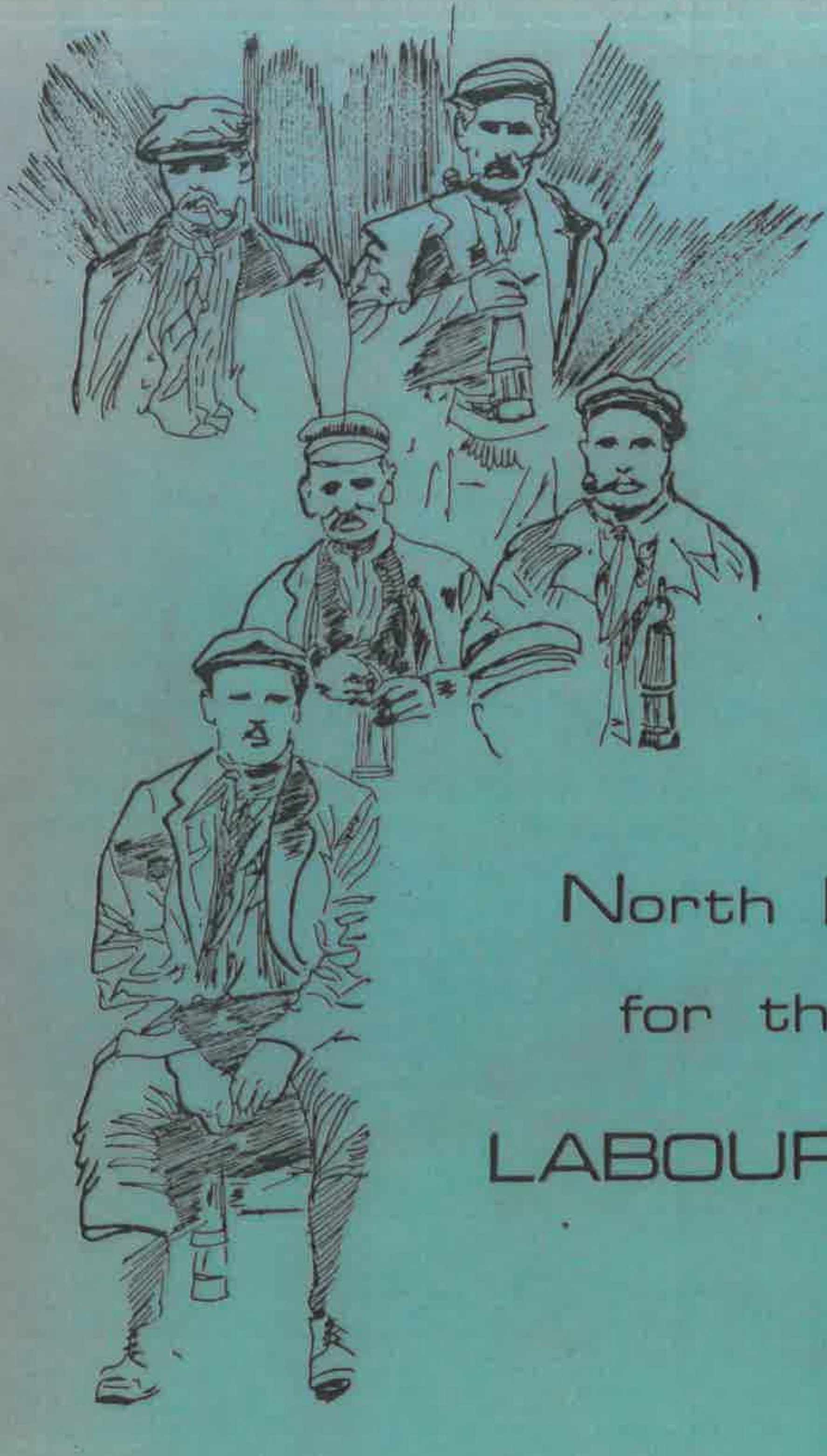

North East Group for the study of LABOUR HISTORY

Bulletin 5

October '71

NORTH EAST GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY

BULLETIN NO. 5

OCTOBER 1971

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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 50p per individual or institution, student members 25p. 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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JOSEPH COWEN - THE NORTHERN TRIBUNE

At the Group meeting on 20th November, 1970, Mr. Keith Harris, Librarian of the Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, gave a stimulating lecture on "Joseph Cowen - the Northern Tribune". Mr. Harris began by describing his lecture as some episodes in the life of a political artist. Cowen was born in 1829 at Blaydon Burn and was strongly influenced by the area where the Crowley works had operated until 1816. The closure of this famous works inspired an upsurge of radicalism but it also stimulated men like Cowen's grandfather to begin the business career which began the fortunes of one of the Winlaton millionaire families. The paternalism of the Crowley system found expression in many of the Cowen attitudes as employers.

The young Joseph after local schooling went up to Edinburgh University, which he left without graduating. He was, however, already politically active and in one of the copy notebooks he made at this time he recorded: "I have thrown my lot in with the democracy of the World". There were family divisions on political matters in particular in regard to the "physical force" faction of the Chartists. Such disputes could affect the income of the young man. Cowan was an active supporter of the revolutionaires of Poland, Italy and France and he gave much time and effort to organising financial support for emigre groups in Britain. Later he was prepared to use business shipments to help more directly in the distribution of political literature. He had personal contacts with Garibaldi and Mazzini and probably played, on occasion, a more conspiratorial role that it will ever be possible to prove because of the destruction of the relevant correspondence.

Cowen was a skilled and attentive business man. He had a keen interest in the technical aspects of his companies' output. He firmly believed that the working class must find its own salvation and he played a most active part in establishing many working class organisations, including the Winlaton Mechanics Institute and a local sanitary society. Cowen was for many years secretary of the Northern Institute of Mechanics Institutes. He took a close interest in the Blaydon Co-operative Society and encouraged co-operators to engage in production as well as retail sales.

The Northern Tribune provided Cowen with his first venture as a publisher and he employed Julian Harney at £1 a week to work on this journal. The periodical came to a premature end, when his father reduced financial support to his son. Five years later in 1860 Joseph Cowen became sole owner of the Newcastle Daily Chronicle. He restored the paper's economic viability and also moved it to the left to make it a radical newspaper with a national reputation. A new Weekly Chronicle began in 1863 and this carried articles by many leading radicals during the second half of the nineteenth century. These two papers played a significant part in mobilising public opinion in support of the Newcastle engineering workers in their struggle for the Nine Hours Day in 1871. Cowen used the Chronicle as a vehicle for expressing the ideas of the Northern Reform Union (1858 - 62) whose programme included manhoodsuffrage and vote by ballot. This movement gave Cowen a national prominence in domestic matters whereas previously his reputation was largely associated with international affairs.

On the death of his father in 1873 Cowen was elected M.P. for Newcastle and he retained the seat until his retirement from public life in 1886. Cowen was never on happy terms with the national Liberal Party leadership and also had disputes with the local party leaders. He revealed his old radical flair in campaigning against coercion in Ireland and in establishing, albeit short lived, a connection with Hyndmann's Democratic Federation.

Before his death in 1900 Joseph Cowen became embittered towards many of those he previously supported; he condemned both northern co-operators and the miners. He became a clear exponent of imperialism and lived to give strong support to the Boer War.

(The above is but a brief summary of some of the points made by Mr. Harris who is working on a full length biography of Joseph Cowen. Mr. Harris has provided the following introduction to a bibliography on Cowen.)

COWEN'S EARLY YEARS: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Priestman deeds (Durham County Record Office)

The Cowens sold most of their industrial and land holdings to the Priestman Company. The deeds, in conjunction with the Ryton area enclosure maps, also in the Durham County Record Office, show the development of the Cowen industrial empire after the closure of the Crowley works at Winlaton in 1816.

Cowen collection (Newcastle upon Tyne City Libraries)

The Cowen papers are very selective. They include, for instance, the complete papers of the Newcastle Foreign Affairs Committee and the Northern Reform Union, but are void of material on many aspects of Cowen's life, particularly between 1862 and 1873.

Linton papers (Museo Feltrinelli, Milan)

These are included to give an indication of the frustrations with which historical research workers can be faced. W. J. Linton (1812 - 1897) while at Brantwood was very dependent on Cowen both in buying the Brantwood estate and in the publication of the English Republic. In addition it was possibly Linton who introduced Cowen to national political activity when the two men acted as joint secretaries of the Subscription for European Freedom. But the Linton papers are in Milan and in a private museum belonging to the Feltrinelli family which is now closed to the public.

Holyoake papers (Co-operative Union, Manchester; Bishopsgate Institute, London; Museo del Risorgimento, Milan)

G. J. Holyoake (1817-1906) was largely financed by Cowen from about 1855 to 1880, as the entries in the Holyoake diaries show. The diaries and books of cuttings are in London; the correspondence in Manchester and Milan. The correspondence throws light on many of the shady corners, and particularly on the acquisition of the Newcastle Chronicle and relations between Headlam and Cowen during the 1874 election.

A microfilm copy of the papers both in Manchester and London is available at the Newcastle Polytechnic Library. Photocopies of the Manchester correspondence relative to Cowen can be found at the Newcastle Central Library.

Howell papers (Bishopsgate Institute, London)

The papers of George Howell (1833-1910) are a magnificant source for labour history in the second part of the nineteenth century. The include letters by and about Cowen on several matters but are principally useful for the Reform League papers. A microfilm copy of the collection is in Newcastle Polytechnic Library.

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

English republic 1851-1855

Published by Linton and financed by Cowen, the English Republic expressed the rather nebulous Mazzinian philosophy popular at the time with both men.

Monthly Record of the Society of the Friends of Italy 1853-1855

Cowen was a very active member of the Society.

National Sunday League Record 1856-1859

Contains fairly regular reports on Cowen's work in this field. Providing cultural and recreational facilities for working men on Sundays was the aim of one of the more significant agitations of the mid-nineteenth century.

Newcastle Chronicle

An essential source in all its forms. Cowen became proprietor of the Daily Chronicle in 1860, developing later the Weekly Chronicle, the Evening Chronicle and the Monthly Chronicle. The Weekly Chronicle, edited by Adams, is of particular importance because of the contributions of friends of Cowen such as Harney and Holyoake.

Newcastle Council Proceedings

An important source on Cowen's local activities, particularly during his years on the Council.

Newcastle Guardian 1846-1872

The Radical newspaper of its period. In 1858 Cowen preferred it to the Chronicle. It gives the best reports of radical meetings up to 1860. A microfilm copy is in Newcastle City Libraries.

Northern Daily Express

A newspaper which often supported Cowen, particularly at the beginning of the Northern Reform Union, but which had a running battle with the Blaydon Mechanics' Institute and moved away from Cowen particularly in its later years.

Northern Reform Record 1858-1860

The organ of the Northern Reform Union.

Northern Tribune 1854-1855

Cowen's first effort at publishing. It failed not from lack of talent, when men like Harney and Adams were on its staff, but from a recession in the Cowen family finances.

Northern Union of Mechanics' Institutions reports

Cowen rescued this organisation after Thornton's death. The reports show some of his involvement with mechanics' institutions.

Reasoner 1846-1866

Holyoake's secularist publication, with which the Northern Tribune was merged. It reports many of Cowen's activities and includes some correspondence from him.

Refugee Circular 1851-1852

Reports Cowen's first contact with the Poles. The periodical of the organisation set up to support the Polish refugees who arrived in Liverpool in 1851.

Republican Record 1855

The periodical of the Republican Club of which Cowen was treasurer.

BOOKS

Adams, W. E. Memoirs of a Social Atom 1903

Particularly important for Adams' pre-Newcastle Chronicle days.

Bean, W. W. The Parliamentary representation of the Six Northern Counties 1890

An invaluable collection of facts.

Bourn, W. History of the Parish of Ryton 1896

Includes useful details of the Cowen family.

British Association. The industrial resources of the Tyne Wear and Tees 1864

Includes a section by Cowen on fire clay goods.

Burnett, J. The nine hours movement 1872

Gives an indication of the part played by Cowen in the 1871 strike.

Burt, T. Lecture on the Life and Work of Joseph Cowen. 1911

Written by a man who knew Cowen intimately, and for whom Cowen worked hard in 1874 when Burt became M.P. for Morpeth.

Carr, E. H. The romantic exiles. 1933

Basically the story of Herzen and his circle. But it contains the story of the ship Ward Jackson fitted out for the Poles at the time of the Polish Revolution and with which Cowen was closely involved (although Carr fails to mention him).

Cole, G. D. H. A century of co-operation. 1947

Has an account of the North-East co-operative enterprises in which Cowen and Rutherford were closely concerned.

Curatolo, G. E. Il dissidio tra Mazzini e Garibaldi. 1928

Affecting Cowen most closely in 1864 when he was considered to be the only man who could effect a reconciliation between Mazzini and Garibaldi.

Devyr, T. A. The odd book of the nineteenth century. 1882

A fascinating work with stories of Newcastle Chartism and references to Cowen.

Duncan, W. Life of Joseph Cowen. 1904

Contains errors.

Flinn, M. W. Men of Iron. 1962

The history of the Crowleys. Essential to explain the Winlaton background.

Fynes, R. The Miners of Northumberland and Durham. 1873

A useful background study by a man who was a friend of Cowen.

Gleason, J. H. The genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain. 1950

Explains the political situation which lead Cowen and others into a permanent hatred of Russia.

Holyoake, G. J. The history of co-operation in England. 1875-1877

Contains references to the Blaydon Co-operative Society. Note that this material is excluded from the 2nd ed. of 1906.

Holyoake, G. J. Sixty years of an agitator's life. 1892

Unreliable, but possibly not quite as much as some of Holyoake's critics have suggested.

Jones, E. R. Heroes of Industry. 1886

Contains a section on the Cowens.

Jones, E. R. Life and speeches of Joseph Cowen. 1885

A short and less than scholarly biography, followed by a collection of speeches few of which are taken from Cowen's early life.

Linton, W. J. Memories. 1895

Underplays Cowen's contacts with Linton.

Maccoby, S. English radicalism 1853-1886. 1938

A vital background study.

Milne, J. M. Newspapers of Northumberland and Durham. 1971

The only useful study of Cowen's newspaper work. Does not contain the complete story of Cowen's purchase of the Newcastle Chronicle, since the Holyoake and similar papers were not consulted.

Newcastle Critic. Life of Joseph Cowen 1874

A short contemporary study.

North-East engineers' strikes of 1871: the Nine Hours' League, E. Allen, J. F. Clarke, N. McCord, D. J. Rowe. 1971

Gives an indication of Cowen's involvement.

Schoyen, A. R. The Chartist challenge. 1958

The first work to make use of the Cowen papers. Good on the relationship between Cowen and Harney.

Vincent, J. The formation of the Liberal Party, 1857-1868. 1966

Background study.

Welford, R. Men of Mark twixt Tyne and Tweed. 1895

Biographies covering all periods, but including many men associated with Cowen.

PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Brock, P. Joseph Cowen and the Polish exiles. 1953. (Slavonic and east European review. Vol. 32. pp. 52-69)

Brock, P. Polish democrats and English radicals, 1832-1862. 1953 (Journal of modern history 1953 pp. 139-156)

Mackay, D. F. Joseph Cowen e il Risorgimento. 1964. (Rassegna storica del Risorgimento. Anno LI. Fasc. 1)

Maughan, J. A history of Blaydon district (Blaydon courier. 1955-1957) A series of articles containing much new material.

Partridge, M. Alexander Herzen and the younger Joseph Cowen. 1962. (Slavonic and east European review. December 1962. pp. 50-63)

Salt, J. Local manifestations of the Urquhartite movement. 1968. (International review of social history. Vol. 13 pp. 350-365)

Shannon, H. A. Bricks: a trade index, 1785-1849. 1934 (Economica Vol. 1 pp. 300-318) An analysis of the trade on which the Cowen fortunes were based.

THE NINE HOURS STRIKES OF 1871 IN NORTH EAST ENGLAND

The prolonged strike of the engineering workers on Tyneside for a reduction in the length of their basic working week from 59 hours to 54 hours was one of labour's most notable victories of the 19th century, and one of the most interesting and illuminating industrial disputes of that period.

The main struggle was foreshadowed by a shorter conflict on Wearside in the spring of 1871, when the engineering workers in that district succeeded in extorting from their employers the five hours cut in the basic week. The struggle on Wearside was short and comparatively easy, because the employers there were weaker and less well organised that their Tyneside opposite numbers were to show themselves. The settlement on Wearside set the scene for a great struggle on Tyneside. There the engineering workers, organised for this special purpose in a Nine Hours League, presented the same hours demand to the local engineering employers. On Tyneside, as on Wearside, it need not be supposed that the selection of the hours demand in preference to a straight wage claim was made without careful consideration and good judgement. Wage gains had often been made and subsequently lost in the past, but an alteration in the basic working week might be more difficult to reverse, while in the thriving conditions then prevailing the necessary overtime should mean that the hours concession would also involve a wage increase in practice. Moreover the claim for a shorter working week could be, and was, accompanied by hefty propaganda activity, emphasising that the worker wanted the extra five hours not out of mercenary motives, but rather to produce extra time which he could use for a variety of edifying activities, likely to help the education and health of himself and his family, and redound to the benefit of the community at large.

In response to the hours demand offered in May by the Nine Hours League, most of the Tyneside engineering masters organised themselves in an association of employers led by Sir William Armstrong. This association was determined to mount a strenuous and implacable opposition to the claim of the men to dictate the length of the working week. Until almost the end of the strike these employers steadfastly refused to recognise the workers' ad hoc organisation and its leaders; their tone was set in their reply to the Nine Hours League's first respectful request for the hours concession, a blank negative conveyed, not directly, but through a local firm of solicitors. The refusal of the associated employers to negotiate directly with the men's acknowledged leaders was to give rise to severe criticism over a wide range of opinion. Its weakness as a tactic was exposed by two contrasting developments. On the one hand two of the local engineering employers, Charles Mark Palmer and George Robert Stephenson, steered clear of the employers' association, and preferred direct negotiations with their own workmen; although they were unwilling to yield the nine hours day, their more direct and open attitude to their men prevented the strike affecting their important works. Moreover, the leadership of the Nine Hours League itself was careful to point very clearly the contrast between their own moderate and pacific attitude and the intransigence and pig-headedness of the associated employers.

The skill of the men's leadership was indeed in many ways impressive; their conduct of the prolonged dispute never faltered or put a foot wrong. They succeeded in playing upon public sympathy to such an extent that by the end of the summer the Tyneside engineering employers appeared as national bogies, heavily criticised in such national journals as The Times and the Pall Mall Gazette. The men's leaders raised some £20,000 during the strike, an astonishing feat for an ad hoc working class organisation. This was very much the work of a small group of able leaders of whom John Burnett, President of the Nine Hours League, was the most active and prominent. This leadership, springing directly from an existing shop floor situation, was not dependent on established trade union organisations. Indeed officials of the A.S.E. received a distinct rebuff when they tried to challenge the local leaders for control of the Wearside strike, and never played any very prominent role in the conduct of the Tyneside strike.

The men's conduct of the strike demonstrated perhaps the best techniques in contemporary industrial action. Their leaders were supplied with an endless supply of emollient phrases, stressing the essentially peaceful and law-abiding nature of their activities. At the same time, when the employers sought to break the strike by the large-scale import of blackleg labour, these imported workmen set foot on the streets of Newcastle at their peril, and it is quite clear that in practice there was a great deal of successful intimidation. No overt political implications appeared in the men's conduct of the strike, and their leaders were careful to confine their arguments to the issue directly involved in the dispute with the employers.

From the beginning a series of attempts to solve the strike by mediation occurred, all of them breaking down on the real or apparent obduracy of the employers. However, as the men remained firm and united, the employers began to weaken; in booming conditions for their trade they saw orders flooding in on competitors, while the skilled labour force on which they depended appeared to be dispersing to various other parts of the country. The income of the strikers seemed more than adequate to maintain the struggle, while the employers were receiving little help from their brethren in other parts of the country. A series of letters to The Times by Armstrong and Burnett paved the way for the masters' surrender, and the strike was concluded in October after a final mediatory intervention by Joseph Cowen, junior, one of the League's most useful supporters, and R. P . Philipson, the Newcastle Town Clerk.

The winning of the nine hours day paved the way for similar demands by engineering workers elsewhere to demand the same concession, and other groups of workers also joined in the fight, with some gains on the hours front. Perhaps more significant that the hours victory, however, was the clear demonstration that employers could not always ride roughshod over the interests of their workers, and the 1871 strike was one of the great labour victories of 19th. century Britain.

N. McCord

EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS IN THE 19th CENTURY

The society organised a half day school on this subject at Durham on 15th May 1971: more than 50 attended. The subject was introduced by Professor H. J. Perkin, of Lancaster University, who spoke on "The Education Act of 1870", and discussed the social thinking which underlay the introduction of state education. Professor Perkin was followed by Mr. J. M. Thew, who read a paper on "The Gateshead School Board, 1870-1914", which illustrated the problems facing those who had to implement the 1870 Act at a local level. The meeting ended with a paper by Mr. R. Pallister (Neville's Cross College) on the state of popular education in County Durham in the early 19th century. Summaries of the papers by Mr. Thew and Mr. Pallister follow.

SCHOOLS FOR WORKING CLASS CHILDREN IN COUNTY DURHAM IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

The elementary schools available to the working class child in the first half of the nineteenth century varied in many ways, but the two fundamental variables were efficiency and financing. These were the factors which determined whether a child would or would not attend school. Efficiency was measured by parents in terms of the ability of the child to read and cast accounts, and it was generally found that the masters or mistresses who taught well had many scholars. The payment of fees was in almost all cases a disincentive to school attendance, although many contemporary writers argued that parents only valued what they had to pay for, and that free education had a pauperising effect. With wages in most cases under £1 per week whilst fees at school averaged around 2d a week in the schools for the poorer classes, and with the possibility of a five-year-old earning a shilling a week scaring birds or picking stones in the field, then investment by parents in their child's education seemed hardly worthwhile, the more so since the education given was of doubtful quality and certainly of little advantage in getting a job which would generate some return to that investment.

The Private Venture Schools, which were financed entirely by fees, were usually efficient when high fees were charged, but certainly beyond the means of the working class. (The Durham Chronicle has many advertisements for such "academies".) Fees were often as much as a shilling a week. Lists of these schools can be found in Town Directories such as Kelly's and Walker's. At the cheapest level, when fees were low enough for working class children, the standard of instruction was invariably too low; "thirty or forty children crowded in the kitchen of a collier's dwelling and the mistress teaches, nurses her baby, cooks...", according to the Newcastle Commission Report of 1861. Occasionally one comes across excellent private venture schools where low fees were charged, (see Jacky Lister's School at Tudhoe, in J. J. Dodd's History of Spennymoor (1897)), but in general, in these schools, one got what one paid for.

Most schools were part free and part fee-paying. Where there were free places, these were associated with charitable endowments, and the schools were then known as Charity Schools, although it was rare to find such a school offering free places to all children. The Charity Commissioners' Reports, 1819-1837, (available in Durham County Library) give details of the many charities available in the parishes in the county. The most famous educational charities were those associated with the Blue Coat Schools. A detailed and continuous account of the Durham Blue Coat School is given in the history of the school by R. Chadwick. (Typescripted 1958: there is a copy in Durham County Library.) Most charitable endowments generated less than £5 per annum, but there were some in the county worth much more, for example those associated with the bishops Crewe and Barrington. County Durham schools received about £180 per year from the Lord Crewe Trust in the 1820s. (The Crewe Trust Order Books are in the Dean and Chapter Offices, Durham.) By his will dated 1826, Bishop Barrington left £3000 for schools for the poor, but he had already, during his lifetime, taken an active part in founding schools and in subscribing to many more. The Barrington School at Bishop Auckland was nationally known as soon as it was instituted by Barrington in 1810 as a training school for teachers. Barrington was also the instigator of the Weardale Schools Committee which was set up in 1820 to foster education in the Wear Valley, and he personally provided £2000 for this purpose. (Minutes of this committee are in the Durham County Record Office.) He was also a leading figure in the Durham Diocesan School Society, which was one of the first local societies to be set up under the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor... (some Diocesan School Society Reports are in the Department of Palaesgraphy in Durham Cathedral).

The Churches played a major part in providing schools for the poor. The Church of England had its National Scoiety (1811) from which associated Durham schools obtained £3935 between 1811 and 1847. (The National Society Reports are at the headquarters of the society in London). Beneath the National Society were the Diocesan Societies run by the local clergy, the Vicar of Aycliffe, the Reverend J. D. Eade, for many years being secretary of the local society. The clergy subscribed generously to both national and local societies, but it is well to remember that Church of England clergy were rather well-to-do. The Reverend Andrew Bell, pioneer of the monitorial system, was at the same time Master of Sherburn House and Rector,of Swanage, with a joint income of £1800 per annum in 1815. The coal-miner would at that time be very fortunate if he earned a pound a week.

The British and Foreign Schools Society, instituted in 1814, founded schools in which there would be non-denominational religious instruction. Subscribers were from all denominations and included Darby and Barclay of the Society of Friends, the Bishop of Durham and Mehemet Ali. In Durham there were few British Schools in comparison with the number of National Schools. The Quakers were instrumental in establishing schools under the British Society in County Durham, the strongest centres of Quakerism being at Darlington, Shotton, Durham City, Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Raby. (There are some references to local schools in the Annual Reports of the British Society, available at the society's headquarters in London.) The local Quakers also had some notable charities such as Forster's and Walton's, references to which can be found in the Accounts of Trust Property in the Friends Meeting House, Darlington. The Backhouses and the Peases provided schools where they had opened collieries, for example at Blackboy and Coundon Grange, and these schools were usually associated with the British Society.

In 1840, the Wesleyan Education Committee was formed on similar lines to the National Society. Much of its energy was devoted to Sunday Schools and there were very few day schools run by the Wesleyans in the county; those which were set up seemed to use the chapel schoolroom rather than establish a school in a separate building. Etherley, Burnopfield and Elvet, for example, used the schoolrooms in the chapel for day schools. (See the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, 1839-1899, and also W. Fordyce, History of Durham (1857)).

The Roman Catholic Schools housed children from the lowest ranks of the poor. The fees were lower than in other schools. In 1859, for example, 65 per cent of R.C. Scholars paid less than 2d per week, while only 37.3 per cent of C.E. and 17.57 per cent of pupils in other Protestant Schools paid less than 2d, according to the Newcastle Commission Report. The R.C. Schools were usually found in the towns, where large numbers of Roman Catholics were gathered. Some of these schools for the very poor had reputations for outstanding educational work, especially those administered by the Sisters of Mercy. Sunderland St. Mary's School 'deserved to be ranked amongst the most valuable a nation can possess' said government inspector Mr. Marshall in 1850.

Industrialists generally took some interest in the education of their workpeople, sometimes by establishing and maintaining schools, but more frequently by making some donation to the building of a local school. In the western part of the county, the lead companies were active in promoting the education of their workpeople. The London Lead Company had schools of their own at Nenthead and Middleton, but they also subscribed to many others. Attendance was compulsory for all children of workers, and the company had its own schools inspector. The Beaumont Company had its own school at Newhouse, a school of high quality, and here, too, education was compulsory. (Minutes of the London Lead Company have references to schools; these are in the Institute of Mining Engineering, Newcaslte. The Newcastle Commission has a detailed account of the lead company schools.)

Less concerned about education were the coal-owners. Some, like the Londonderrys, did provide and maintain schools for their workers' children, other children also being allowed to attend at a higher fee. The Londonderry documents in the Durham County Record Office refer to schools at Penshaw, Painton, Pittington, and Old Durham. Pease and Partners had build schools at Sunniside, Peases West, Billy Row. Waterhouses and St. Helen's before 1860. Etherley School, built by the coal-owners in 1833, still stands. Fordyce's History of Durham lists many instances of coal-owners contributing to local schools; these colliery schools came in for harsh criticism from commissioner Forster of the Newcastle Commission, who spoke of gross negligence.

The Crowley Iron Works had their own schools at Swalwell and Winlaton in the early years of the 19th Century. (See the Law Book of the Crowley Iron Works ed. M. W. Flinn (Surtees Society, Vol. 167, 1957).) Further south, the Derwent Iron Company had erected and supported schools at Blackhill, Consett and Leadgate, while the Weardale Iron Company subscribed to several in the middle of the county.

In South Shields, the Jarrow Chemical Company had erected the Barnes School in 1850 at a cost of £1,100.

After the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, those children who were in the workhouse were usually given education either in the new workhouse schools or in a nearby local school, in which case the Board of Guardians paid the fees. The large Unions, such as Gateshead, South Shields, Stockton, Sunderland and Durham were able to provide their own workhouse schools fairly quickly after 1834, but the smaller Unions, such as Lanchester, Sedgefield, and Easington had insufficient children in the workhouse to form a school, so the children were sent out of the workhouse to the nearby schools. (Several Minute Books are held in the Durham County Record Office and payments to teachers are listed in these. Sir W. Chance, 'Children under the Poor Law' (1897) is a valuable general work. The Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners have some local references.)

Between the common day school and the degradation of the workhouse school, stood the Ragged School. As far as can be ascertained, there were such schools in Hartlepool, Sunderland and Durham City, but it is likely that at some time there were also such schools in Gateshead, South Shields and Stockton. These schools were for the street urchins who had neither money for fees, nor clothes to wear for day school; most had no inclination to attend school. Free meals of bread and soup were used as incentives to attend school, and the education given there attempted to 'rescue as many children as possible from degradation and misery... to try the power of kindness over the young and destitute... to discharge a Christian duty towards a class which particularly requires attention and amelioration'. (Occasional references can be found in local newspapers and in the Minutes of the Committee of Council.)

Only a brief mention can be made of Sunday Schools, which were certainly of major importance in the early years of the century, although they declined steadily as more day schools were provided. Documentation in this field of education is rather scant, and one hopes that some enthusiastic researcher will one day attempt to unearth local material so that we can assess the debt that English education owes to the Sunday School movement in the 19th Century.

Ray Pallister,
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THE GATESHEAD SCHOOL BOARD 1870-1914

In the nineteenth century, Gateshead was an industrial town, the character of whose industry changed from chemical and glass manufacture, flour milling and mining to heavy engineering and railway workshops. Throughout the century the population increased, but the greatest increase was in the era of the School Board when the population expanded from 48,627 in 1871 to 109,888 in 1901. This increase resulted largely from a higher birth rate, not from rural migration; therefore most of the increased populace had to be educated in the town's schools.

The 1870 Act provided for the establishment of school boards to make good any deficiency that might exist in the provision of school places in the school board area. The Corporation of Gateshead, as a result of a survey in August 1870, held an election for a school board on the 28th November 1870; the Gateshead School Board was the fourth in the country to be elected, only those of Manchester, Liverpool and Rochdale being elected earlier. At its first meeting, the School Board instituted its own inquiry into school provision and found that, allowing for voluntary and private agencies, there was a deficiency of 3930 places. Early in 1871, it was decided to build five schools or groups of schools (infant, junior, senior) in parts of the town where they were needed.

The building of these schools proved to be a lengthy process. The first one was not completed until 1874, and the last one not until 1879. Meanwhile, the School Board, conscious of the pressing need for school places, took over the management of several voluntary infant schools which were in financial difficulty, and opened a large number of temporary schools which served two purposes; they fulfilled the immediate need and provided a nucleus of pupils to transfer to permanent schools, when they were completed.

By 1879, the initial building programme was finished, and from 1876 the School Board was the major provider of school places in the school board district. This was in contrast to most other areas; for example in Newcastle voluntary agencies provided the majority of school places until 1897, while nationally voluntary agencies were still providing more school places than school boards in 1901.

The fourth School Board, elected in 1879 was faced with two problems. The first was the need for further schools to meet the demands of the increasing population and the fact that the urban parts of Gateshead were fast developing to the South and West. The second problem was the financing of the School Board's work. The continuing provision of extra school places was faced by each successive Board until 1903, but the financial problem merits closer inspection.

A school board had three sources of income : the government grant, fees, and a precept on the rates to make good any deficiency in the school fund. In addition a school board could raise loans from the Public Works Loan Board for building and equipping schools. Gateshead School Board used all the above methods. Nevertheless, it ran into grave financial difficulties for three reasons.

The first reason was the scale of provision required. In 1871 the School Board had to provide places for 3,930 pupils or about 1/3 of the child population of the borough. During the thirty years of the School Board's existence the population doubled and the main burden of the extra provision fell on the School Board, which by 1881 was providing over 70% of the school places in the town. Nationally six school boards were providing 25% of school places. By 1903 the School Board was providing 16,392 school places while voluntary agencies in Gateshead were providing only 3,596.

The second reason was the relative poverty of Gateshead. In 1870, the rateable value was £110,000 and the borough rate was 4s. 1d. in £. By 1879, the rateable value was £194,000; the rate was still 4s. 1d. in £ despite a very heavy education precept. This was a remarkable achievement which could not be maintained, because in Gateshead the product of a 1d rate was £700 while in neighbouring Newcastle a 1d rate produced £2,800. The difference was mainly caused by the compounding of rates on old property in Gateshead by 50 per cent, which meant that a tenement whose rateable value was £100 would only pay on £50. In Sunderland, rates were only compounded by 20 per cent. Therefore in Gateshead a 1s. rate raised £2. 10s., whereas in Sunderland the same 1s. rate raised £4. The result was that a higher rate per £ had to be levied to raise the same total as its neighbours. Evidence of this can be seen by the fact that in 1882 the Gateshead School Board precept was 1s. while the national average was 5.1d.

The final factor which weighed heavily on the Board's finances was the loan repayments which constituted the greatest single cost to the School Board. Remembering the heavy scale of provision it is not surprising that loan repayments accounted for 5.5d. from every 1s. raised by precept, while the national average was 1.59d per 1s raised. One might think that Gateshead School Board was extravagant in the building or equipping of its schools, but the cost of each school place in Gateshead was £10. 3s.; nationally the average cost was £12. 12s. while in a comparable town like Bradford the cost was £20. 15s. 8d. over double the Gateshead figure.

Several attempts were made by the School Board to alleviate the problem. In 1879, a petition was unsuccessfully addressed to the House of Commons appealing against the proposed increase in interest rates for new loans. In 1882, an attempt was made to change the method of loan repayments to annuities which would enable the School Board to budget a fixed amount of money for loan repayments. This attempt was only partially successful as only recent loans were changed. The Gateshead School Board, in 1884, tried to persuade other school boards to join them in a petition to the Vice-President of the Education Department for special relief where the school rate was excessive. The Vice-President was sympathetic, but the Treasury was not, although in 1885 there was a slight improvement in loan interest rates and the terms of repayment.

The most important attempt to solve the financial problem was made in 1886. Gateshead School Board organised a conference of school board delegates to support a move to obtain financial relief by presenting evidence to the Royal Commission then sitting. Many school boards supported Gateshead's idea, but Gateshead School Board representatives were not invited to give evidence before the Royal Commission. Perhaps as a final note on Gateshead School Board's financial difficulties it is worth recording that Section 97 of the 1870 Act afforded special relief grants to school boards of 'poor, populous districts'. Gateshead was the first board to receive such a grant, and in 1888 it received £644, the larges grant distributed under this section. The Chairman said

> "Measured by the 97th Section of the Act, Gateshead was the poorest Borough in England. That was to say the amount of work they had to do in proportion to the rateable value of the town was greater than any other."

In spite of their difficulties the Gateshead Board established a sound system of elementary education which was always as liberal as the Code allowed. From the earliest days, Music was important in all schools and a children's choir was formed. Football, swimming and school libraries were encouraged, often on the initiative of the teachers, but always supported by the Board. Many evening classes thrived in the town and a Higher Grade School was established. The Board was also progressive in providing such educational services as school dinners, clothing grants and grants to former pupils for higher education, which are nowadays taken for granted. To sum up, in the thirty two years of its existence the Gateshead School Board set up an organisation which formed the basis of the educational system in the borough until well after the second world war.

J. M. Thew.

THE NORTH-EAST
ENGINEERS' STRIKES
OF 1871

E. Allen J. F. Clark
N. McCord D. J. Rowe

Publisher: FRANK GRAHAM Price £2.50

MEMORIES OF A DOMESTIC SERVANT IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Mrs. Rippeth, now living at Ryton, was born in 1901, and grew up in Addison Colliery Village. During the First World War she worked for a few weeks as a domestic servant in the "big house" of a local colliery owner. In this interview with Barbara Rowlands she gives her reminiscences of her time "in service".

B.R. More than anything, I am trying to get a picture of what life was like for you when you were in service. How old were you when you started? How did you come to start? Had you any choice?

E.R. No, I had no choice. I was just fifteen. Finished school - what I had. (Ill health had kept Mrs. Rippeth away from school for even years at a time, in early childhood.) ... I got the chance of this place. So I went there. There was a cook, parlourmaid, housemaid, laundrymaid - and I was the "in-between" maid.

B.R. And what were your duties?

E.R. I got up at 4 o'clock in the morning, because I had two big stoves to clean out, the fires to light - because the Colonel had to have a hot bath at 6 o'clock in the morning. They had three daughters at home: the three sons were at the war. (The First World War) And I had the fires to put on - they got their sticks ready chopped from the colliery, because he was the colliery owner, and they got the best coal. I had to set the table in the kitchen, the breakfast table; I had to wash all the kitchen floor out first. It was twice the size of this (probably therefore approximately 20' x 14'); and there was just red lino on, and you used a tin of soft soap - but it was measured out, how much you had to use.

B.R. Who measured it out?

E.R. The mistress. And you just had to use a certain quantity, and that floor had to be scrubbed every morning - and the fireplace cleaned every morning.

B.R. What sort of fireplace did you have?

E.R. It was black-leaded. It was a very huge fireplace, with two big ovens, and a big grate, and the one in which they called the kitchenette was the same size. This heated the boilers. There were two boilers to heat. When I got all the kitchen scrubbed out, dusted, I had to set the table for the maids' breakfast. ...The housemaid used to sometimes get up about 6 o'clock. And she had a key to the pantry - she used to put the kettle on, made a cup of tea, and we went and locked ourselves into the pantry, and had half a slice of bread and a cup of tea. We had to sweep the crumbs up in case we got found out. And we'd lock up again.

B.R. Between 4 o'clock when you got up, and 6, was anybody else up at all?

E.R. No, I didn't have anybody else up, and I didn't have anything. Then, after I got that all done, I had to go into the hall, and scrub all the hall out, and dust it; and I had all the gentry's boots to clean.

B.R. How many pairs would you have each morning?

E.R. There were sometimes two pairs for each of the girls, or maybe three pairs; and the Colonel sometimes had his riding boots on, and there were the mistress's boots. And if they had any guests, I had theirs to clean. I had them on a long table - and I must put them correctly in a row, not mix the left up with the right, it had to be correctly done. I'm a bonny good cleaner of shoes, I will say that, because you had to clean underneath, here (soles)! When I got that done, I had to go and do all the front steps. They had to be scrubbed and scoured, and the sandstone put around the edges. And the front door had to be washed down every morning, and the front passage. And it had to be polished.

B.R. What did you use for polish?

E.R. They had some liquid polish, and I had to use that. I was only allowed so much to last the week. Everything was rationed out - you couldn't go at it, the way you would go at it in your own home, if you had it.

B.R. Why do you think they did that?

E.R. Because they were mean! That's how they got their money. They'll not part with it. ...By then, it was time for the breakfasts.

B.R. About what time was that?

E.R. It would be about 8 o'clock when the girls used to come down. The cook was busy in the kitchen making the breakfasts, and I had to carry the plates through the hall, into the hatch, for the parlourmaid. And what I was really disgusted at, they had a jamjar on the table, a treacle tin and a jar of honey, - whereas at home we used to put the jam in a little dish.

B.R. Well, why do you think they used to have the tins on the table?

E.R. She (the mistress) didn't believe in the dust getting into anything. They had porridge in the morning, and I can see that Lyons treacle tin to this day, and they used to put their spoon in there, and put their treacle on their porridge, instead of using sugar.

B.R. What sort of food did they eat?

E.R. They had their bacon and eggs, their toast and marmalade. We had a breakfast but not as good as them. ... The higher you were up in the kitchen the bigger you helped yourself, you see? I was at the bottom - I was lucky if I got a bit of bacon. And I didn't like porridge, stodgy stuff - I wouldn't have that.

B.R. So, what time would you get your breakfast, after getting up at 4 in the morning?

E.R. With the maids, nearly 9 o'clock. When we got them settled. And then I had all the washing up to do.

B.R. What did you have for the washing up? Powder, or what?

E.R. You had to use washing soda, to get the grease off the plates - there was no liquid "fairy" or anything like that.

B.R. What about the pans? Did you have to do all those?

E.R. All the pans to do.

B.R. What did you use to clean those with?

E.R. A good wash with soda. If they were very bad, I had to boil the soda in them on the stove. And if you spilt it, you had your stove to clean over again with blacklead - not liquid blacklead, blocks. You put the block on the top of an old tin, you put water on it, you rubbed it on your cloth and rubbed it on.

B.R. How long did it use take you to blacklead the stove?

E.R. Oh, I was a good black-leader, and I was quick. I had to be quick! (quarter of an hour).

B.R. What sort of pans did you use?

E.R. Iron pans. All to scrape, and you had to get all the soot off them. Scrape them all, and brush them all. Rub them up, and brighten them as best you could.

B.R. And did your hands get into a mess?

E.R. I used to put glycerine on my hands at night, and I've many a time cried because it used to smart so much.

B.R. Did you have to buy your own glycerine?

E.R. You had to buy it yourslef. I got keens, with the cold weather.

B.R. Winter and summer, did you get up the same time, and do the same jobs?

E.R. Aye, if I'd stopped there long enough .. After I got washed up, seen that the dinner plates was all right, and the tureens and everything - I did all the vegetables and the potatoes, then I had to go into the laundry.

B.R. When you were doing the vegetables and the potatoes, who chose what to give you?

E.R. The cook told us what I had to do. I hadn't a potato-peeler, I had to be very careful. She used to check them up, and see if they were clean enough.

B.R. How many did you use to prepare vegetables for?

E.R. If they were all at home, there would be eleven of them altogether. ... Then, I went to the laundry. We had one laundrymaid, to do all that washing. They had great big mangles with a turny-handle, and rubber rollers. No electric, it was poss-stick and poss-tub. That's where I learned to do white shirts, to put the nice shine on the front. I couldn't do it now mind, I've forgotten! I had to do the Colonel's dress shirts up. You had to see that there were no buttons off. If there were, the sewing maid had to sew them on.

B.R. What sort of things did you wash in the laundry?

E.R. All their clothes - they never sent anything to an outside laundry.

B.R. What sort of clothes did you have to wash?

E.R. He wore "long-johns". Worcester, woolly stuff. Flannel vests.

B.R. What else did you have to wash?

E.R. We washed the sheets and pillowcases.

B.R. Did you have to boil them all?

E.R. Everything was boiled. They had a great big boiler, at the other end of the laundry. Everything had to be boiled, everything had to be starched. She had net lace curtains, you know, and everything had to be starched; and they had to be pulled like this (rubbed, one part of curtain against another) and all ironed.

B.R. What sort of clothes did the women wear?

E.R. They wore bloomers, not little things up here ... cotton bloomers, and warm ones in the winter. And they had lisle stockings. We had to wash the stockings as well, and the socks. We had a special bowl to do the socks and the stockings in. And they wore waist petticoats and they wore camisoles with the cotton buttons up the front, or- being them - they had the pearl buttons up. ...They all had to be washed, and they all had to be starched. And they all had to be ironed.

B.R. And did you wash every day?

E.R. We washed three days in the week. Washed one day, and we had to get them all dried.

B.R. How did you do that?

E.R. They had a big back garden, they all had to be pegged out. If it was a nasty day, they used to hang them up in the laundry, because the laundry was more or less heated, with the boiler going, the hot water, you see? And they dried them there. Then we had to wet them all, and starch them all, then we had them all to iron. We had a great big trestle table, and we had flat irons, where you put the inside irons in the fire, like a box iron. Then you closed it up.

B.R. Were they heavy?

E.R. Yes, they were heavy, because it was a solid block - put in the fire, and it got red hot.

B.R. Did you ever burn yourself?

E.R. Sometimes you did, but you just rubbed a bit soap on. You had another heating on the fire while you were using that. You had a special little one that you heated on top of the fire. You clean it with bath-bricks, so there was no dirt on, and you did the fancy bits of the petticoats.

B.R. What are bath bricks?

E.R. You used to buy a block - it was like a solid sand but it was very, very fine. You used to rub it on the iron, it used to bring all the dirt up, and polish the iron. Later on, you got it powdered, which was easier.

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B.R. How long did you use to spend in the laundry helping?

E.R. Three mornings a week, after I got all my own chores done; I have seen me standing on my legs nigh on four hours. You could never sit down on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

B.R. What about your lunch? What time would that be?

E.R. When we got through there, we had our lunch. They had their lunch between twelve and one. We got ours at one. When we got cleared, and they were finished, we got ours.

B.R. Did you eat the same food?

E.R. Not exactly the same, but if the cook had been "up to it" - and she was - she used to do a bit extra, and of course it was left ... but she (the mistress) would sometimes come into the kitchen. If the mistress come into the kitchen, it doesn't matter what you were doing you had to stand up like a regimental army. And I am afraid that annoyed me, because I used to say, "God made everybody equal", and I'm afraid that bit used to annoy me very much. She used to dress herself in a very severe black dress, and she had a high neck, and she wore her hair in like the "teabun", you know, up on the top. They think its coming back into fashion now, it was in the fashion then. She used to come in like this, and she had her bunch of keys.

B.R. What were the keys for?

E.R. All the different cupboards and things. She kept the keys.

B.R. How could she remember which key belonged to which cupboard?

E.R. Oh, she knew. And if the cook wanted anything special, she had to ask her for it, and she would get her it, she didn't give the cook the key to get it. ... We had a one for the pantry, on the quiet.

B.R. How did you get that?

E.R. I never asked. I thought least said soonest mended, here. What I don't know I cannot tell!

B.R. Why did the mistress use to come into the kitchen sometimes?

E.R. She come in to give the cook the menu for the day. She might wait until we were in the middle of our breakfast, and we'd all have to stand up, you were just having your breakfast and you had to stand up and put your hands behind your back. And, I'm afraid that bit annoyed me immensely.

B.R. That was to show respect?

E.R. That was to show her authority, and you were the servant, and she was the mistress.

B.R. What did the other servants think?

E.R. They all had to do the same.

B.R. Did they get annoyed about it?

E.R. No, they took it for granted. But I'm afraid I didn't.

B.R. Did you ever use to say anything?

E.R. I never said anything. I knew it didn't pay.

B.R. What would have happened?

E.R. I'd get my cards. There weren't Insurance Cards in those days, but I'd get my notice.

B.R. What would cause you to leave? What sort of thing?

E.R. Well, the laundry maid was very, very nice: I was very fond of her. She had dark hair, she had lovely dark eyes and she had a nice, slender figure. We were in the laundry one morning, and she started to cry. And I said, quite innocent-like, "Have you got a headache?", because I'm afraid I was very green. She said "No Elsie, I haven't got a headache". "Well" I says, "by the look of you, you'd better sit down, on that bench". And I got her a drink. And she was sick. She says "If I tell you, will you tell nobody?" I says, "I'll not tell a soul in here". She says"I'm going to have a baby". And her lad had been killed. He was a soldier. "Well" I says "you'll have to leave". She says "I know that." I says "she'll not keep you one she gets to know." She says "I know that" ... She did get to know.

B.R. How did she get to know?

E.R. Because the girl couldn't carry on with her heavy laundry. She gave her notice. Finished. I didn't stop long enough to see whether they got a new one or not, I gave my notice in.

B.R. What made you give your notice in?

E.R. Well, I was working for nothing.

B.R. What would happen to the laundry girl? Did you hear?

E.R. I never heard. She gave me her photo.

B.R. What would usually happen in situations like that?

E.R. Well, when she said she was going to have a baby, I just looked at her, because I didn't understand anything. Nowadays, the kids "try 'afore they buy, at school" - but I didn't know anything at all, I was as green as grass. And, of course, there was a lot of tittle-tattle later on, in the kitchen, about the lass. And I'm afraid I stuck up for her, as young as I was. She got her notice and she had to leave.

B.R. How would she manage to live?

E.R. I don't know, because she was only twenty, twenty-two or something, that's all she was, but she was the nicest girl there.

B.R. Had you seen other people in this situation?

E.R. I'd never seen anybody else like that before, and I was upset. But, he was going back (to the war) and that was that. I can understand now, but I couldn't understand then .

B.R. So, after you'd had your lunch, after this "heavy" sort of morning, what did you do with your afternoons?

E.R. Oh, I had the maids' bedrooms to do, I had to sweep the floor and dust them out. And see that they were tidy. We didn't have any free time. Then, we had to get the passage done - and the Laundry was all to sweep up, and put ready for the next morning. Then, I had to come in and lay the table for the tea. And help the cook: she would give us odd jobs to do. If she was baking, she used to say, "grease them 'panes'" or "wash us them bowls out", or "reach us this", and "reach us that". Now I can see I was a proper scivvy, in the right use of the word.

B.R. Did they use to have a man to do the heavy jobs, the outside work, that sort of thing?

E.R. They had a gardener.

B.R. But dragging things round the kitchen, lifting all these heavy pans? What about in the Laundry, big tins of water, bath-tubs, that sort of thing?

E.R. Oh, no. They had zinc baths. There were poss tubs, and poss-sticks. We just had to roll the poss tub along, and empty the water out, at the sink. For the second lot of water. Then, roll it back again. Everything was done by hand. You hadn't a bit of tubing or anything to fix on the taps.

B.R. Did they use to have a formal dinner every night?

E.R. Oh, yes, they always had dinner at 6 o'clock.

B.R. Was that not early for most people?

E.R. They had theirs at six, and if they were having guests, then they put it back to half past. We had our teas about 5 o'clock. That gave the cook a chance to get on with the dinner, and the parlourmaid a chance to get "waited-on". And the housemaid had to help the girls to get ready. If they had any guests here - because, with the War being on, they used to get a lot of officers - and the officers used to come, and if they stayed, I had their shoes to clean. Boots. They wore brown boots. Every time I hear the poem on the radio about me "brothers brown boots", I think of that officer. He's living in Ryton at the minute, or he was. ...When we got that cleared away, if the cook was in a good mood, she used to take some of the meat off that she thought the mistress wouldn't miss, and shw used to make us a sandwick for our supper at night. Because we just had a very plain supper: it was generally bread and cheese, and I cannot stand cheese, I never could eat cheese.

B.R. What did you use to eat instead?

E.R. Oh, I just used to have bread, and - it wasn't buttered - margarine. And a bit of jam. And I was always last to go to bed, because I had to see that both fires were dead out.

B.R. How did you do that? Did you put water on?

E.R. No, I waited until they went out, and raked them out.

B.R. What time would that be?

E.R. I never got to bed before 10 o'clock. The cook used to bolt the back doors and that up, and all our bedrooms was on the same floor, along the passage downstairs (on the ground floor). I slept in the same room as the laundrymaid. We had a bed each. But not a nice, soft bed, you know, like they have now. I've seen me roll into bed, and I was asleep afore my head touched the pillow. ...And we got a half-a-day once a fortnight. That was our free-time.

B.R. What time would you be 'off'?

E.R. Finished after "lunches", they called it. After 1 o'clock. When I got all washed up, and that, it was sometimes half past two. And I had to be back in afore 9 o'clock. And they used to watch for you coming up the drive. To see that you got back in. And I wouldn't do anything after I got back in, that was my half day "off". I wouldn't even wash the dishes, then. The others had to do it. The cook. They had to do it, because when it was the cook's night out, I had to do the dinner - I was just fifteen.

B.R. How did you know what to do?

E.R. She told us.

B.R. Were you not afraid of doing it wrong?

E.R. No, my mother had learned us to cook. I knew how to cook. I knew how to make pastry. Because she used to make - one lump of pastry; on a baking sheet; she used to cover it with treacle, and then put another bit on, and nip around the corners, and brush the top over with milk. And that was cut up in squares, and put on a side-dish, and that was one of their sweets, and I used to laugh about that. I used to think it was the funniest thing out ... treacle tart, I used to call it, for a pudding. At home, we had real puddings, maybe leak puddings and jam puddings, things like that. But I used to say to Eula, "its queer, treacle tart for your pudding" - I didn't like that.

B.R. What sort of thing did you used to do on your afternoon free?

E.R. Well, I was that tired, I never used to do very much. I generally just used to sit on the little wall, and talk. To the girls. Or I maybe went to one of their houses for my tea. Then we used to have a walk down to Blaydon. And we'd maybe go to the pictures, if we were lucky. But I always had to come out before it was finished, and walk home, there were no buses.

B.R. What sort of wages did you get?

E.R. Five shillings a week.

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B.R. Did you get any extra for you free half day?

E.R. Oh, no. ...And I even had to wash the cellar steps, once a week. There were ten steps down into the cellar, and I had to scrup them, and put sandystone right around the edge. ...And she (the mistress) came down to the cellar one day, and I thought - "I'm giving my notice in. I'm not getting up" - to myself. And she says I want to see you. And I says "Yes madam?" But I says "You can take a weeks notice from today, I'm leaving". She says "Why?" I says "There's too much work, and too little money. And my mother says" - mind, me mother never did say -

I says "Me mother says, I have to give my notice in". She says, "Well will you stay, until I get somebody else?" I says, "If its not too long", and I stayed another three weeks. And she'd got a girl in, that was twenty four years of age to do it, to take my place.

B.R. What wage would she get?

E.R. I don't know, but she didn't go for five shillings. I knew that much.

B.R. What did the mistress use to call you?

E.R. Oh, just "Hall", you never got your first name. Everybody was known by their name.

B.R. And you called the mistress, what?

E.R. "Madam" - the master "Sir", and the girls was "Miss".

B.R. Just "Miss", or what?

E.R. There was "Miss Irene", "Miss Stella", and the other one, ... the sons were at the War, but when they came, ... they were much nicer. Because they used to come into the kitchen and shake hands with everybody. And they used to thank the cook, for when she used to bake, for their mother to send the parcels. They used to come in specially, and I've seen one of them put his arms around the cook, dance her around the kitchen. They'd been at the War, and had seen the difference. They were equal to everybody else. But the oldest one was killed in the first World War. He was 23.

B.R. Was everybody very sad?

E.R. Oh yes - because he was the nicest among them.

B.R. Did you ever get any of the officers bothering the staff? The maids?

E.R. Oh, no! They weren't allowed in the kitchen. But the sons used to come in, when they can back off leave. To say thank you for the cook, for the parcels. Madam used to tell her what to make, and she used to come and inspect it, and fetch the box, and we used to pack it.

B.R. Did the mistress use to talk, about he worrying about her sons, or was there never any mention of such things?

E.R. Oh, no, she never talked to the staff. She only came in to give orders.

B.R. If you were going to be interviewed for a new job, or you had to talk to the mistress, where would she see you?

E.R. In the kitchen.

B.R. So you didn't go to her part of the house much at all?

E.R. No. I was only once upstairs. They were all away, and I knew the housemaid, because she came from the same village as me (Addison Village); she said "would you like to look upstairs, to the girls' rooms?" "Why" I says "show me the way!" She took me through the girls' rooms, and that was the only time that I was allowed upstairs.

B.R. What were they like?

E.R. Oh, they were very posh, regarding my standards.

B.R. Did it make you feel you should have had a bit more "comfort" in your rooms?

E.R. Oh, no, I was never envious.

B.R. What about the other maids, did they just accept that their rooms were bare, and the girls rooms were not?

E.R. Well, they knew that they were of the lower class, pitmen's daughters; therefore they just had to put up with it.

B.R. If they weren't maids, what could they do instead?

E.R. Well, if they had any brains, if they had any education if some was lucky, and their father - suppose he was a deputy at the pit, and he'd sent her to be trained as a shorthand typist, ... she could get a decent job. What we called a decent job. One of me friends trained as a shorthand typist. And she went to Skerry's College, in Newcastle. And she used to think she was the cat's whisker. "Now" I says "get off your high-horse ... your dad's working under mine at the minute".

B.R. What sort of money would she get, a week?

E.R. Maybe fifteen shilling, or ten. She travelled to Newcastle for it. You had to walk to Blaydon, you know, and get the train. And she still comes to see me once a month on a Thursday. And she was six stone then, and she's still six stone - married, had a family, and she's a great grandmother. But she's never altered - she was here last Thursday.

B.R. Of the people you remember in your class at school, how many girls would get the chance of that sort of training?

E.R. Not very many. There's some had a lower-paid job than my Dad, at the pit. They wouldn't get as much as if they worked down the mine, and they only got 24 bob a fortnight.

B.R. These girls that you remember, how old would they be when they got married?

E.R. Oh ... you didn't get married in them days, until you were well in your twenties. If anyone was getting married before they were twenty one, it was terrible. There was very few marriages at an early age. All my friends that I know was all married in their twenties.

B.R. Did you not find that girls who had worked at your sort of job, like a scivvy as you said, for five or ten years - and then got married - were they not worn out before they got married?

E.R. They made darn good housekeepers. And good wives, because they knew how far the money should go, and they knew how to cook, and they knew how to work. In fact, if it hadn't been for the working class in Addison Colliery, all the folk in Ryton would have been "hacky dorty", because it took the working class to keep them clean. The majority of people didn't know the right end of a duster, some of them. They'd been brought up to be ladies, and that was that. When they got themselves married, they had housekeepers, to take the brunt off their shoulders.

B.R. Was it only by the Second World War that people learned how to do things themselves?

E.R. The Second World War, everybody had to toe the line. Because they (the working class) went into the Army or the Navy, as lieutenants and officers - because I have a few friends that had had a bit of education and they were officers.

B.R. Did it seem strange that everyone "levelled out" in that way?

E.R. Everybody seemed to realise that everybody was on an equal level.

B.R. Did this not happen in the First World War?

E.R. It didn't happen in the First World War - yet there were more killed in the First World War.

B.R. So, was it unusual for people from the working class to become officers, in the First War?

E.R. Oh, you never heard of anybody being an officer, at least I didn't.

B.R. How were people chosen as officers, in the First World War? And how were they chosen as just "soldiers"? Did it depend on your education, or what?

E.R. It depended on your education, and your background. And if you'd gone to a Public School. If you went to a Public School, you walked straight in to be an officer. But, if you went to Crookhill Council School, you were put into the Infantry straight away. I had three brothers; one joined the army and was sent to Catterick. He was there a few months and he deserted. I remember the Military police coming up the street, to seek him, and me mother says "I'll kill him when he comes in".... He walked up the other end of the street, in a Royal Marine uniform. He walked into the house, and he told them straight; the Army was rotten, and stunk at Catterick camp. He walked out, and he went to Deal, in the Royal Marines. And that's where he ended up in ... the other one failed, something the matter with his feet, for marching. And my other brother wouldn't go into the Infantry. He said if he couldn't go into the Royal Artillery on the guns, he wasn't joining up, they could do what they liked. So, he went into the Royal Artillery, on the big guns. And he was wounded four times, and he was gassed four times. And it's only about seven years since he had the last bit of shrapnel taken out of his leg. They'd given him a pension of 6/6d a week, and when they took that shrapnel out, they took it off him!

B.R. So, what happened to people like your brother - they had been gassed, and wounded, what happened when they came back? Did they have jobs to go to?

E.R. They went back into the pit, because, you see, coal was in great demand.

B.R. What if their health didn't allow them to?

E.R. There wasn't much for them to do. There was very few light jobs.

B.R. What about health in general? The girls doing all this hard work, like you in the Big House? Was their health good by the time they married, or poor?

E.R. They had to be very strong to stand it. Otherwise your health wasn't up to par. Because you worked all those hours, and late hours, and you did heavy work.

B.R. As in-between maids, apart from what you have mentioned in the Laundry, for example, was there other work you had to do that probably men would do round the house, now?

E.R. I had to get the coals in - down in the cellar. Fill the scuttle; it wasn't a bucket, it was a big scuttle which had a handle on the back so you could chuck it on. You had to fill them and carry them. The coal was kept in the second kitchen, not in the first kitchen, because that's the one she (the mistress) came in. That's where we (the maids) got our meals. They used to bring the sticks up from the colliery and the coals: there was always plenty sticks for the fire ... I had to keep the pantry clean. Stone floors in the pantry, and along the passages. Sometimes I wonder if that's where I got me bad legs from.

B.R. Did you see any mice, or rats?

E.R. Oh, yes. We had mice. No rats - the minute there was a whisper of a rat in the laundry, we had the colliery men up after them, fumigating it. With him being boss, he could get anything. ..... He was a nice bloke, I liked him. Much nicer than his wife probably because he went down the pit, and he worked. He used to say, me father learned him all he ever knew about pit-work. Because, when me father was lying very, very ill, him and the under-manager came to see my Dad, and they brought him a half a bottle of whisky, and they gave him a gold sovereign. Now, that was saying something, for the Manager to come, and the under-manager, but yet when he died, three weeks after, we got notice to be out whether we had a place to go to or not, and we had to go into one room. They wanted that house for another Colliery worker. Therefore you had to get out.

B.R. What did you do?

E.R. We got one room. There was my sister and me at home, and my mother.

B.R. How many rooms would they have in the Big House, when you were working there?

E.R. An awful lot - it was a big house. About ten bedrooms, two bathrooms. There were three boys, and three girls. Downstairs, there was the dining room, a huge sitting room, the hall and the lobby, the two kitchens downstairs, the passage and the big laundry. Lovely gardens - because every year when the Sunday School gave their Anniversary, we used to go to the Big House.

B.R. Did you ever go back after you'd left them (at fifteen)?

E.R. No, but I've had a bit talk with Sir --- (the son of her old employer) since then. But we used to go up as kids, in the Sunday School - I remember I had a white cashmere dress on, with a blue sash, and I was picked to say my piece in front of the girls. And it was "Inasmuch", and it had 10 verses. They used to pick two or three, and then they used to say who was the best - and I was picked out as the best, and I was presented with a bouquet of wallflowers; it had a bit of ribbon tied around it. I thought I was the Queen of Sheba coming back with that bunch of wallflowers!

B.R. What did you talk about when you met Sir --- again?

E.R. I met him one day, in the Ryton Pensioners, a couple of years ago and I went up and I asked him how he was, because he suffered badly with pains, and he had these things on his elbows, sticks. And I says, "You'll never guess what I used to do for you when you were in the army". He says "thats a long time ago". I says "I cleaned your boots every morning for weeks, I was the little in-between maid, at the age of fifteen". He says "Here, you're going an awful long way back, you're making me feel old", and he shook hands with me. He says "Well I'm pleased to see you and thank you for them services".

B.R. And you went to his funeral?

E.R. When he died, there was another woman and me, representing the Pensioners. The reporters were standing outside and they stopped me as I went in, and they asked who I was and what place did I represent. I said "Ryton Pensioners" and my name was in the Hexham Courant as one of the mourners for Sir ---.

B.R. But you didn't tell them that you used to clean his boots?

E.R. Oh, No.

B.R. Did it make you feel strange that your positions had changed? That you had come to his funeral, as a representative of an Association?

E.R. It was sort of, more on a equal level. He said to me "You know, I'm a pensioner now". I said "Well I'll swop you pension-books, anytime!"

Barbara Rowlands.

MRS. MARY DUFFY OF TEESSIDE - DOMESTIC SERVICE IN THE EARLY 1920's

What I have to say may sound like a personal diary but if my general experiences are multiplied thousands of times you'll get a fair picture of the lot of many, many working-class girls, who were growing up at the same time as me.

I often wondered why it was my mother looked so old when I was a child. After some consideration I came to the conclusion that she worked too hard. She washed and baked and scrubbed and polished and worried. She worried about money - about the shortage of money. Although my father was working, and he was very lucky to be working, he had a very low wage.

In the particular district I lived in most men were unemployed and one could see groups of men standing at the corners, passing round the fag-end. On odd days they would speculate with coppers on the horses, and if they won a couple of bob it would be spent at the local public house where they drowned their frustrations: and they had many frustrations to drown.

Now I know we're talking about women but men were practically in the same bad way in those days. If they worked, they worked for very little money; if they were unemployed, they were derelict, and hung around the corners as I've already said.

In 1922 I was exactly twelve and in elementary school in Stockton. I used to dream of all the kinds of things I would do when I left school. At that particular time I was in all the plays. I was Lady Macbeth in Macbeth, and I was Shylock in The Merchant of Venice. It was a girls' school you see. On top of that my compositions were read at school and I was very very proud, and the teacher, who was very kind, would tell me, "When you leave school Mary, I will look out for a new author or a new actress". I believed her in my innocence.

One day the Manager of the school, a canon, (I'm a Roman Catholic of course) came in the classroom and asked us to write an essay on "What I would like to be when I leave school". The winner would get a prize. As far as I was concerned it was in my pocket: I knew that I was the best at composition and I set to work frantically. I wrote about the stage, set, costumes, applause, etc. But the prize did not come my way. About two weeks later the canon came in with the headmistress, a sister (she was a nun) and she had a very grave face. The canon commented that some compositions were good but some were bad; in particular one mentioned the theatre and acting, without realising that this was pride and would lead to sins of the flesh. Worst of all, not one of the girls had said that she wanted to enter domestic service. This he described as an honourable way to give service, and a sound training for later married life.

I left school at fourteen. I did not enter the stage, but my mother took me to a domestic agency, where we were given a card that stipulated that if I were found a job I would pay to the agency my first two weeks wages, which amounted to twelve shillings.

This domestic service was an experience. I'll give you an idea of my ordinary day's work at fourteen years old. At first I scrubbed the steps, the hall, dusted and polished it, laid the breakfast table, brought in the food, changed the plates, washed up, prepared veg for dinner, laid the dinner table, changed plates, washed up including pans and crockery, swept and dusted kitchen, scullery, scrubbed floors, brushed stair-carpet, cleaned bed-rooms, cleaned windows, laid table for tea, changed plates, washed up, swilled yard. That was on all days. Special jobs: once a week there was the washing and ironing of clothes, cleaning silver and brasses, brushing carpets, and waiting on the 'at homes'.

They were very strange, the 'at homes'. There was a drawing room, or what was supposed to be the drawing room, and the lady would sit at the table, various friends came in. I would put on my uniform (black and white for morning, blue and white for afternoon, and gray and white for visitors) and would ask the visitors their names as they entered the house. From the door I would have to announce, Mrs. So-and-so, Mrs. So-and so; but one day I got a name wrong. When this happened there was always a reprimand.

I would always have to answer the door. Even if I was cleaning the chimney flues I would have to hurry up and clean up and then answer the door. The people of the house just would not answer the door; for the first time in my life I knew what idle, lazy people were. But one thing that stood out with me was that I was not recognised to be an individual: an ordinary person. The only communication I ever had was when they gave orders and I took them.

But one particular day the lady of the house did communicate with me. It so happened that I worked from seven in the morning till seven at night and by the time I got out it was near eight. Once I wandered around the shops in the High Street with a friend looking at the things in the shops which we couldn't buy. Following this I was called to account for my action to the lady of the house. A friend had told her that I was walking around the High Street at night. She suggested that I join a sewing class or "something useful", and when I answered that I needed some recreation, she said, "How dare you speak to me like that".

Once I tried to join in a conversation on the theatre held by the girls of the house but as soon as I spoke there was a silence; after a pause they continued their conversation without any reference to my comment. It was then that I realised that for them I was not a person, simply a useful commodity like a brush or a carpet beater but nothing more. I was there at their command.

I hoped and hoped that somehow I could escape this drudgery, but I dare not hand in my notice. Then one day something turned up. I accidentally broke a butter dish and the lady told me that I would have to pay for this out of my wages. Moreover she went to see my mother. An argument developed which led to my leaving this employment. My mother simply could not afford to lose money in this way, so I left domestic service.

At this time I was sixteen. My next job was in pottery. There were a number of such factories where working-class girls could go: printers, the lemonade factory, the jam factory, confectionary. Most fo the factories were kind of closed shops; families worked in them and brought other relations in, so it could be very hard even to get into a factory but as luck happened my father was a potter. In this way I escaped the humiliation of domestic service, and determined that no daughter of mine would ever have to suffer such an experience.

The above extract comes from Mrs. Duffy's talk to a group meeting at the Teesside Polytechnic on Saturday, 13th March, 1971. The following is a brief summary of the paper read by Dr. Helen Mellor.

DR. HELEN MELLOR - WOMEN AND SOCIETY IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Apart from sketching in the general background of the position of women in an industrialising society, Dr. Mellor high-lighted certain rather neglected aspects of their changing life-patterns.

First there was the immense differences between feminine life in the various social classes. Particularly she stressed the irony of the increasing burden of domestic work on middle-class women as their working-class sisters took advantages of opportunities for employment in industry rather than in other people's homes. The implications of this change are still being discussed in the women's pages of contemporary newspapers.

Health was another neglected topic raised by Dr. Mellor. It is difficult to take into account the debilitating effects and social consequences of constant childbirth. This of course was the lot of nearly all married women until the adoption of contraceptive practices. The predominance of the Victorian spinster (in public life) as opposed to the married woman, can be understood only in relation to this phonomena. It was one source of the ambiguity in the attitude of women to their femininity: an ambiguity for whose resolution the world still waits.

MATERIAL IN LOCAL LIBRARIES

This is the first of a series of contributions which will appear in future Bulletins when local librarians will be invited to outline some of their holdings which will be of interest to Labour Historians. The first of these is by Mr. K. G. Harris, Librarian of the Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic.

LABOUR HISTORY ADDITIONS TO NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY

The Newcastle Polytechnic Library is a new and expanding institution whose primary function is to serve the students and staff of the Polytechnic. Taking a broad view, this can best be achieved in developing in certain directions as a part of the total library resources of the area. This involves close co-operation with other libraries in many directions, one of which is in building up areas of excellence in specific subject fields.

Labour history fits naturally into the sphere of the Polytechnic Library as it is an interest shared by several teaching departments. The opportunity has therefore been taken to collect some source material either as reprints or in microform. Although intended first of all for members of the Polytechnic, the Library is not restrictive in its approach to other students and would certainly permit its collections to be used by genuine workers in the field of labour history, whatever their background.

The Newcastle Polytechnic Library is the only local institution possessing some of the material listed, and, as a result, knowledge of its holdings will of itself be useful.

1. Archive Collections

(a) Howell papers (microfilm)

The papers of George Howell are housed in the Bishopsgate Institute, London. They include Howell's diaries and letter books and, of the utmost importance, the minutes of the International Working Men's Association and the papers of the Reform League.

(b) Holyoake papers (microfilm)

The correspondence of George Jacob Holyoake is of the utmost importance to historians specialising in co-operation, secularism, and 19th century politics. The papers themselves are to be found in the Co-operative Union in Manchester and the Bishopsgate Institute in London. The Polytechnic Library possesses microfilm copies of the collections of both libraries.

(c) Independent Labour Party Minute Books 1893-1909 (microfilm)

2. Annual Reports

Labour Party Annual Reports 1900-1967 (microfilm)
National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations Annual Conference Reports 1967-1967 (microfilm)
Trades Union Congress Annual Reports 1869-1966 (microfilm)

3. Newspapers

Northern Star 1838-1852 (microfilm)

This is an invaluable addition to local resources, being essential not only for the study of Chartism but also because of its special reports on matters such as the Winlaton nailmakers strike of 1847-8.

4. Periodicals

Poor man's Guardian 1831-1835 (Merlin P. reprint)

Hetherington's weekly is of importance not only as a vehicle of radical opinion but also for the part it played in the history of the press.

Chartist Circular 1839-1842 (microfilm)

One of the most influential periodicals in the history of Scottish Chartism, published by William Thomson.

Democratic review 1849-1850 (Merlin P. reprint)

Red Republican 1850 (Merlin P. reprint)

Friend of the People 1850-1851 (Merlin P. reprint)

George Julian Harney was connected with a number of publications between his editorship of the Northern Star and being brought by Joseph Cowen to Newcastle to work on the Northern Tribune. These three periodicals are all Harney productions. The Red Republican contains a valuable introduction by John Saville.

Notes to the People 1851-1852 (Merlin P. reprint)

Ernest Jones was also connected with several publications during the decline of Chartist activity. Notes to the People was begun after Jones had refused to be involved with Harney in the Friend of the People.

Beehive 1862-1878 (microfilm)

The Beehive is an essential source for the history of trade unionism during the period when London was re-asserting a prominent position in labour affairs. George Potter, editor of the Beehive, represented a new style of labour leader.

Commonweal 1885-1894 (microfilm)

The periodical of the Socialist League, edited by William Morris until 1889.

Free Labour Gazette (extracts) 1894-1896 (microfilm)

Free Labour Press (extracts) 1899-1903 (microfilm)

The periodical of the National Free Labour Association, with the aims of seeking "the unity of labour and capital, trade without restraint, and industry without restriction".

The Socialist 1902-1922 (microfilm)

Published monthly in Edinburgh by the Social Democratic Federation and aimed at the Scottish working class.

5. 19th Century Parliamentary papers

The Irish U.P. publication of British Parliamentary papers, arranged as it is in subject groups, is invaluable to libraries which have never had the opportunity to collect the originals. The Newcastle Polytechnic Library has purchased the following subject sets of interest to labour historians:

Civil Disorder
Crime and Punishment: Juvenile offenders
Education: Poorer classes
Education: Scientific and technical
Health: General
Health: Infectious diseases
Industrial Relations
Industrial Revolution: Children's employment
Mining accidents
Mining districts Vol. 2
Newspapers
Poor Law
Population
Social problems
Trade and Industry: Depression
Urban areas: Housing
Urban areas: Sanitation

6. Secondary Materials

Wilson, A. Scottish Chartist Biographies (microfilm)

These important biographies are not available in book form, although some of the material will presumably be incorporated in Dr. Wilson's forthcoming book on Scottish Chartism.

SKILLED TIMEWORKERS' RATES IN THE SHIPBUILDING AND SHIPREPAIRING INDUSTRIES SINCE 1913

The following is an outline of changes in the basic wage-rates of skilled workers in the British shipbuilding and shiprepairing industries since 1913. This material is obviously not original, yet it is sometimes difficult to find in a convenient form. A national uniform wage-rate for shipbuilding was negotiated for the first time in 1930, and the rates quoted before this date refer to the Tyne district.

Wage structures in British industry are notoriously complex and those found in the shipbuilding and shiprepairing industries are no exception. Therefore the basic wage-rates given here comprise only one element in the total wages system. For example, nationally-agreed rates give no indication of piecework earnings, and some shipbuilding trades were pieceworking and others timeworking. The pieceworking trades comprised platers, riveters, caulkers, welders and drillers - broadly the ironworking trades. The timeworkers included shipwrights, joiners, electricians, painters and other finishing trades. After 1939 various kinds of payments-by-results systems were introduced for trades which had previously been timeworking trades, until by 1950 over 80% of the skilled workers in shipbuilding were on piecework or some form of incentive bonus. (See Knowles and Robertson "Earnings in Shipbuilding" Oxford Institute of Statistics Bulletin, December 1951). In addition to piecework there were "lieu" rates. Very often work done by pieceworking trades could not be accurately priced, say, because the work was scattered over the ship. In these circumstances traditional pieceworking trades were paid "lieu" rates, an enhanced hourly rate for the job, which was expected to be done at piecework speed. The negotiation of lieu rates was usually done at district level, and in 1945 in the Tyne district alone there were over 1,000 lieu rates. Many special allowances and extra payments were also paid to men on certain jobs, and for the most part these special payments, usually given to compensate workers for doing dangerous or unpleasant jobs, were the subject of district or yard negotiation. Therefore the basic wage-rates given here are only a very rough guide to earnings in shipbuilding and shiprepairing, although they do indicate broad trends in wage movements in these industries.

The War Bonuses quoted here were first introduced in shipbuilding and shiprepairing in April 1917. They were authorised by the Government's Committee on Production and were awarded to meet rises in the cost of living. The bonuses were regarded as a temporary measure to meet special war-time conditions, yet were retained after the war and war bonuses were actually increased during the post-war boom. When depression hit shipbuilding in 1920 war bonus was phased out and finally abolished in January 1923, but when a temporary improvement in trade conditions made a wage increase possible this usually took the form of an increase in bonus rather than an increase in the basic rate. Indeed the only increase in the basic rate in the period 1921-50 was an increase of 1/6d. in 1930. These bonus payments were finally consolidated into the basic rate in 1950 to form a new inclusive uniform plain time rate.

Yet another bonus payment was in operation from 1917-22. In October 1917 the Ministry of Munitions authorised the payment to skilled timeworkers in shipbuilding and shiprepairing a bonus of 12½% payable on total earnings, including overtime and other allowances. This represented a substantial wage increase and it was granted in an attempt to restore the wage differential between skilled and unskilled time workers. However, under pressure from the general workers' unions the increase was extended to semi-skilled and unskilled workers in November 1917. This bonus payment was phased out by employers over the period November - January 1921-22.

A. Potts

THE SKILLED TIMEWORKERS' RATE IN THE SHIPBUILDING AND SHIPREPAIRING INDUSTRY SINCE 1913

			Basic Rate	Bonus or War Bonus	Total
	1913	(53 hour week)	41/6	-	41/6
3rd March	1915	4/- Advance Basic Rate	45/6	-	45/6
30th August	1916	3/- " " "	48/6	-	48/6
1st April	1917	5/- " War Bonus	48/6	5/-	53/6
1st August	1917	3/- " " "	48/6	8/-	56/6
17th October	1917	12½% Special Advance to Timeworkers on their total earnings.			
5th December	1917	5/- Advance War Bonus	48/6	13/-	61/6.
31st July	1918	3/6 " " "	48/6	16/6	65/-
27th November	1918	5/- " " "	48/6	21/6	70/-
1st January	1919	Introduction of 47 hour week			
26th November	1919	5/- Advance War Bonus	48/6	26/6	75/-
31st March	1920	3/- " Basic Rate	51/6	26/6	78/-
2nd June	1920	3/- " " "	54/6	26/6	81/-
4th May	1921	3/- Deduction Basic Rate	51/6	26/6	78/-
1st June	1921	3/- " " "	48/6	26/6	75/-
Nov., Dec., Jan.	1921-22	12½% special advance to Timeworkers withdrawn.			
29th March	1922	10/6 Deduction War Bonus	48/6	16/-	64/6
17th May	1922	3/- " " "	48/6	13/-	61/6
1st June	1922	3/- " " "	48/6	10/-	58/6
1st November	1922	2/6 " " "	48/6	7/6	56/-
22nd November	1922	2/6 " " "	48/6	5/-	53/6
13th December	1922	2/6 " " "	48/6	2/6	51/6
3rd January	1923	2/6 " " "	48/6	-	48/6
18th June	1924	3/- Advance Bonus	48/6	3/-	51/6
24th September	1924	4/- " "	48/6	7/-	55/6
1st July	1928	1/6 " "	48/6	8/6	57/-
1st September	1928	1/6 " "	48/6	10/-	58/6
1st January	1930	1/6 " (National Uniform Wage)	50/-	10/-	60/-
1st April	1936	2/- " Bonus	50/-	12/-	62/-
3rd February	1937	2/- " "	50/-	14/-	64/-
7th July	1937	2/- " "	50/-	16/-	66/-
16th February	1938	2/- " "	50/-	18/-	68/-

			Basic Rate	Bonus or War Bonus	Total
6th September	1939	2/- Advance Bonus	50/-	20/-	70/-
21st February	1940	5/- " War Bonus	50/-	25/-	75/-
22nd January	1941	3/6 " " "	50/-	28/6	78/6
17th December	1941	5/- " " "	50/-	33/6	83/6
4th January	1943	6/- " " "	50/-	39/6	89/6
3rd April	1944	4/- " " "	50/-	43/6	93/6
7th May	1945	4/6 " " "	50/-	48/-	98/-
15th April	1946	6/- " " "	50/-	54/-	104/-
3rd March	1947	Introduction of 44 hour week.			
11th October	1948	5/- Advance War Bonus	50/-	59/-	109/-

			New Work
20th November	1950	National Wages Settlement - New Inclusive National Uniform Plain Time Rate	120/-
23rd November	1951	Advance 11/-	131/-
7th November	1952	" 7/6	138/6
1st April	1954	" 8/6	147/-
15th March	1955	" 11/-	158/-
7th March	1956	" 12/6	170/6
27th May	1957	" 11/-	181/6
6th October	1958	" 7/4	188/10
28th March	1960	Introduction of 42 hour week	
9th January	1961	Advance 8/6	197/4
9th July	1962	" 6/-	203/4
16th December	1963	" 8/-	211/4
30th November	1964	Introduction of 41 hour week	
5th July	1965	" of 40 hour week	
25th November	1965	National Long Term Agreement	
7th March	1966	Time Rate increased by 5/- under Long Term Agreement	216/4
3rd July	1967	Time Rate increased by 5/- under Long Term Agreement	221/4
1st January	1968	Minimum earnings became Time Rate under Long Term Agreement	257/4
19th December	1968	National Long Term Agreement	
	(1)	From 16th Dec., 1968 to 19th Jan., 1969 Time Rate increased by 6/- under Long Term Agreement	263/4
	(2)	From 20th Jan., 1969 to 30th Nov., 1969 Minimum earnings became Time Rate under Long Term Agreement	300/-
1st December 1969	(3)	General Wage Advance of 6/- and adjustment in Plain Time Rate under Long Term Agreement	325/-
7th December 1970=	(4)	Minimum earnings became Time Rate under Long Term Agreement	350/-

The above are New Work rates: for Shiprepair Rate add 3/- to basic rate.

BOOK REVIEWS

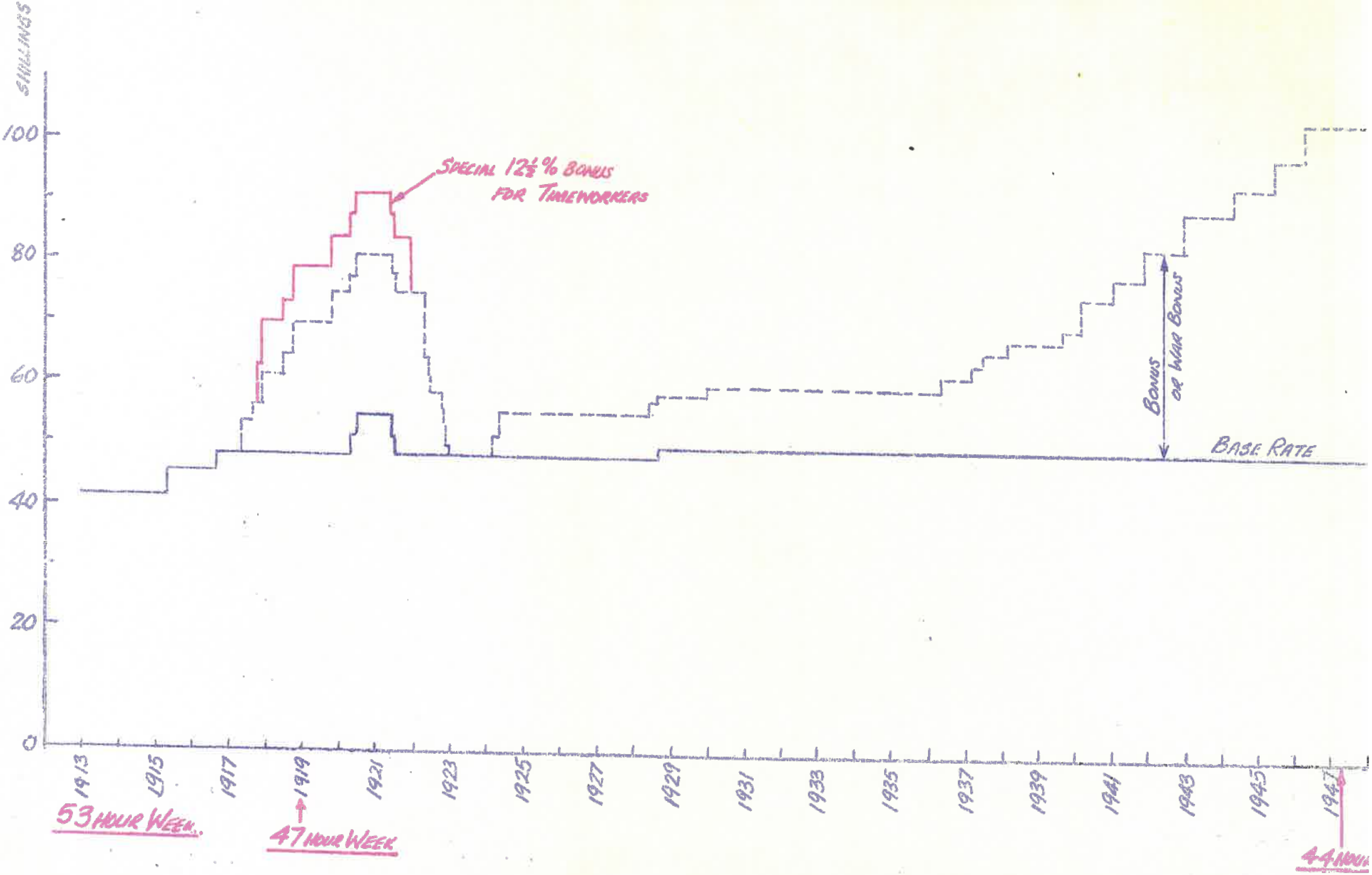
The General Strike in the North East by Anthony Mason (University of Hull publications, 1970). pp. 116. £2.00.

Students of modern British history have little difficulty in enumerating the causes and consequences of the general strike of 1926, but they do not find it easy to describe what was really going on during the nine days of the actual strike and the few days of confusion and bewilderment which followed its calling-off. The reasons for this ignorance are obvious: given the unprecedented nature of the basic situation, no-one at the time can have had a complete picture of what was happening even in a particular region, let alone in the country at large; and given that many of the leading activists of the day are no longer with us and that those still alive may see the events of the strike very differently in retrospect, it is clear that a definitive story can never be told. Regional studies, based on what can still be ascertained at a local level, offer the only prospect of further discoveries, and Anthony Mason's study of the strike in the north east therefore deserves a warm welcome from labour historians in general, as well as from local historians of this area in particular, since it is the first substantial attempt at a local survey for any part of the country.

The general strike in the north east is particularly worth a close study, not only because the basic issue of the miners' strike was of direct relevance in the area, but because, as Mr. Mason tells us, "the strikers ambitiously attempted directly to counter the Government (emergency) organisation, establishing their own central strike committee for the area in Newcastle." Essentially, Mr. Mason offers us a study of the massive and novel problems of organising (and combatting) a general strike; having examined the organisations which the situation threw up on both sides, he then discusses the effectiveness of the strike, and concludes with a brief survey of the confused situation which developed immediately it became known that the strike had been called off.

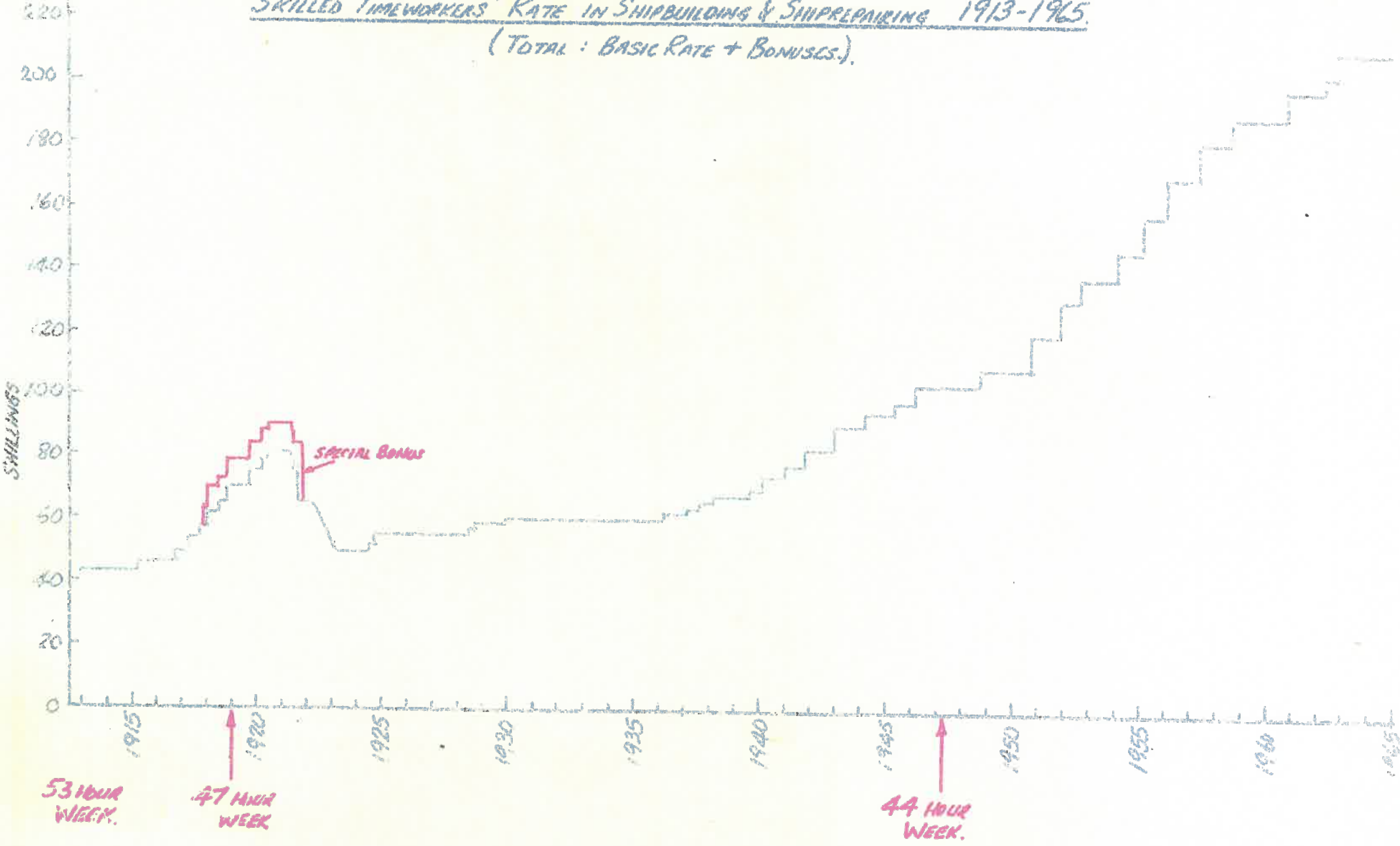
In producing this study, the author has used a wide range of materials: he was able to call on surviving participants, especially the Lawther brothers and Mr. Page Arnot; he has made full use of both trade union and government archives; and he has relied judiciously on the local press (the book includes reproductions of some numbers of the two strikers' newspapers, the Northern Light and the Workers' Chronicle). Inevitably, one regrets that certain questions remain unanswered: why, for example, were the good people of Chopwell so much more active and determined than anyone else; and what exactly was the role of the infant British communist party, some of whose members flit mysteriously through these pages? Also, it is necessary to challenge one of Mr. Mason's opening remarks that the unions failed "to improve their position very significantly in the relatively good days of 1919-20" (p.3): surely, many unions did gain significantly - especially in terms of shorter hours - in those twilight days when war-weariness and euphoria were strangely mixed, and a good deal of the bitterness in industrial relations up to the general strike derived precisely from the fact that union leaders were conscious that much had been gained, and that much had to be defended, if the 'pre-war world', with all its horrors (real and imagined), was to be avoided. But in the main, although the evidence is limited, it is unlikely that Mr. Mason's conclusions about the events of May 1926 will be seriously challenged: of particular value is his reminder that the stereotype of strikers playing football with policemen is highly misleading; while it lasted, the general strike was a serious and bitter affair, and in the north east, at any rate, it was accompanied by violence

SKILLED TIMEWORKERS' RATE IN SHIPBUILDING & SHIP REPAIRING 1913-1950



SKILLED TIMEWORKERS' RATE IN SHIPBUILDING & SHIPREPAIRING 1913-1965.

(TOTAL : BASIC RATE + BONUSES).



and disorder. Mr. Mason, indeed, has done as much as can be done at a virtually impossible task, and deserves our thanks. But a critic is surely justified in complaining about the high price of acquiring the fruits of his labours: even in these inflationary times, £2.00 is a lot to pay for an extended paper-bound essay of 100 pages, and at this price the book is far beyond the reach of many stalwarts of the labour movement who might have been interested in owning it.

Duncan Bythell

Dan Smith An Autobiography (Oriel Press Ltd. Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970)
pp. 151. price £1.75 net.

This is a teasing and tantalising book, it is also a compelling book. It is teasing and tantalising because it moves uneasily in that no-man's land between "Memories" and "Autobiographies" where no paths are charted, and because it abounds in short, flat, descriptive sentences on persons or issues where some more penetrating analytical development would have illuminated for the reader not only the issue but also Dan Smith himself at the centre of its involvement.

Consider, for example, the description he gives of his early skirmishes and campaigns as a newly-elected Councillor on Newcastle City Council. He quotes from his maiden speech in the Council Chamber (p.34): "I'm not interested in platitudes. I've come here to do a job and I don't feel that the Newcastle City Council has much to be proud of.. It is a hundred years since it did anything and I mean to change that". Later, (p.35) he describes his continuing sense of frustration and the encouragement to soldier on which he consistently obtained from Joe Eagles (newly appointed as secretary to the Newcastle Labour Party): "If it had not been for him" he writes "I would not have had the guts to battle through the council and through my own group because it is no secret that I was not only being shot at from the front, but from the back as well". No wonder opening shots of this nature, in a far from maidenly speech, as conventions go, got him off, as he himself records, "to a bad start". But if, to him, and maybe to others at the time, it was "no secret" that he was being subjected to attack both back and front, it may well be very much of a secret to others and they may well feel cheated, as indeed the reviewer does, not to be told more. Equally the reader may feel a sense of deep deprivation at not being told more about Joe Eagles and his relationship not only with the author but also with other members of the Party. If we were told more we might not only be assisted in our understanding of Dan Smith but also of Joe Eagles and the almost jungle-like situation which seems to exist. But was Dan Smith so dependent upon combining "cracking up" (p.35) by other people as his words might seem to imply? It may be doubted. Supporting evidence for such a doubt is possibly to be found in the account he gives of his first meeting of the Northern Economic Planning Council in his capacity as newly-appointed Chairman:- "I remember one member of the Council" he writes, (p.91), "a well-known figure locally, who was quite determined at that first meeting that he should have been Chairman and who was going to make it difficult for me if he could. I steeled myself, turned to him, and said, "Look, if we're all going to be chairman at this meeting we're not going to get very far. While many of you may have views as to whether I should have been the chairman, I am appointed and if we've got a job to do we can only do it if we work efficiently. That is how I intend to work". Thereafter, and without any qualifications at all, these meetings were the most efficient that I have ever had the privilege to chair". A touch of persecution complex?; possibly so, but surely the qualities which shine forth from this incident are those of unadorned forthrightness and unflappable dedication to the efficient performance of a job. And that job was one towards which the pages of this book shown Dan Smith to be consistently moving from the movement when he agreed, in May 1950, to stand as a labour candidate in the Walker Ward in the Municipal election, to the moment when, in March 1969, he was able to announce the formation of a Regional Science Committee. From being an early rebel against conventional ideas - internationalist, pacifist, Trotskyite Socialist - he had concentrated his powers and his convictions upon the narrow point of Local Government, and, having found his natural field of battle in this sphere, had widened it successively through City, conurbation (Tyneside), to Region. If "Regionalism" is a valid and viable concept then Dan Smith will have to be numbered amongst its founding fathers. And if "Regionalism", as an abstract concept, should be found not to be valid, even so, Dan Smith will have to be numbered amongst those who, in times of economic decline and overall distress saw a vision for the North East, cast in regional terms, and set about its fulfilment with a dogged, almost remorseless determination, which seemingly paradoxically, made him a national figure. It is from this that the book derives its compelling character.

As art forms, autobiographies are perhaps the most difficult to master: they must recall the times and circumstances in which the author has played out his part, and they must, at the same time, reveal his innermost thoughts and leanings. The author seems to sense that there is something lacking in his account of himself. His intimations on this point occur in his final chapter. After attempting to describe what it is that, so to say "has made him tick", ("the desire to serve, the challenge presented by problems, and my interest in people")(p.150), he ends with the cryptic confession that one element of his make-up which he had lost was "the sensitive part of me which wanted to be understood. Not thanked, or reverenced, or liked. Just understood". "Some day" he writes in his last sentence, "I will have to write a book about it". (p.151).

It is to be hoped he will; for there is much to be said, by way of description, let alone analysis, which this book does not manage to say. But even if he does it may still be though that there will remain a need for objective analysis by another mind, for the issues raised by his "Autobiography" are of wide and general significance. Amongst them is the question of the price that seemingly has to be paid for success in public life, and, secondly, the apparently established fact that the route to national, perhaps even European, recognition is not necessarily via Westminster.

Edward Allan.

Newspapers of Northumberland and Durham by Maurice Milne (Frank Graham Newcastle). pp. 236. £3.00.

Maurice Milne's Newspapers of Northumberland and Durham is a welcome addition to the history of the provincial press. As a field of research the provincial press has been sadly neglected, and yet its importance for the historian concerned not merely with the shaping of public opinion but also with the cultural concerns of the community, can hardly be overestimated. Nevertheless of recent work in this area only that of G. A. Cranfield and Dr. Donald Read comes to mind.* Mr. Milne's book is all the more welcome as it deals with the years 1855-1906 - again a much neglected period.

Mr. Milne's task, with around one hundred newspapers and magazines appearing at one time or another in the North East in these fifty years, was considerable - and all the more so if his book was not to become a mere chronicle of the rise and fall of a succession of newspapers. Thus he has attempted to look at the two functions of a newspaper: as a "commercial enterprise" and as "a vehicle of opinion", and this has involved an investigation not only of the quality of local journalism but also a consideration of ownership and political management. Not surprisingly therefore papers like Cowen's Newcastle Daily Chronicle figure prominently in this book; certainly "a vehicle of opinion" it was also a highly successful "commercial enterprise". Indeed the sections on the Chronicle - especially those on its "radical years" (1869-1872), and on the relationship between Cowen and James Annand over the Eastern Question in 1876-7 - are among the best in the book. But other, and perhaps in their way no less significant newspapers, are not forgotten: Stead's Northern Echo, Joicey's Newcastle Daily Leader, or the extremely enterprising North and South Shields Gazette and Northumberland and Durham Advertiser founded in 1849 before the repeal of the "tax on knowledge", and from 1855 the earliest halfpenny evening newspaper in England. Or the even more interesting case of the Newcastle Evening News, which founded in 1893 took up the cause of the class struggle only to be "silenced" by a mysterious "take-over" in 1894, and thence subsequently espoused the more respectable cause of the "Lib-Labs".

Mr. Milne's main aim, however, is to examine the complex problem of the newspaper as a vehicle of opinion, and in particular, party political opinion. Thus all the "great" political events - the Bulgarian Horrors, Home Rule, Tarrif Reform - are examined for the light they throw on the party political standpoint of the local press. Clearly it is important to know which side of the party fence the Newcastle Journal or the Sunderland Echo sat on the question of Tarrif Reform, but Mr. Milne is far more interesting when dealing with where the local press stood on such issues as crime and punishment, or industrial relations - topics which in their way are equally as informative as to the type of public attitudes the press was attempting to create. Did the press in the North East, however, succeed in influencing public opinion on these issues? Certainly it would be interesting to know how (if at all) readers of the Chronicle reacted to their newspaper's support to the engineers' strike of 1892. It is not enough to know that the Chronicle had become reactionary in its old age. Did the readers of the Chronicle support the men of 1871, but not those of 1892? Had the readership of the paper changed in the intervening twenty years anyway, so that in 1892 it simply confirmed the existing prejudices of its public?

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* G. A. Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760. (1962)
D. Read, Press and People 1790-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities. (1961)

Thus in the end, as Mr. Milne admits, the real problem remains: how does the historian assess the effect of popular newspapers on their community? How does he determine whether newspapers shape or merely reflect current attitudes? Hence while it is important to know what a newspaper editor said, or what the proprietor's politics were, it is even more important to know whether this carried any weight with, or had any influence on, the paper's readers. Who bought the Chronicle or the Journal, and why? On this Mr. Milne has virtually nothing to say. While the only parallel between editorial opinion and public response we are offered is that of electoral results in the North East between 1868 and 1906. And this, as Mr. Milne points out, is hardly a good area for testing the impact of newspapers on public opinion. Yet difficult as it is to assess the influence of a paper or a press, it must at least be tackled if the press is to be fitted into its community as well as its political milieu. Mr. Milne, however, must be congratulated on breaking so much new ground with this book, and for documenting the political setting so excellently.

Paul Stigant

The Miners of Northumberland and Durham by Richard Fynes (S.R. Publishers Ltd., Wakefield, 1971). pp 302. £3.25.

Richard Fynes' history of the Northumberland and Durham miners was first published in 1873, and a second edition was brought out by Thomas Summerbell of Sunderland in 1923. There has been a continuing demand for copies of these earlier editions and second-hand booksellers have received high prices for them. Now S.R. Publishers have brought out a third edition containing a short foreword by Lord Shinwell.

Although he had no formal training in the writing of history Fynes can claim to be one of the pioneers of labour history. He was a miner who spent all but the last few years of his life in the pits and he set himself the task of recording the struggles of the Northumberland and Durham miners. Not surprisingly Fynes made no attempt to write an objective history, his account is entirely sympathetic to the miners' point-of-view. Yet many eminent historians must wish that their books were half as widely read as Fynes' book has been over the years. It has been read by generations of miners and helped to sustain them in their struggles. It has also been read by many outside the coal industry, Lord Shinwell among them as he records in his foreword, and thereby helped to win their sympathy to the miners' cause. Fynes' history may now have been superceded by more scholarly accounts of the early struggles of the Northumberland and Durham miners, yet his book was a work of some influence in its day and many people will welcome the issue of a third edition.

A. Potts

William Smith	Basket maker	1838	Newcastle	Shop at 37 Middle St. (1838) and 26 Clayton St. (1843); treasurer in 1843; Newgate St. (1838), and 5 Edward St., Arthur's Hill, Westgate (1843).
Edward Summerside		1838	Winlaton	
– Scholefield		1841		
Edward Scurfield (Scorfield)	Saddler	1841	Gateshead	Church Walk & Oakwellgate.
James A.E. M'K. Sinclair	Foundryman	1840	Newcastle	3, Pipewellgate, Gateshead; secretary; in 1843 newsagent and bookseller of the Chartist Depot, 25 High Bridge, Newcastle.
John Starkey		1841	Newcastle	Queen St.
John Summer	Hatter	1841	Gateshead	High St.
– Shotton		1841	Newcastle	
John Strickland	Shoemaker	1841	South Shields,	King St.
William Scott	Labourer	1841	Ouseburn	Bank-top.
John Scott	Smith	1842	Ouseburn	Bank-top.
Thomas Scott		1842	Newcastle	Lax's Buildings; treasurer.
James Southern	Joiner	1843	South Shields,	Treasurer local association; treasurer Newcastle and Gateshead delegate fund; treasurer Northumberland and Durham Delegate Association.
John Strickland		1844	South Shields.	
E. Surtes		1849	South Shields.	
T. Smith		1849	South Shields.	
James Smith		1850	Newcastle.	

William Thomason	Glassworker	1838	South Shields	Had been prominent Edinburgh Chartist; stood unsuccessfully for editorship of 'Miners' Advocate' at Miners' Association Newcastle Conference, November 1843.
John Turnbull	Local preacher	1839	Swalwell	
– Todd		1840	Newcastle	
George Thomson		1841	Newcastle	Head of the Side.
Thomas Taylor		1841	Newcastle	Polstern Chapel Yard.
Josiah Thomas		1851	Newcastle	
J. Usher		1837	Newcastle	Treasurer Newcastle Working Men's Association.
George Usher	Tailor	1843	Newcastle	Dean Court.
James Waugh		1838	North Shields	
William Welsh		1838	South Shields.	
John Wilkinson		1838	Winlaton	
John White		1840	Newcastle	
William Wilkinson	Shoemaker	1841	South Shields,	Thames St.; (* see below 1843); treasurer.
John Wishart	Fitter	1841	Newcastle	Chambers' Court, Newgate St.
Thomas White	Cabinet Maker	1841	South Shields,	Dairy Lane; secretary.
James White		1842	Newcastle	Lax's Buildings.
William Wallace		1842	Newcastle	Forth Terrace; secretary.
Thomas Walker	Shoemaker	1842	Ouseburn	