry, sobriety, social and civil order ... in fitting and preparing the children of our poor to thrive and be useful in that humbel station in life to which they are called ..."

No. 5 THE TYNE 1800-1850

This collection includes amongst many items of interest to the local historian the following:

Two items related to the Seamen's strike of 1815 - "The Seamen's Chronicle" and a letter from J. H. Addington (18th October)

Four items concerned with the Keelmen - the strike of 1822 and a trial in 1828.

A statement of the South Shields Shipwrights' Union for 1828.

A notice of South Shields Seamen's Loyal Standard Association 1837.

"Travel in the Turnpike Age" was the title of Unit No. 2 and this contains items of interest to all local historians. Units are available from local bookshops at 16s.

"GENUINELY SEEKING WORK"

This was the expression that in the years between the wars evoked anger among the militants and fear amongst the timid. Recently while seeking other material I chanced upon the following in the records of the Gateshead Poor Law Union Board of Guardian minutes.

At their meeting on 27th July 1926 the Guardians considered the applications for Two Male Attendants for the Mental Hospital Wards of the Poor Law Institutions. They were examining 203 applications. The following is an analysis of these applications.

Occupations

Coalmining:	43 miners and 7 other trades e.g. underground official, deputy overman
Nursing etc:	40 this includes a variety of descriptions; male nurse, nursing orderly, mental male nurse, male attendant
Hospital work:	13 this includes ambulance driver, porters, attendents
Workhouse:	4 temporary attendents
Engineering trades:	20 this includes fitters, turners, blacksmith and striker, electrician, acetylene welder, tracer, iron moulder etc.
Police, prison service, Army:	11 includes 6 described as soldiers
Salesmen, travellers, shop assistant:	8 (one milk purveyor)
Labourers:	11
Building trades:	3 including brush hand and carpenter
No trade or occupation:	7
Miscellaneous:	42 this includes 3 barmen, a pianist and a music teacher, a shipwright, compositor, hairdresser, stoneman, insurance agent, rubber worker, carpet weaver, cotton weaver, leather worker, saddler, butcher, gas stoker, goods porter, caretaker and ticket examiner.

Only 78 of the applicants were already in a job.

The age distribution of the applicants was as follows:

<u>Years of age</u>	<u>No. of Applicants</u>
20-24	31
25-29	52
30-34	46
35-39	39
40-44	20
45-49	9
50-54	3
55-59	1

The Board selected six men for interview but no less than 26 were moved and seconded on the first vote and three votes were required to select the sixth interviewee. The Board made the appointments on 7th September at £170 per annum.