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Urban Development and Population Growth in Middlesbrough 1831 - 71

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J.W.LEONARD (1975)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a detailed analysis of the urban and demographic development of Middlesbrough during its first forty years of industrial growth. Much attention has been paid to the relation between the initial urban plan, the actual urban development, the speed of population growth, and the nature of that population. These developments have been placed within an economic and political framework.

Alongside this analysis there is comparative work of a number of kinds. References are made to other town plans, both past and contemporary, whilst also relating Middlesbrough to mid-nineteenth century urban development generally. Specific comparisons are made with many other towns, based on the grid-iron plan. The household structure of Middlesbrough is compared to other towns that have undergone similar analysis. This comparative work runs alongside a detailed analysis of the historiography of the town, regarding both urban change and population growth.

Considerable use has been made of unpublished government material in relation to early municipal changes in Middlesbrough, and this has been supplemented by local deeds and records. Much attention has been given to extracts from diaries, letters, memoirs, as well as material in the nearby press, in an attempt to overcome the unavailability of the Pease collection. Considerable time has been spent on the available enumerators' books, including the recording of information, devising a computer programme, and presenting the ensuing analysis.

Such demographic analysis has been amply illustrated with tables, graphs, and histograms, which appear alongside the text. The main illustrative elements for the purely urban aspects are maps and photographs, which appear in the appendices.

Introduction

My curiosity in the history of Middlesbrough was first aroused by the apparent lack of a competently written history in any depth. It seemed that paradoxically so short and sudden had been the growth of the town that such a history ought to have been already written.

Any respectable study of nineteenth century developments in the iron and steel industry had its, almost statutory, section on Middlesbrough. Apart from this, the history of the town attracted mainly urban geographers and historical demographers. The very speed of Middlesbrough's growth created a convenient, simple example in any comparative work on nineteenth century urban development or population growth. Detailed work tended to be left to local enthusiasts; and many of these often lacked historical judgment, at least of a critical nature.

Thus a pattern has emerged whereby outside academics have produced many short accounts of the town's development, both as an urban entity, and as a focus of population, whilst local enthusiasts have supplied more detailed work. This detailed work however has tended to be little more than a quantitative apologia for the town's chequered development. It seemed to me that the problem for the serious historian was to apply the methods of the first group to the study areas of the second.

These study areas often centred on the local experience of town planning, especially with regard to the original town plan of 1830. This plan not only created the first version of industrial Middlesbrough, but also laid the foundations for most of the subsequent thinking in regard to local urban planning. The general

concensus in most published work of this kind is that the 1830 plan was initially successful, that the founding fathers of the town were heroic, and that any subsequent blemishes resulted solely from the second phase of development. This second and more hectic phase was that normally associated with the rise of the local iron industry.

Common sense however militates against this version of the town's past. One simply has to walk around the remains of the original town in order to see that many flaws must have been there from the outset. Photographic evidence further confirms this scepticism. So the problem was to ask new questions of established evidence, and to find as much new evidence on the early town as possible, in order to fill in the earlier gaps. This then was the task I set myself.

This thesis therefore sought to develop a deeper insight both in regard to the urban aspects of the town's past, and its demography. In pursuing these ends I was not of course oblivious of the quality of urban life during the first two generations of the town's industrial life.

My methods were basically threefold. First I attempted to uncover the relevant urban and demographic facts concerned with the Middlesbrough take-off. For the urban past, this meant a very close look at town development in the formative years, alongside an examination of the men who created the town. Much of my attention at this point was directed upon Joseph Pease and his closest associates. For the demography of the town, it meant a scrutiny of the printed census material, followed by sample analysis of the enumerators' books. By such means, generalisations could be tested, and new detail made available.

I followed this first phase by an examination of public opinion at the time of the original urban development. This opinion was

drawn from as wide a range of material as I could obtain: as many levels as possible were noted. I was of course careful to differentiate between current testimony and post hoc memoir. Obviously I also examined the credentials of witnesses for social or economic partiality. Concurrent with this examination, I did some comparative work on general trends in the country at large; this in both my main areas of study. Clearly the early urban developments of the town did not take place in a vacuum: the nineteenth century was alive to urban possibilities; and I thought it also useful to test accepted comment on the population of the town, as well as comparing some constituent parts of that population against other towns, both similar and contrasting.

Finally I took a long term view of Middlesbrough's urban growth by analysing the work of many academics and others, both local people and outsiders. I was concerned particularly to note any major shifts in emphasis emanating from any cause: personal experience, changes in the town itself, changes in public attitudes, etc.

My methodology was thus a mixture of comparative urban development, and statistical demography/social history with a strong sociological bias; whilst taking it for granted that any urban history requires some attention to be given to economic and political developments. My attempts to unearth new material have often taken me outside the Teesside area. This has been mainly to other parts of the North-East, and to the West Riding; but also it has entailed several visits to libraries and repositories in London.

Chapter I

The Urban Planners.

1) The Economic Framework

The early development of Middlesbrough cannot be divorced from the economic changes that were taking place in the Tees region as a whole, especially the events in Stockton from 1825 to 1830. The single most dramatic event behind the birth of Middlesbrough was of course the building of the railway from West Durham via Darlington to Stockton. The advantages that could be gained from shipping coals on the Tees from Stockton, could be further enhanced by using a point lower down the river as a port of shipment.

That economic activity was on the increase in these years, first in Stockton and then in Middlesbrough (and for that matter in other parts of the Tees) can be seen from the introduction of a second edition of a local history by the Rev. John Brewster.[1] In his Advertisement the writer points out that after having 'dismissed it (his first edition) from his mind, and adopted studies more congenial with the decline of life' he has been requested to revise his book. Brewster gives two reasons for the need for his second edition in 1829: one is his leaving Stockton after 30 years residence, but the major reason must be the great changes that had taken place in 'upwards of thirty years' between the first and second editions of his history. These changes

1) Rev. John Brewster - The Parochial History and Antiquities of Stockton on Tees (2nd edition 1829, 1972 reprint)

he saw as 'the increase of population in the town of Stockton, the enlargement of its buildings, and the prosperity of its trade...' He categorises these as 'giving a new era to its history'. In spite of what Dyos[1] sees as the 'booster tradition' in Brewster's work, a very good picture of Tees-side is given right on the eve (fortuitously) of the Middlesbrough take-off. In spite of seeing the effect of the railway on the economic fortunes of Stockton, Brewster has no idea of what the export trade possibilities could be, or what further extensions of this Durham rail link could be imagined. It is no surprise therefore that no mention is made of a possible extension to Middlesbrough, in spite of the royal assent to the bill for this extension having been given the year previously. Nevertheless Brewster saw that the economic changes then current constituted a new era rather than more of the same.

In a short history of the area, J.W.Wardell sees the important theme as "economic history within a Tees-side setting"[2]. This local historian places the emergence of Middlesbrough within the years 1810 to 1852, and he includes river improvements as well as the

1) H.J.Dyos - Agenda for Urban Historians (an essay in The Study of Urban History, 1966). In this enlargement of his essay reviewing recent writing in nineteenth century urban history in Victorian Studies, March 1966, Dyos extends a remark of Sydney Checkland regarding the 'brave days of the town boosters of the eighteenth century'. Brewster is categorised as one of those whose voices 'drop to a whisper' after the advent of rapid industrial change; but an interesting facet is that Dyos of course refers to the first edition of Brewster's history in 1796, whilst instead of 'withering under the burst and thrust of industrialisation', he makes something of a comeback, in spite of his advancing age, p. 19.

2) J.W.Wardell - The Economic History of Tees-Side (1960). This was the result of lectures given in 1956 to the Historical Association in Stockton, as well as the result of work done at a week-end school. Wardell's findings thus were exposed to the criticism of informed local people.

inevitable railway changes: the starting point being the first cut made in the Tees[1], closing with the setting up of the Tees Conservancy Commission[2].

September 27th, 1825, is the signigicant date when the efforts of the magnates of Darlington, Yarm and Stockton were rewarded with the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Wardell stresses the successof the venture by showing that the price of coal at Stockton 'promptly dropped from 18s.0d. to 8s.6d. per ton'. Not surprisingly success led to further enterprise, with what some (but not all) historians see as a mild disaster for Stockton.

The Stockton staithes, in the words of Wardell 'soon proved inadequate for the shipment of all the coal delivered by the railway, and while the Stockton people contemplated - and finally made - the Portrack Cut...the Darlington people by-passed Stockton by carrying the railway over the river, west of Stockton Bridge, and on to Middlesbrough.' Motivated by the situation, Joseph Pease and his partners purchased 500 acres of land down-river from Stockton for £30,000. from William Chilton 1828[3]. Pease and the others styled themselves the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, and also had interests in both the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the coal trade. They of course created the situation from which they were by stages able to benefit.

1) The Mandale Cut of 1810 shortened the Tees between Stockton and the river mouth by $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles; the Portrack Cut of 1831 shortened the Tees between Stockton and Middlesbrough by $\frac{3}{4}$ mile.

2) The Tees Conservancy Commission replaced in 1852 the Tees Navigation Company. This latter lacked both the will and the financial means to make the necessary river improvements that were essential by this date.

3) Although 500 acres is the amount commonly referred to, W.Lillie

This explanation of the extension of the railway to Middlesbrough is upheld today, albeit with an odd addition of sophistication regarding either detail or casual pattern. In his address to the Cleveland Institute of Engineers in the Centenary session of 1964/5, the president, J.H.Patchett said simply that 'The river at Stockton was so shallow that only vessels of less than 150 tons register could berth, and larger ships had to be loaded from keels' thus 'in 1830 coal shipping staithes were erected on the riverside at Middlesbrough...known as Port Darlington. The extension of the railway from Stockton to Middlesbrough, which included a bridge over the river Tees, completed the scheme.'[1]

Not uniquely Patchett's approach is descriptive and non-analytic. He eulogises about Tees-Side's great past, urges current progress, and predicts a notable industrial future. In company with Wardell he makes no connection between the interested parties in the Railway and the Owners' companies. Referring to the railway development he simply adds, 'a company which was formed to develop the town of Middlesbrough, purchased 500 acres...on which the first streets and houses of Middlesbrough were erected.'

At a similarly auspicious gathering Dr. K.Warren addressed a meeting of sixth formers in Middlesbrough Town Hall on the occasion of the formation of Teesside County Borough on 1st April 1968.[2] Concerning himself with economic history for the most part he stressed the geographic aspects of industrial change, and supported his thesis with statistics of production, urban areas,

in his History of Middlesbrough (1968) argues that the amount measured out at 527 acres, whilst some of the Owners' records mention 519 acres, page 51).

1) J.H.Patchett - Presidential Address given to the Cleveland Institution of Engineering in the premises of the Cleveland Scientific and Technical Institute, Middlesbrough, 1964/5, p 4.

2) Dr. K.Warren - The shaping of the Tees-Side Industrial Region. This address was reproduced in the Journal for the Advancement of Science,

and population. He follows Patchett's approach by describing the extension of the railway 'to deep water on the Tees estuary'. The rest of the story then unfolds with chronological certainty, for 'already Pease, evaluating the development prospects, had begun to entertain expansive visions of the future'.

More recently Peter Barton has suggested new ways of looking at the Tees-side situation in the years under discussion.[1] He shows that Middlesbrough did overtake Stockton economically, but this overtaking was less dramatic than is often supposed, and the reasons maybe more complex.

Taking the area as a whole he sees that 'in the forty years which followed the introduction of the railway the whole character of South Durham and Tees-side changed dramatically'. Then looking at the separate Tees ports he observes, 'one intention of those who promoted the Stockton & Darlington Railway Bill was to make it possible to ship coal from the River Tees. Collieries in the St. Helens Auckland district of Durham were to be linked by rail to the other terminal point, Stockton, where coal staithes could be erected.' Barton thus dismisses completely the often held idea that the original intention of the railway was the movement of coal simply as far as Stockton for the home market: the export possibilities coming therefore as almost a complete surprise.

Introducing Middlesbrough he remarks, 'This method of transporting coal was preferred to the alternative of constructing the much discussed canal.

December 1968. The British Association had decided to mark the formation of the new county borough with a scientic symposium and exhibition; this was in conjunction with the Chemical Society, the Society for Analytical Chemistry, the Royal Institute of Chemistry, and the Society of Chemical Industry. Dr. Warren's paper was part of this ambitious programme, f. 186.

1) Peter Barton - The Port of Stockton-on-Tees and its Creeks, 1825-61: a Problem in Port History (Maritime History, vol 1, No 2, Sept 1971), f. 124.

The limited success of the enterprise showed that the idea of using a railway was sound even if the distance of Stockton from the sea was proving to be a handicap. Acting upon these conclusions the proprietors extended the line to a place known as Middlesbrough, then no more than a hamlet, but six miles nearer the sea than Stockton'.[1]

However the cause is not left so simple. He points out that coal exports from the Tees area accounted for only about 2 per cent of the total shipped from the North East before 1831. Price competition still came from the Wear and the Tyne to such an extent that 'the upward trend of Stockton's exports faltered in 1829'. The proprietors of the Stockton & Darlington Railway responded in two ways. First they reduced their tonnage dues for coal carried for the export trade, and secondly 'the threat of competition strengthened their resolve to extend the line to Middlesbrough'. When it comes to the relative fortunes of both Stockton and Middlesbrough an entirely different factor has to be considered. This concerns interpretation rather than the economic adaptability to changing circumstances in that 'the coal trade from Middlesbrough is not easy to quantify because separate figures are rarely available for the amounts being shipped from particular staithes or coal drops within the River Tees'. Thus although the figures given tend to be global ones for the Port of Stockton which down to 1861 included the trade of Middlesbrough, historians have tended to credit most of this trade to activity in Middlesbrough to the detriment of other parts of the Tees whose trade was within the Customs limit of the Port of Stockton.[2]

1) Barton points out that before the first cut there were nearly nine miles of river to navigate between Middlesbrough and Stockton; and after the second cut there was only six. Reference has already been made to these cuts, p6, f1.

2) Before 1845 the Customs limits of Stockton extended up-river as far as Yarm, and coastwise as far north as Ryhope (just south of Sunderland) and as far south as Huntcliff Foot (just south of Saltburn). Between

In spite of the trend towards a more accurate picture of Middlesbrough's early years, there are still signs of conventional and out-dated views being accepted: sometimes for reasons of local patriotism (Middlesbrough vs Stockton) sometimes through what must be an over hasty assessment. Writing over a hundred years after the extension of the railway to Middlesbrough, an economic geographer wrote, 'About that time' in reference to 1830 'a company of iron-masters known as the Middlesbrough Owners, bought 500 acres of land at Middlesbrough on which to establish iron smelting works and build a town.'[1] No previous mention is made of the coal trade, and the construction of the Stockton & Darlington Railway is seen to have 'had a beneficial effect on the trade' (not specified) 'of Stockton'. More of the same then follows: 'the line was extended to Middlesbrough where there was then (1830) only a population of 150 people.' In omitting the coal trade in this way, the writer misses out a very vital 20 years in the history of both Stockton and Middlesbrough: the whole raison d'etre for the original town of Middlesbrough is overlooked in describing the Middlesbrough Owners as iron-masters, and not as railway proprietors with a growing interest in the coal trade.

This interest cannot be ignored if the initial urban scheme of the Middlesbrough Owners is put into an economic context. The limitations of the economic framework imposed limited urban aspirations, which if not exploded

1845 and 1860 this area shrank considerably to lose the Durham coast down to Seaton Carew. In 1861 Stockton was reduced to the stretch of river from Yarm to Newport; whilst Middlesbrough extended from Newport to Seaton Carew on the Durham coast, and to Huntcliff Foot on the Yorkshire coast.

1) S.J.Owen - The Origins and Development of the Ports of the United Kingdom (1939). Chapter XI is devoted to the Tees Ports.

within the time of the coal town (before 1850), then at least had no sense after the start of the iron town. Just what these plans were, I will look at subsequently, but before this, I will consider the involvement of Joseph Pease and his partners in this area.

2) Joseph Pease

a) Marriage and Business

Although some writers have commented on the fact of Joseph Pease's marriage to Emma Gurney in that the marriage was a great financial gain for Pease, there was nothing unusual in this union. Quakers had long married 'cousins' and marriage between different branches of Quaker economic enterprise was normal. The Gurney family represented banking interest in Norwich, and Emma was a co-heir, but Joseph was not impecunious. His family were long established textile manufacturers in Darlington, and he was the enterprising son of an enterprising father; moreover he worked for the infant Stockton and Darlington Railway Company as secretary.

Nevertheless his marriage did bring him financial gain, and the immediate ends of this gain were in the railway extension from Stockton to Middlesbrough, and in the purchase of the Middlesbrough Estate. This lack of unusualness in the acquisition of economic gain through marriage is illustrated by the Quaker historian Arthur Raistrick.[1] He notes the closeness of the 'interlinkage by marriage among say, the iron masters or the bankers'; and goes on to describe the situation where 'the Quaker industries became a close network of concerns tied together by family relationship'. For the Quaker businessman it seemed that financial help was never far away, for 'no small business stood alone', but Raistrick points out that there was more to consider than the crude financial side. Given Quaker witness 'it was almost inevitable that the choice of

1) Arthur Raistrick - Quakers in Science & Industry (1950 rep 1968), fn 45.

a partner should be restricted within a small group with similar religious and business interests'. Yet it was not simply a case of Quaker helping Quaker: as a group they had a reputation for soundness in business. Raistrick notes also that the 'corporate responsibility for solvency and honest dealing made the Quaker ventures into industry very sound', and so for the outsider this careful forethought 'made people willing to place their money in his hands when most other people were suspect'. Not only did this apply to business ventures, but to the actual money trade, banking, also. The Gurneys of Norwich themselves were textile weavers before they were bankers, and members of the family married back into textiles long before the union of Joseph and Emma.

The Gurneys' financial support for the purchase of the Middlesbrough Estate comes in three ways. Obviously Emma's money was at Joseph's disposal, and he was the leading light in the purchase; then directly the purchase was backed by the banking house of Francis Baring, Nathan Mayer Rothschild, Samuel Gurney and Moses Montefiore; and finally two of the six Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate were Henry Birkbeck and Simon Martin, both bankers of Norwich, and both influenced by the Gurney family.

This kind of support can be seen also by looking back at the original railway venture of 1825. Writing in 1831 Joseph Priestly[1] pointed out how costs could vary even within a very short time. An estimate for a line of 36 miles (including main line and branches) was given by Mr. G.Overton in 1820 as £84,000., and the 1821 Act of Parliament authorised the Company to raise amongst themselves the sum of '£82,000. in shares of £100. each, and, if necessary, a further

1) Joseph Priestly - A Historical Account of the Navigable Rivers, Canals, and Railways Throughout Great Britain (1831).

sum of £20,000. either amongst themselves, or by the creation of new shares, or they may borrow any portion of the said sums either by optional notes or by mortgage of the tolls and rates'.[1] It was at this point that the control of the company passed into the hands of the Quakers. A second Act was obtained in 1823, this time to cover 32 miles (this was the estimate of George Stephenson) and the cost was reduced to £74,300. A third Act was obtained in 1824 to enable a new branch line to be added, yet the Act also empowered the company to raise a further sum of £50,000. in spite of the fact that this additional line was estimated by Robert Stephenson to cost only £9,000. A final Act was passed in 1828 to make possible the Middlesbrough extension, and taking into account the erection of a bridge over the Tees and nearly five miles of rail was estimated at £47,605.13.6d. The Act empowered the company to raise an additional sum of £100,000. by any means authorised in their former Act, except promissory notes.

Thus costs were high in view of the limited initial aims of the railway. The Quakers controlled the line but the network had to be spread far wider than that of the Darlington Quakers, be they textile manufacturers or bankers. Not only were there costs for the actual construction of the railway, but there were high legal costs and compensations. A fairly recent local study[2] has shown that 'although Stockton and Darlington capitalists contributed liberally it was neither Darlington nor Stockton that found the major part of the money invested at the outset'. Examples of such investments include:

1) An Act for making and maintaining a Railway or Tramroad, from the River Tees, at Stockton, to Witton Park Colliery, with several branches therefrom, all in the County of Durham.

2) Robert Wood - West Hartlepool (1967), p. 8.

Table 1

Joseph Gurney of Norwich.	£14,000. on the first list.
Gurney & Co.	£20,000.
Richardson, Overend & Co.	£10,000.
Richardson, Fell & Gurney.	£ 3,000.
Joseph Gurney, for another.	£ 6,000.
Joseph Gurney & Co.	£ 1,000.
Thos. Richardson.	£10,000.

It has been said that of the 25 miles of railway constructed under the original scheme, at least twenty miles were made with Quaker money. Far from it being hard to come by the necessary capital, some of the details reveal a situation that suggests a rush of capital for this transport venture. It has been noted that Joseph Gurney put up £14,000. for the original on the first list, but this in fact contributed to a total of £120,900. which was nearly £40,000. in excess of the £82,000. actually authorised.

Joseph Pease himself reported in May 1826 on the railway's finance saying that he 'apprehended the principal strength of our railway proprietors are now in London'. Michael Robbins notes that it was the Darlington Quakers who had done the string pulling 'working on all their family connections'[1], and concludes that 'it was London money, then, on top of support in the north of England, that made it possible to open the Stockton & Darlington'.

1) Michael Robbins - The Railway Age (rev ed 1964), p. 93.

b) The Peases of Darlington as Manufacturers and Railway Pioneers

The Peases in Darlington were established as textile manufacturers long before the evolution of the public railway system. Their origins have been traced back to the early eighteenth century by Joseph Foster[1] in a privately circulated volume of detailed genealogy. In this Foster notes that the Peases of Darlington can be traced back to Joseph Pease of Shafton, in the parish of Felkirk, Yorkshire. This member of the family lived from 1665 to 1715, and was the father of the first of the Darlington Peases, Edward, who settled there in 1744.

It was in Darlington that Joseph Pease's wife Ann (nee Coldwell) inherited property, and this is what drew the son, Edward, into business in Darlington. This business was woolcombing, and initially Edward worked as a partner with Thomas Coldwell, and then came into property in his own right by marrying Elizabeth Coates, a Durham heiress, which enabled their son Joseph (1737 - 1808) to establish the firm of Joseph Pease & Sons. One of these sons was Edward Pease, known as 'father of the railways', who was also father of Joseph, the founder of Middlesbrough.

Writing within a generation of the founding of Middlesbrough, John James[2] noted the existence of the Darlington Peases in his history of worsted manufacture. Darlington appears, along with Norwich and Norfolk etc. as centres for the manufacture of 'stuffs', and such information was based on De Foe's English Tradesman (4 ed 1738) - James concludes that 'the making of worsted stuffs had been commenced at Darlington, affording another indication that the manufacture was fast spreading in the North of England'. For the particular firms James notes that the 'spinning of worsted yarn (was) ... carried on by Messrs.

1) Joseph Foster - Pease of Darlington (1891).

2) John James - The History of the Worsted Manufacture (1851, rep 1968), p 255.

Pease and also by Messrs. Backhouse'. This latter family were also Quakers. There are indications also that not only did the trade in Darlington increase, but the basis of manufacture within the textile industry became more varied.

Writing within three years of James, a local historian of Darlington gave a more detailed picture of the Pease as manufacturers[1]. Edward Pease is noted as one of the presidents of the Darlington Dispensary, along with other notables, Quaker businessmen and landed aristocrats alike, in the early nineteenth century. In describing the amount of spinning that took place, the writer refers to work both by hand and machine; and Pease is noted for paying £800. for spinning in Scotland alone in 1810, such was the amount of work available.

The extent of the Pease enterprise was again emphasised seven years later when the 'extensive woollen manufactory' was destroyed by fire. The property was valued at £30,000. and the number of workpeople thrown out of employment was 500. Looking also at the contemporary scene, after the coming of steam had reduced the number of looms operating, the writer still found that Pease remained important in this manufacture, as well as branching out into allied and other enterprises. For illustration the 1851 Great Exhibition is cited, where 'the material of the flags which form the exterior of the crystal palace fluttered a welcome to all was made here by Messrs. Pease and Co.; the iron was smelted by Pease coke: Mr. Pease's fire-bricks gained a prize'.

Yet in spite of the eventual diversity of Pease economic interests, probably far more has been written about this family in relation to the coming of the public railways. The inauguration of the Stockton to Darlington Railway in 1825 gives a gloss of heroic quality to this and other Pease enterprises, but there is by no means unanimity among

1) W.H.D.Longstaff - The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Darlington (1854), p. 318.

historians as to the nature and extent of this inauguration. The trend is for the uniqueness of the event of the Stockton and Darlington Railway to be played down as one gets near the time of fairly recent writing.

Samuel Smiles saw the event as unique, but not surprisingly George Stephenson took pride of place rather than Edward Pease.[1] In 1854 Smiles visited Darlington and interviewed Edward Pease in connection with his ~~re~~writing of the Life of George Stephenson[2], and although in the later work he limited the role of the engineer by including the efforts of his son, Robert, the major achievement remained in the hands of the Stephensons. Nevertheless he paid credit both to the character and the achievements of Edward Pease.

In his preface Smiles mentioned how when he was living in Newcastle he was 'enabled readily to visit Darlington, and to gather from the lips of the venerable Edward Pease, to whom he had been introduced by a letter from Robert Stephenson, the interesting history of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, of which Mr. Pease was the projector'. The term 'father of the railways' which has often been applied to Edward Pease, Smiles applies to Stephenson.

Pease[3] was in his eighty-eighth year when interviewed by Smiles. Nevertheless Smiles notes that 'he still possessed the hopefulness and mental vigour of a man in his prime'. He described how Pease had very great difficulty in getting together a company to support the railway project - at least locally, for it has already been noted how the business interests of the Quakers worked. Regarding these local interests, Smiles says that 'the people of the neighbourhood spoke of it as a ridiculous undertaking, and predicted that it would

1) Samuel Smiles - Lives of the Engineers, vol 3 (1862 rep 1968), pp 150-61.
2) This work ~~followed~~ was his first literary success, Life of George Stephenson (1857).
3) See plate 1 for portrait, in the appendices.

be the ruin of all who had to do with it'. Particularly he mentions the case of the 'Stockton merchants and shipowners, whom the formation of a railway was calculated so greatly to benefit; showing a marked lack of interest, to the extent that they 'gave the project no support, and not twenty shares were subscribed for in the whole town'.

Of course this analysis can be questioned. If one checks the original declared aims of the railway, the coal export trade did not figure highly. The benefits were to the domestic consumer of coal in the immediate area of the Tees: Stockton's original projected exports were to go no farther than the Cleveland area. Yet given Smiles' outlook, he goes on to credit Pease with the role of the entrepreneur, in that he persevered (a Smiles quality) with the formation of a company; induced friends, Quakers, and relations to unite with him and subscribe to the line.

The appearance of George Stephenson makes for the dramatic turning point with his conversion of Pease to the idea of a 'railway in preference to a tramroad'. This was then followed by the further suggestion that 'the locomotive engine with which he had been working the Killingworth Railway for many years past was worth fifty horses, and that engines made after a similar plan would yet entirely supersede all horse power upon railroads.'

This was followed by Pease's famous visit to Stephenson at Killingworth, and the demonstration of the capabilities of the locomotive, whereby 'from that day Edward Pease was a declared supporter of the locomotive engine'. This resulted in Pease having a clause inserted in the Act of 1823 whereby the company had power to work the railway by means of locomotives, and to use these for the transport of people as well as goods. Thus with the success of

the project Smiles claimed that Pease and his collaborators 'were laying the foundations of a system which was yet to revolutionise the internal communications of the world'.

Longstaff, although writing a local history, takes a more modified view of the amount of heroics involved in the Stockton and Darlington Railway than does Smiles.[1] Having mentioned the existence of tramroads in the eighteenth century, Longstaff attempted to locate Stephenson in the evolution of the railway by pointing out that 'before the success of Stephenson there were railways'. He does however qualify this by citing the primitive system of tracking, the smallness of the engines, and the general troublesome nature of the contrivances, and sees Blackett's experiments at Wylam in 1813 as the turning point, thus pre-dating the Darlington venture.

Even when he describes the new aspects of travel that the Pease venture introduced, Longstaff notes that 'Yet men did not grasp the invention or pay particular attention to it at that time.' A directory of 1827 is quoted as pointing out that 'several coaches drawn by horses, travelled daily, at the rate of seven to nine miles an hour on this railroad from Darlington to Stockton; while six locomotive engines were employed in the transit of goods'. Thus given the rather hit-and-miss nature of the undertaking (at least in terms of what soon followed) the writer adds that 'a train of coaches was a speculation of unheard of risk in the early days of the Stockton and Darlington. Passengers were not courted; almost they came uncalled for if they came at all'. Yet the conclusion is that 'the Success of the Stockton and Darlington experiment was instantly apparant in its results - a host of similar experiments'.

1) W.H.D.Longstaff - op cit pp 360-6.

Writing over a hundred years after Longstaff, Michael Robbins emphasises the role of the Stockton and Darlington Railway as one in a line of experiments rather than a turning point.[1] In an attempt to define the Railway Age he says 'it began with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1830 and lasted until the First World War.'

As to origins he concedes that 'the railway was a child of the English North-East' and that wagonways of a humble sort had been in use ... for something like 150 years before the Liverpool merchants in the eighteen-twenties staked large parts of their fortunes on rails and flanged wheels'. As to the Stockton and Darlington Railway specifically he notes that it 'marked a great step forward in the organisation of the railway; it brought together into one organism several of its principal features'; but maintains that 'it was the curtain-raiser, not the first act'. Two features are particularly isolated regarding the Quaker line: operation and finance. The first lacked the 'single operator' in that the railway was worked on the 'highway principle' whereby 'passengers ... were conveyed in horse-drawn coaches belonging to several different proprietors'. Regarding finance he notes that in the Stockton and Darlington's first Act 'there was no guidance whatever as to what this (proper Books of Accounts) meant'. Thus there was 'no account-ability to the public or to the stockholders'. Robbins can thus repeat that 'the Liverpool and Manchester was the place, and the year 1830 was the date, of the birth of the Railway Age ... for the first time, it became something different in kind, not merely in degree, from the earlier forms of inland transport by road and water'.

Finally a quite recent publication is even more adamant in

1) Michael Robbins - op cit pp 11, 20-1, 90-3.

the idea that the Stockton and Darlington was not a particularly unique venture. Jack Simmons[1] notes that 'before 1830 no major town in Britain had felt the impact of the railway to any significant degree'. Here Simmons is concerned with not only the size of the particular towns involved, but also with the lack of sophistication of the early systems.

Going back before the Liverpool and Manchester he notes that 'only two pairs of towns had yet been linked by rail', these being Cheltenham and Gloucester, and Stockton and Darlington. The first (by a line authorised in 1809) is seen as a line which 'remained modest in scope, useful as a conveyor of coal from Gloucester Quay, but otherwise barely perceptible as a factor in the economy of either town'. In the case of the Quaker line, the scale and the impact in an economic sense are not mentioned by Simmons: Stockton and Darlington are seen as 'both towns of minor importance'. The crucial urban result of the creation of Middlesbrough in the first extension of this line is also not mentioned.

Looking mainly at the scale of the towns before rather than after the coming of the railways, Simmons can say that 'the Liverpool and Manchester Railway however opened up a new world. When its public traffic started on 15th September 1830 the railway began to exercise, for the first time, its full impact upon two of the great cities in Europe'. If one takes this point of view, the uniqueness of the Quaker Line is no more, the heroic quality of the Pease enterprise evaporates, and other Pease enterprises are thus open to much more critical scrutiny than is usually given.

1) J.Simmons - The Power of the Railways (essay in Dyos & Wolff (eds) The Victorian City, 1973), p 277.

c) Pease the Quaker

Three things will mainly be considered here, and these in connection with the scheme of Joseph Pease for the new town of Middlesbrough. First there is the question of tradition, second expertise, and third moral conviction.

I have, later on, made some general references to the Quaker tradition of town planning[1]. A more detailed insight into an important part of this tradition can be obtained from a work by an American scholar, who, in her biography of William Penn[2], has worked both from available documents and has trodden the ground in Philadelphia.

Acknowledging that Penn was 'far from being the first town planner', Catherine Owen Peare shows how he fitted into a long tradition; in fact at least 150 years before Joseph Pease. She shows how systematically he had the site for Philadelphia surveyed and later developed. 'His city was not to grow up in an unplanned shamble, neither was it to suffer from the unwholesome crowding and congestion of London or Paris'. This reaction on the part of Penn to the winding streets of London played a great part in the intense symmetry of his Philadelphia. Yet the reaction was not simply one of aesthetics as has sometimes been suggested: 'Penn had seen London ridden by plague incubated within her own premises; he had seen her destroyed by fire and rebuilt largely upon the same unplanned, inconvenient lines; he had seen too many houses grow back into too little space and labyrinthian streets reappear'. The practical aim was very strong.

His town was to be both beautiful and practical. He envisaged

1) See pp 78 and 493.

2) Catherine Owen Peare - William Penn (1957), pp 225-6, 249-50.

a town with 'straight streets running uniform down to the water from the country bounds, and houses built upon a line, and every house placed in the middle of its plot, as to the breadth way of it, that so there may be ground on each side for gardens or orchards, or fields, that it may be a green country town, which will never be burned, and always be wholesome'. It is interesting here to compare this vision with that of Pease: both were Quakers, one had the advantage of living a century and a half after the other, yet the vision was less, and the execution of that vision was fractional.

Not only was Penn an urban planner, but in coining the name of his town[1] pursued an ideal of government. Middlesbrough has been praised[2] for the initiative it took from its inception in the field of local government, and Pease also had an ideal as the Covenants show. Yet whereas Penn created strong local government, Pease let aspects of control fall into the hands of others in what often seems a careless way. This quality of control and devolution, Peare sees as showing in Penn 'his true greatness more clearly than at any other time in his life, first in his sincere humility in seeking the counsel and wisdom of other learned men, and second in being able to sign away personal power'. By comparison the huge gap in the case of Pease between his documentary vision and the laissez-faire attitude to the developers of his sites, offers a considerable contrast.

The actual choice of site offers comparisons with that of Middlesbrough: in both cases the founder approached the area by a

1) Being a classical scholar, Penn combined the Greek words 'philos' and 'adelphos'.

2) A good example is W.W.Lillie (op cit) when he uses such phrases as 'the enterprise and leadership that has made this town the prosperous hive of industry that it is today'. Yet this example taken from his introduction represents only the latest link in a very long chain.

river. Pease's reaction will later be noted; Penn approached the site (called Coaquannock by the Indians) and saw an area that suited his own instruction 'be sure to make your choice where it is most navigable, high, dry and healthy'. On the site where already there were ten houses standing in a row, 'some brick, some wood, some unfinished' he laid out his town.

The lay-out offers comparisons with Middlesbrough. The streets of Philadelphia were straight and parallel, 'a wide avenue called High Street (later changed to Market) traversing the length of the city through its centre from river to river, and another called Broad Street bisecting it. Where the two thoroughfares crossed a wide area was left for an open park'. Superficially Middlesbrough had the same symmetry, but not the same breathing space. Yet it is in execution of the Plan that the greatest contrast arises.

Pease notes that by the first summer the number of completed houses was nearly eighty, and 'another year would see 357 completed and a resident population of around 2,500. Many of the houses were of brick, many were affluent, for not all of the Quakers and others who came were poor by any means'. Such mixture and growth applied equally to Middlesbrough. Nevertheless the plan was adhered to: Penn retained his control for long enough. He 'stayed with her long enough to see her economic life lines well established. He had united her many kinds into a single community, and guided them into keeping faith with their own peaceable intent'. Thus it was that Penn could report on his arrival back in England that 'not one soldier, or arms borne, or militial man seen, since I was first in Pennsylvania'. He made sure that the physical appearance of his town followed his plan, but his ultimate concern was with the quality of life. Although 150 years ahead of Pease in time, he not

1) See p 61 of this thesis.

only built his town as intended, but also saw that the life lived in that town was of a civilised standard commensurate with the orderliness of the plan.

It was not simply that Pease had the example of a fellow Quaker before him in this way, but the tradition continued, and sometimes over-spilled into other philosophies. Looking at the century in which Penn was active, a recent historian of town planning has noted that 'the ideal of utopia continued in subsequent years and was to feed its life blood into the stream of nineteenth-century thinking and activities'.[1] Whilst noting that the essence of Renaissance utopias was that 'they were myths' he points out that Penn 'translated an ideal from myth to reality'. In the realm of the continuing tradition, Pease had the example of Owen, and only a generation earlier.

Owen himself has acknowledged the influence of the earlier Quaker town planners in helping him to formulate his aims at New Lanark. In this case the community had been laid out by his father-in-law, David Dale, but the 'quality of life' aspect came from Owen. He aimed to make New Lanark not only an efficient economic unit but also 'a well-governed human community based on his ideals'. Here one can again make comparisons with the Middlesbrough aim, and make contrasts with the reality. Cherry has noted that Owen's schemes of social reform were comprehensive in that 'housing accommodation was increased from one to two rooms, and insanitary ashpits were removed from the front of buildings. There were daily sweepings of the streets and lectures were given on house cleanliness'. Yet

1) G.E.Cherry - Town Planning in its Social Context (1970), pp 14, 20-1.

this was a far cry from Pease's Middlesbrough, although what Owen was attempting was no secret; just the reverse: whatever he could do to make known and popularise his system, Owen did. 'Small wonder', Cherry notes, 'that New Lanark became a centre of attraction with 20,000 visitors between 1815 and 1825 including statesmen, philanthropists, bishops, foreign princes, dukes and ambassadors'. There can be no likelihood that Pease did not hear of Owen's community, which received its maximum publicity during the formative years of both the Stockton and Darlington Railway, and the opening of that railway which was soon to lead to the creation of Middlesbrough.

Another example of how the fact of the formation and state of new towns came before the public was in the response to the publication of Charles Dickens' observations of America in 1842. In a foreward to the 1932 edition of this book, Metcalf Wood described the success of the book as 'instantaneous'; and the author himself remarked in December 1842 that 'The American Book has been a most complete and thorough-going success. Four large editions have now been sold and paid for and it has won golden opinion from all sorts of men'.

Dickens visited Philadelphia during this trip and noted that 'it is a handsome city, but distractingly regular'. He felt that he 'would have given the world for a crooked street'. This somewhat ironic comment in relation to what has been noted about Penn, shows how far the author failed to understand the problems that the Quaker founder faced, or what his full intentions really were. Yet this aside, Dickens' comments can have had no influence on the development of Middlesbrough, whose regular lay-out was at the very time that Dickens wrote, becoming if not crooked, then at least no longer

1) Charles Dickens - American Notes (1842), Chap. VII.

handsome. Dickens' comments however did remind his readers of the Quaker origins of Philadelphia, and therefore of the Quaker tradition in this respect, for he goes on, 'The collar of my coat appeared to stiffen, and the brim of my hat to expand, beneath its Quakerly influence. My hair shrunk into a sleek short crop, my hands folded themselves upon my breast of their own accord, and thoughts of taking lodgings in Mark Lane over against the Market Place, and of making a large fortune by speculations in corn, came over me involuntarily'.[1]

On this same trip, Cincinnati was visited, and it will be noted how this city has been compared to Middlesbrough. Dickens however was impressed with the city, but as much as he admired the 'broad and airy' streets, he was delighted by the 'varying styles' of the private residences which were also noted for their 'elegance and neatness'. The more one reads the account of Cincinnati, the more dissimilar Middlesbrough appears, but the mere fact of Dickens writing serves to remind one of a tradition which Pease nominally aspired to, but whose achievements fell far short of the examples quoted by Dickens.

Apart from Owenism and written accounts of the Quaker urban tradition, there is no doubt that Pease followed the Quaker practice of travelling between groups of Friends for both business and religious purposes. Raistrick notes that 'the regular coming together at Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, along with the custom of extensive travelling in visitation and ministry, was another powerful factor in drawing together Quaker business into a compact mutual relationship.' Although such travel was one means of bringing the Society of Friends into a more coherent whole, it

1) Remarks by Landor Praed, later writing p 464.

nevertheless had a number of side effects. There was the obvious one of material gain, but also the Friends themselves gained a more worldwide view of society and the possibilities of social development from the simple fact that they had seen many more places than most of their contemporaries.

Raistrick almost gives this fact of travel the sanction of a rule in saying that 'the whole history of the Society of Friends from its very inception, is marked by the constant inter-visitation between meetings'; and not only in this country but 'over the whole world'.[1] Yet in the process of material gain, there was some falling off from strict Quaker observance, for instance 'the great wealth of the Gurneys led many of them into unquakerly habits and into the sharp distinctions drawn between many of themselves and the 'plain' Friends ... which led so many of them out of the Society of Friends and into marriage with non-Friends'. It was also the case that sometimes a side effect of travel and worldly success would lead a Friend to remain within the Society, but in more and more of a nominal role. Such an example can be seen from John Gurney whereby his brother Joseph 'remained a 'plain' Friend, observing much of the Quaker simplicity in life and habits, dress and speech, careful in business not to move outside the testimonies and advice of the Society' while John 'became a 'gay' Friend, accepting a brightness and gaiety of dress far removed from Quaker simplicity, entertaining on a lavish scale, and mingling almost indistinguishably with Society at large'.[1]

In the case of Joseph Pease his dress and manner remain very Quakerly, and the most noticeable example was his conduct as a

1) A.Raistrick - op cit pp 46, 78, 340.

member of parliament during the 1830's, but he did not follow the 'plain' Friends who 'tended to restrict their business to modest dimensions, and keep it on innocent lines'.[1] Yet although 'in the heavy industries, iron and mining, as in woollens and banking, some of the Friends went 'gay' and lived according to the normal standards their wealth would secure for them', this was never wholly true of Joseph Pease.[2]

Not too surprisingly there was a fall-off from Quakerism in later generations in Joseph Pease's family: as soon as one looks at details of the life of his son, Joseph Whitwell, there are divergencies to note, and in the following generation there seems an end to Quaker profession. Yet although Joseph may have retained much of his fundamental religion, in spite of the side effects of his travel, there remains the fact that he did see many places apart from Darlington, his home, and Middlesbrough, his creation; and there is no reason to believe that he should not have been influenced by this experience when it came to the early development of his coal port of Middlesbrough. If his faith helped him to resist the temptations of materialism it might also have helped him stick to a Quaker tradition of urban creation, especially as his original scheme was on such a comparatively small scale.

Linked to Joseph's experience of travel, was his political career. He was M.P. for South Durham from 1832 to 1841, which involved him in a lot of travel in both London and South Durham. In this respect it is interesting to look at some of the statements and incidents involved in the 1832 election: the time when he had first to put himself across to the electorate, and the time when he was nearest to the urban development of Middlesbrough, which he

1) A.Raistrick - op cit p 343.
2) See plate 2 for portrait, in appendices.

had initiated. Shortly after his adoption as a parliamentary candidate he wrote to a local newspaper a letter addressed to the 'independent' electors of South Durham. In this he pledged himself to support 'the interests of my native county' in that 'the prosperity of all classes is near to my heart'. Having thus identified himself with the lower as well as the upper orders of society, he declared that 'I would never yield to mean compliances or cowardly expedients'.[1] Such statements became ironical when only a few miles from where they are uttered, the infant town of Middlesbrough was already starting the distortion of Pease' own plan.

A week later a second letter from Pease contains two notable statements. In the current controversy regarding the abolition of the import duties on corn, Pease writes: 'I am without stake as a landowner ... and I am aware of what has been said on the existing corn laws, and objectionable as they appear to me in principle, I am an advocate for protection being afforded to the agriculturalist in the present state of things'.[2]

The second part of this quotation contradicts the letter of the week previously. Having stated his principle, he is nevertheless willing to compromise in the circumstances. Needless to say, at the time South Durham was considered mainly an agricultural division, although of course industry was on the increase. But the first part of the quote takes some swallowing. Certainly Pease was not a landowner in the strictly agricultural sense, but he had only three years previously purchased the Middlesbrough Estate, along with his five colleagues, of 500 acres. Some of this land was set aside for urban development, some was for industrial purposes,

1) Durham Advertiser, 17th Aug. 1832.

2) Durham Advertiser, 24th Aug. 1832.

and some continued to be used as farming land. At the very least Pease' statement was misleading and required much qualification. Given all the rhetoric built up around the person of Joseph Pease and the town of Middlesbrough, one would have expected him to have publicised his infant social experiment on such an occasion.

Regarding the actual tactics of this election there is room to doubt the snow-white idealism that Pease professed. Of course one has to take into account the hurly-burly of the nineteenth century hustings, especially so in this first election of a reformed parliament, and in the context of a newspaper far from in accord with Pease. Even so, in a letter to this newspaper from the supporters of one of Pease' opponents, Shafto, great complaint was made of unfairness on the part of the Pease camp.

The occasion was an attempt on the part of Shafto to address the electors of Darlington, the very heart of the Pease organisation. This attempt was said to have met 'an uproar of a most outrageous and indecent nature on the part of Mr. Pease's friends ... was continued with such determination that Mr. Shafto could not be heard'. It was alleged that the situation continued to such a degree that Shafto's attempt to speak had to be abandoned. In the same issue, a letter from Pease's supporters denied the premeditated nature of the incident. They put the blame on the particular supporters of Shafto who were present that evening in Darlington in that they provoked disorder by such acts as 'hissing as they passed Edward Pease's house'.[1]

Throughout the campaign Pease denied any parliamentary ambition on his part. His standing was said to be solely in response to

1) Durham Advertiser - 7th Sept. 1832.

the 'call' from the people of Durham; some 800 to 1,000 were said to have pressed him to stand. The newspaper denied this claim by Pease in an editorial[1], and hinted that there were other reasons for Pease's disinclination, but no details followed these hints.

In spite of all the circumstances of the 1832 election, and the less than objective view of the newspaper quoted, there still remain some doubts as to the sincerity of Pease; if not in regard to the electors of South Durham, then at least in regard to many of the new citizens of Middlesbrough.

Nevertheless, when Pease came up for re-election, his confidence in his own sincerity was, if anything, augmented. His address to the electors of South Durham stressed his recent experience by emphasising, 'at what cost, at what sacrifice of domestic comfort ... the honest representative can do his duty'. Yet personally he found that, 'we have been tried and found true', and thus deserved, 'the language of congratulation'. Not only did he emphasise his endurance, but felt it necessary once again to stress his integrity by pointing out that he 'cannot be bought ... conscience rules'.[2]

1) Durham Advertiser, 14th Sept. 1832.

2) The Yorkshireman, 24th Jan. 1835.

3) The Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate

a) Personnel

The basic element binding together the original six owners of the Middlesbrough Estate was that they were Quakers. The moving force among them is most often seen to be Joseph Pease. His qualities have been referred to already, and among late nineteenth century writers there is little disagreement. Looking at Joseph alongside his brothers, his sister-in-law noted that the eldest son John 'was of a thoughtful disposition' and that from the age of nineteen he spoke as a 'minister in their meetings', and what would equip him even less for the sort of role pursued by Joseph, that 'till his death, at the age of seventy, he was a rare example of dedication of heart and conscientious following of what he believed to be right'.[1]

Two other brothers (Isaac and Edward) died young, and only Henry (Mary Pease 's husband) seems to have had similar qualities to Joseph. Yet Mary gives little information as to his character, although the book is about him: she shows proper Quaker modesty, so Joseph emerges predominant as a business leader in that he was 'tall, pleasant looking, with winning manners, he was popular wherever he went ... he naturally came to the front in every enterprise'.

Besides Joseph, the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, were Thomas Richardson, a merchant of Ayton and London, cousin to Joseph's father; Henry Birkbeck, a banker of Norwich, and Simon Martin, a banker of Norwich, both friends of the Gurney family; Edward

1) Mary H.Pease - Henry Pease (2 ed 1898), pp 8-9.

Pease, merchant of Stockton, Joseph's brother; and Francis Gibson, brewer of Saffron Walden, husband of Joseph's sister, Elizabeth.

By stages the entire ownership of the land of the O.M.E. came into the hands of the Pease family. In 1835 Edward Pease died, which could have left only Joseph Pease as a shareholder directly within the family, but in the same year Thomas Richardson went abroad, and by power of attorney his shares passed into the hands of John, Joseph and Henry Pease. Yet three years later there is mention of Thomas Richardson as a Middlesbrough Owner, of Ayton and Stamford Hill.

In 1841 there are four shareholders. Thirty per cent each are held by Joseph Pease, Thomas Richardson and Henry Birkbeck, and the remaining ten per cent by Henry Pease. In 1848 Henry Birkbeck died, and his shares passed to his son, and ten years later the Pease family are in full ownership of the company. Joseph died in 1872, and in the following year the ownership of the company was in the hands of his brother Henry, and his sons, Joseph Whitwell, Edward, and Arthur.

Even before the Pease family were thus in full possession, the other shareholders were closely related by faith, marriage and economic interest. Between the Stockton and Darlington Railway Co. and the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate there was obviously a close connection. Not only were the economic aims compatible, but some of the men were in both concerns, Joseph Pease and Thomas Richardson. It was in fact in the connection with the railway rather than the town, that Mary Pease notes her husband's memory thus, 'After his brother Joseph's death in 1872, Henry Pease used to remark that he was the last survivor of that little company

who, by making this short journey (the trial run in 1825) the day before the line was opened to the public, could say they were the first to travel by the aid of steam'.[1] That such close connection between ownership of town and railway was continued, and in fact became even more interlocked with other ventures such as the new Middlesbrough dock, was assured by the business behaviour of the Pease family.[2]

1) Mary H.Pease - op cit p 13.

2) In order to make clearer the actual relation of many members of the Pease family, three pieces of genealogy are given in the appendices:
   a) the members of the family that are mentioned in this thesis as either writers or those written about;
   b) the part of the family linking Joseph Pease of Shafton with Joseph Pease of Southend;
   c) the families of Edward Pease the elder and Joseph Pease the younger.

b) O.M.E. Purchase - The Virgin Site

A number of different accounts exist as to what exactly Middlesbrough consisted of before the urban development of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. There is a variation in respect of the number of houses, and confusion regarding the number of people living there. Sometimes there is scathing comment on the barren nature of the lower Tees, especially in comparison with what was to follow. The basis of the first variation concerns the attempt to compare the land initially bought by the O.M.E. and the Middlesbrough township (itself part of the parish of Middlesbrough); the first was smaller than the second: both the number of houses were fewer, and population figures become confused when presenting township, or even parish, figures as part of the population trend of the original town. The comment relating to the economic value of the pre-industrial site is usually related to the small population that was known to exist there, and sometimes to make a contrast with the economic output of the town.

Writing just after the first generation of modern Middlesbrough, Longstaff described the site of the 1820's as 'a decayed vill of some three or four farm-houses'. He makes the contrast with the potential realised by 'the far sighted Friends' who in relation to the facilities at Stockton decided that 'the water was deeper, and the facilities for shipping was better lower down the river'.[1]

Two generations later Mary Pease presented a more gentle picture of the same scene. Having described the establishment of the Stockton

1) W.H.D.Longstaff - op cit p 364.

and Darlington Railway, she noted that 'at this time the river Tees, flowing past Stockton, made its way to the sea through a flat, and almost uninhabited district'. However her picture is uninspiring in that she describes the banks thus, 'on each side of the river there was an expanse of sand and mud, and beyond this stretched wide fields, with a few storm-driven trees and an occasional farm-house'.[1] Like Longstaff she was impressed by the later developments, but unlike him she found no need to stress an earlier decay, if indeed such a decline had ever happened.

A decade later J.S.Fletcher enthused about the growth of some of the towns of Yorkshire, and asserted that 'most marvellous of all developments in the matter of population is that of Middlesbrough, a town whose entire population was housed under one roof in 1820'.[2] Such an assertion would need far more qualification than Fletcher gives, and the impression left is inaccurate. Moreover he finds that the great change in the area came with 'the discovery of iron ore in Cleveland by Mr. John Vaughan in 1831'. Thus the picture becomes even more fictitious. The writer leaves the description of pre-1800 Middlesbrough, 'a lonely marsh'.

Yet sixty years after Fletcher, the same kind of amazement is still expressed. Commenting on the rise of a number of Western cities in the nineteenth century, Emrys Jones used Middlesbrough as his main example in showing that there were towns that 'grew from almost literally nothing'.[3] Taking a sociological approach to urban geography, Jones noted that 'in 1801 there were only 25 people living on the site of Middlesbrough', and even thirty years later this had increased to 'only 154'. The next ten years, i.e. the 1830's, saw the population take-off, which enabled Middlesbrough to share in the 'phenomenal increases of the mid-century'.

1) Mary H.Pease - op cit p 17. Yorkshire (1908), p 37.
2) J.S.Fletcher - A Book about
3) Emrys Jones - Towns & Cities (1966), p 55.

Jones is not accurate when he states that the population of 25 was living on the site of the later town of Middlesbrough, but one can fairly make the point that the area did experience a very rapid population increase as a result of industrialisation. Yet having noted that 'the industrial city, the direct outcome of the industrial revolution, was the result of a much faster and wider urban growth than anything that preceded it; it is surprising that Jones should be so amazed that the population did not increase quickly until after precisely such industrialisation. Whilst there was only fairly scattered farming in the area, a rapid population increase could not have been expected, and indeed if such had occurred would have been the cause of amazement, not the other way round. It was on the initiatives of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate with their grid-iron plan that urbanisation and therefore urban population came, and of these Jones makes no mention. The picture left of Middlesbrough before the work of the O.M.E. is one of backwardness in a particular thirty years when many other industrial areas were growing by leaps and bounds.

Stressing a similar backwardness, but from a different angle, W.G.Hoskins, writing ten years before Jones, wrote of the Quakers having 'created their planned town upon the empty farmland', and thus enabling themselves to draw 'their straight lines and (make) their rectangles without hindrance from any legal or physical obstacle'.[1] Opportunity is the note that Hoskins strikes in this context. Opportunity and organisation. 'The planned town' he reminds us 'is the product of the big capitalists - kings, bishops, abbots, in mediaeval times; town corporations, dukes and Quaker syndicates in modern times'.

1) W.G.Hoskins - The Making of the English Landscape (1955), pp 213-4.

By modern times he here referred to the pre-twentieth century! with the coming of very modern times, only governments could afford to lay out new towns. Hoskins ignores the human obstacle in all this: he does not ask how successfully the Quaker town fared. Interestingly in his photograph of Middlesbrough, which he uses to illustrate 'a nineteenth-century planned town', the town itself is absent. He shows the post 1850's growth which was to the south of the planned town, and missing from the photograph is what he himself described as 'a fascinating piece of Victorian social history'. Yet his text conveys the pre-urban emptiness of the area before the schemes of Joseph Pease and his partners.

One voice which dissents from the account of pre-urban desolation and waste is Thomas Parrington. He was born in the farm-house in Middlesbrough ten years before Pease conceived the idea of a coal port there. He gave a number of interviews to the press, thus his impressions of the area both before and after urbanisation are recorded.[1]

Referring to 1808 when his father took up the tenancy of the farm at Middlesbrough he has noted that 'the house ... stood on elevated ground, surrounded by most excellent grass land, close to the river Tees'.[2] About the smallness of the population he leaves us in no doubt, for he points out that his father was 'the only responsible person in the parish, and was constable, overseer, churchwarden and surveyor of the highways'. The farm-house itself he described as

1) Thos. Parrington (1818-1915) was the youngest son of John Whitfield Parrington, who was tenant for the Middlesbrough Farm from 1808 to 1829, the landlord being William Chilton of Billingham, from whom the Quakers purchased the site for their town and industry.

2) See photographs, plates 3 and 4.

'a good one and comfortable and from the windows we had the most lovely and uninterrupted view of the range of the Cleveland Hills'. Not surprisingly he resented those 'ignorant people (who) have described Middlesbrough before falling into the hands of the Quakers as a wretched single dwell on a dismal swamp, a sad libel on the dear old place'. He admits that 'it was certainly lonely' but adds that it was 'a lovely place, to which all our family were most devotedly attached'.[1]

Apart from any scenic value that the area possessed before industrialisation, Parrington mentioned also some economic activity, in that 'in the rich pastures round the house, my father's famous herd of shorthorns were to be found', and instances of people 'finding' them are given, in that 'people used to come from great distances to see them and I remember when a lad, seeing the first Lord Feversham drive up in his yellow chaise and pair'.

Allowance has to be made for the subjective element in Parrington's testimony, but what he says throws much doubt on the dismal view of pre-industrial Middlesbrough. It was certainly not a populous place, but in a limited agricultural way, it was maybe as successful as many aspects of later industrialisation. At least the inhabitants were happy and healthy,[2] which is more than can be said for many of the industrial citizens in the nineteenth century following the Quaker economic miracle.

1) The Parrington quotes are taken from 'the Uniqueness of Middlesbrough's History', being two interviews (one by Parrington and one by Sir William Crosthwaite) in an attempt to span the history of the town within the memory of two men. This was published by Norman Moorsom, about the time of the creation of the County Borough of Teesside, April 1968.

2) Details of the farm-house are known. In 1890 a relation of Parrington sent drawings of the farm to Mr. Alfred Sockett, of the Middlesbrough Town Clerk's Department, although asking to remain anonymous from any use of this material.

c) O.M.E. Purchase - Early Doubts Regarding Development

Apart from what the site was like before the Quakers' urban plans, there was some doubt as to how far, if at all, the O.M.E. could make a success of their venture. These doubts have been based on the indignation of the pre-industrial people of Middlesbrough, on a more genuine assessment of economic possibilities, while the actual schemes and prognostications of the Quakers have sometimes been exaggerated. Such exaggerations spring from a number of sources. Sometimes the Quakers have been given credit for the establishment of the iron industry on Teesside, which gave the great impetus to urban growth; sometimes the later nineteenth century town has been attributed to Quaker planning. No douht there are elements of truth in both claims, but both are exaggerated. Certainly Joseph Pease did encourage other manufacturers to come to the infant Middlesbrough, including Bolckow and Vaughan. These men pioneered the iron industry in the area however, and they had little to do with early Quaker expectations. Certainly also the town of the later nineteenth century was related to the earlier ideas, but the Quaker influence was oblique. The original Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate planned a small town of limited economic scope; the later town came as a result of other people and other economic forces: original influence was exerted by the continued land ownership of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, but here the influence was not towards any comprehensive idea of planning, rather to a mild say in what developmentswere to take place. Some examples will illustrate these points.

Mention has already been made of the Parrington family, who occupied the Middlesbrough Farm at the time the Quakers were contemplating their purchase. Tom Parrington's memories were simply those of a child, but some of his father's thoughts at the time have been recorded. The Stockton historian, Michael Heavisides, has noted that at the time of the negotiations for the sale of the estate his father knew Parrington senior quite well.[1] He has recounted that 'When the originators of the railway were in treaty with Mr. Chilton for purchasing his estate at Middlesbrough, I happened to dine one day with Mr. Parrington, at his solitary farm-house there'. It seems that the conversation turned to the possibility of the sale of the estate, and one of the other guests supposed that the Quakers at Darlington were about to buy the farm in order to build a town. To this Parrington relied, 'What, build a town at this out-of-the-way place ... Time works wonders, but I'll be hanged if I don't turn this house into a public-house and hoist the sign of the "Quakers' Arms", as I suppose if a town is built here it will be a Quaker one'.

The farmer's incredulity was changed with time. Yet others also shared his scepticism. Chilton, the land vendor, included. In a short biography of Tom Parrington, Joseph Pease's grandson has noted that 'When the Peases purchased the Middlesbrough farm it is said that Tom Parrington's father joined in Mr. Chilton's laughter at the Quakers' folly in thinking that the farm could ever become a Port and a suitable place to which to bring their railway and the

1) M.Heavisides (ed) - The History of the First Public Railway (1912), pp 77-8. In this book Heavisides refers to his father's book, 'The Annals of Stockton-on-Tees, published by his own press in 1865.

coals of South Durham for shipment'.[1] The writer no doubt put this episode down to rural naivety: understandable but amusing given the aftermath.

A much more recent writer stresses the difficulties, and therefore provides a basis for legitimate doubt in the O.M.E. venture, when having acknowledged that 'until the early part of the nineteenth century, sleepy-looking Yarm was the chief port and shipbuilding centre on the Tees, with nearby Stockton taking second place' he points out that 'the mudflats nearer Teesmouth frustrated all attempts to construct shipyards and docks at Middlesbrough'.[2]

Brown is concerned to show the difficulties facing any group of industrialists in connection with the Tees lower than Stockton, and duly apportions credit to the O.M.E. by stressing that 'If the right men had not appeared at the right time ... Middlesbrough might still have been a name on the mudflats'. He singles out not surprisingly Joseph Pease as he 'who perhaps did more than anyone else to make modern Middlesbrough'.

This again is somewhat exaggerated - it depends what one means by modern Middlesbrough. If the big change is after 1850 rather than after 1830, then it must be the iron manufacturers to whom one must turn for responsibility. Some writers have in fact pointed out the limitations of the early plans of the O.M.E. and given these limited initial aims, responsibility for later developments must lie elsewhere - both in a negative as well as a sense of achievement.

1) Sir A.E.Pease - Thomas Parrington 1818-1915 (1923) first published in the Yorkshire Agricultural Society's Journal (1923), p 4.

2) Alfred J.Brown - Fair North Riding (1952), p 181.

Such a writer was G.M.Tweddell[1], who knew Middlesbrough well in the later nineteenth century. In a useful way he points out what many others have missed in later work that the 'Middlesbrough Owners ... purchased from Mr. William Chilton one of the four farms in the township of Middlesbrough'. If comparisons are to be made with growth in the early town, it must be the Parrington farm only that is taken into account. If comparison is to be made with the growth of population and the way that Middlesbrough spread itself in the later nineteenth century, then other pre-1830 parts of the parish that were inhabited can be included, but with proper explanation.

Having noted that at the ceremony to celebrate the railway extension to Middlesbrough and the birth of the new town, all there 'entertained glowing hopes of the prosperity of the new venture', Tweddell then looks ahead to what he knew by hindsight. He comments that 'none then were as very sanguine as to imagine for one moment that its (the town of Middlesbrough) miles of streets would ever extend far beyond the proposed new town ...'. Here he is showing clearly that the Owners limited their urban hopes to the 32 acres of the Pease Plan: the rest of the purchase was thus for industrial purposes. It is clearly not appropriate to attribute to the Owners the success of schemes of which they never dreamed.

The way in which such can be attributed, can be seen from Sir William Savage's study of comparative urban development.[2] In his

1) G.M.Tweddell - The History of Middlesbrough (1889). This is the Tweddell manuscript kept by Middlesbrough Central Library. A number of writers have been very impressed by this document, but while it is useful, its special interest seems mainly to be that it is in manuscript form - most similar sources are printed.

2) Sir William Savage - The Making of Our Towns (1952), fn 145.

chapter on Industry and the Growth of Towns, he devotes a section to the Industrial Revolution where he deals with Middlesbrough. Here again is the familiar 'the most striking example of mushroom growth is Middlesbrough;, without any real qualification regarding planned and unplanned development, or successful and unsuccessful execution of any such planning. It seems very reasonable to compare the town and its rate of growth with Barrow, South Shields, and St. Helens, as Savage does, but accuracy regarding what actually happened in Middlesbrough would help.

His Middlesbrough is a site that 'in 1830 (possessed) only a solitary farm-house' and then almost in fairy-tale fashion 'a company laid out 500 acres as a market town and as such it grew to 5,700 in 1841, then iron industry developed and later other business and its population in 1949 was 145,000'. The whole picture seems so deterministic. There is no proper account of the pre-1830 situation, and although 500 acres were purchased, only 32 of these were laid out in the way that is suggested. Even the account of the nature of the urban plan is distorted. Middlesbrough was never intended as a market town, even in its coal port days; there were moves to establish a market there, but the institution never really challenged even quite small nearby places such as Stokesley or Yarm, to say nothing of Stockton.[1] The population figure for 1841 refers to the parish of Middlesbrough which included Linthorpe which was never a part of the Pease Plan, or even a part of the original purchase of land[2]; the population figure should have been only that for the township, and even so, with some qualification.

1) Currently (1975) Stockton Market is still a thriving institution whilst Middlesbrough Market closed in 1959, and was a diminishing concern long before that.

2) Linthorpe did by the end of the nineteenth century become a suburb to the south of the main commercial and industrial centre.

Savage's account of early Middlesbrough does show however the need to state clearly the initial aims of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, as Tweddell has done 63 years earlier. Those aims may have been over-ambitious in the eyes of Chilton and Parrington, but at least they were within the bounds of contemporary possibility, which Savage's aims were not. If the initial aims had been in any way near to Sir William's Middlesbrough, then not only would there have been much greater doubt regarding the infant town, but that town would never have been started in the first place.

d) Early Civic Plans

The clearest statement of the civic intentions of Pease and the other Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate can be seen from a document drawn up between them and the first purchasers of plots for building.[1] This document of 13 pages and a land plan falls into two unequal parts. First the document deals with the people and the land in question, and second it lays down the rules for the construction of the early town. A copy of the land plan to which frequent reference is made in the agreement is included in the Appendices.

In the first part of this document the Owners and the purchasers are named; in some cases there are purchasers who have acquired more than one plot of land, e.g. Henry Pease has 15 plots, Richard Otley 12 plots, and Robert Elliott 8 plots: obviously some speculation. The land is then defined by actual area, reference is made to the division of the town area into 123 plots.[2] While still concerned with this first part of the document, some interesting remarks appear which illuminate the prior feelings and the future intentions of the Owners. On page 2

1) Middlesbrough Owners' Deed of Covenants 8th Feb. 1831.

2) In fact 125 plots are available by the sub-division of plots 14 and 15. See Otley map in the appendices. The plots are on the west end of Commercial and Dacre Streets.

one sees, 'whereas the said parties' (the Owners) 'previously to their entering into any contracts with the said parties hereto of the second part' (the purchasers) 'for the sale of any of the said lots did agree at their own cost and charges to make and form streets and other public passages on certain parts of the said hereditaments and premises ... delineated on the said plan with such view as hereinbefore mentioned to the formation of the said town of Middlesbrough ...'.

Having thus committed themselves to laying out the streets, the Owners also went on to the problem of the maintenance of such streets: 'all future contracts ... subject to the ... plan ... and the formation and keeping in repair of streets, causeways and sewers and the nature of the buildings to be erected ... And ... that the said stipulations shall be embodied in covenants.' The second part of the document consists of 26 covenants which attempt to give the intentions of the Owners some binding force.

The Covenants can be analysed in a number of ways. A fairly straight-forward break-down is to look at these rules under three main headings: intentions regarding the actual fabric of the town, the maintenance of reasonable standards, and the institutions for supervising the scheme.

Regarding the urban fabric the Owners promised that within four years they would lay-out, form and macadamize or pave the several roads, streets, and public passages. Also they would construct paved causeways or footways by the sides of such streets, etc. with durable materials. Within this same period they would construct sewers: this they describe in detail, 'cut, dig, open, construct

and complete in through over or under the said streets and public passages respectively such sewers conduits gutters sinks and watercourses for conveying and carrying off the water from the messuages, tenaments or dwellinghouses... into the river Tees'. All such covenants go into this amount of detailed description; and this work, as in many other instances, is to be under the supervision of a surveyor to be appointed. Moreover they promise to construct a road of 40' width from the town to the railway terminus.

Although the Owners did not make themselves responsible for any actual house building - this was left to the buyers of the plots - they did lay down quite detailed standards regarding both the durability and the appearance of the houses to be erected on their plan of streets. In fact they begin clause three thus, '... for the purpose of preserving some uniformity and respectability in the houses to be built ...' and then go on to lay down building rules.

Builders were not allowed to build any house etc. of less than 19' to the eaves; similarly windows had to be no less than 5' 6" in height and 3' 6" in width. Doors had not to be less than 7' 8" in height or less than 3' 6" in width. Outside steps had not to project more than 12" into the said streets, as also windows 'of a kind called a Bow Window' had to project no further. Uniformity had also to be observed in the roofing in that the buildings had to be covered with slates or blue tiles.

Walls which separated the buildings from each other had to be built and 'forever remain' as party walls. Owners were given the power to rest timbers on these walls but any alteration had to be 'not less than 10" in thickness'. Any timber that was made to rest on these walls had to come no nearer than 5" to the opposite side of

such party wall.

'Having disposed of the appearance of their town, the Owners then turned to the maintenance of standards. Two major ideas seem to have occupied them: the upkeep of the physical aspects of the town, and maintenance of reasonable personal behaviour between the inhabitants of the town. Upkeep included clauses relating to street cleaning, drainage, road upkeep, and damage to public streets.

Owners of property were requested to use their best endeavours to compel their tenants to sweep, and cleanse the footways, paths, and pavements over the whole length of the front of their houses. This work was to be carried out between the hours of seven and ten 'in the forenoon' once or oftener in every week as the Surveyor shall from time to time order. Also as a special case, in time of frost and snow, the tenant had to remove the ice and snow within one hour.

Owners and/or occupiers were made responaible for house drainage. The rule was that within 20 days each house fronting a street had to have put up, a spout of the whole length of the front with a pipe or trunk to be fixed down the wall so that water shall pass under the flagging and into the common sewer. No water from the house roofs had to fall upon passers-by, or over the footways.

Damage to public streets represents by far the longest clause in the document: almost a page and a half to itself. Part of the clause is concerned directly with actual damage to public streets, while a large part develops into a general code of good conduct.

Among the restrictions concerned with actual damage to streets, the document lists vehicles, cleaning operations, and repair jobs. Among the vehicles that could not be used indiscriminately were 'any

truck, wheel sedge, wheelbarrow, bier, handbarrow, or carriage whatsoever'. Routine jobs such as dressing or cleaning a cask or hoop, washing or scalding any cask or tub, or placing furniture for display etc. could not be carried out on the public causeways etc. for fear of damage to the same. Similarly repairs to carriages etc. could not be carried out on the public causeways etc. Many more examples of this kind are listed.

Finally, regarding the physical aspects of the town, the Owners reiterated their promise to put down roads etc., but add that when these are completed the owners of the property in the town will have to maintain them by rate contributions. The same condition was attached to the maintenance of sewers.

Turning back to clause seven, one sees a mass of detail concerning what amounts to the maintenance of decent personal behaviour. Included in this long list are restrictions against keeping dangerous dogs at large; not dumping offensive matter such as 'dung, soil, filth, and rubbish' in the streets; not creating illness by the careless operation of slaughterhouses and butchers; not causing night hazards in the streets; not indulging in blood sports; and finally not playing football to the annoyance of any inhabitant.

The last 17 clauses concern town government. This includes the decision makers, finance, consultation, expertise, and accountability. The decision makers are of course the property owners who will meet annually to discuss these covenants and take any major decisions considered necessary. Voting where necessary is at the rate of one vote for every £5. rateable value of property held. The day-to-day work is delegated to a committee of seven who meet as 'they think fit', and who can also arrange special general meetings.

The Annual General Meeting will elect this committee of seven; they will fix the yearly rate (not to exceed 2s.6d. in the £, and will make any necessary bylaws. They will also appoint a surveyor, who must guarantee £500. against his appointment, and have this underwritten by two sureties.

The Surveyor will work under the direction of the A.G.M. and the committee. He shall report on the condition of roads, streets, sewers etc. When these have to be repaired, he must attend to the contract for the materials so necessary. On the income side, he must collect the rates of which he has already calculated the amount, and keep a record of property ownership, and votes that owners are entitled to at the A.G.M.

From the income collected the Surveyor must pay the outgoings and bank the remainder, and keep proper accounts and records of contracts for inspection by property owners. Finally he must prevent violations of clause seven, and prosecute offenders: the costs of the prosecution to come out of the rates.

This then was so to speak the first town charter. There seem to be no legal loop-holes to prevent an almost ideal community coming into existence. The Deed has been cited as evidence that the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate were 'keen businessmen'[1] and that the last 17 clauses add up to 'a most interesting attempt at local government by consent'[1]. The problem is to find out what went wrong in regard to

1) W.Lillie - op cit pp 58/61.

both the intention of the Owners and the actual implementation of the plan.

e) O.M.E. Purchase - Profit from the Land Sales

In spite of any forebodings that may have been expressed, the purchase of the Middlesbrough Estate was very profitable for the Owners themselves. Writing a generation after the original purchase, a historian of Durham[1] noted that 'the speculation proved highly successful, building sites being sold at prices leaving a large profit'. The problem is to find just how much profit was actually made. The main obstacle is that the information is not available in that often prices of property are not given in title deeds, and the problem is further complicated by the O.M.E. shareholders sometimes buying back sites, or developed sites, and later re-selling; this sometimes applies also to the administative staff of the O.M.E.

The general picture is that 500 acres were bought for £30,000. in 1829 from William Chilton. This gives an average price of £60. per acre. Both the historians Ord in 1846 and Longstaff in 1854[2] quote selling prices of the housing lots being between 20/- and 30/- per square yard. This would average between £4,840. and £7,260. per acre. Obviously if the whole of the 500 acres had been sold at this price the Owners would have received between just under £2½ millions and over £3½ millions; in effect a profit of between over 8,000% and over 12,000%.

Of course not all the land went for this price: even the clever Quakers could not make such gains. This applied to the 32 acres of urban development for the most part, and even here there has to be an

1) William Fordyce - The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durhan, vol 2 (1857), p 202.

2) J.W.Ord - op cit p 535; W.H.D.Longstaff - op cit p 364.
See p.455 of this Thesis

allowance made for streets and market place. Neither Longstaff nor Ord say just when these prices were paid, but it seems most likely that these apply to the 1830's. Yet when we look at even this early part of the period the picture once more becomes blurred, for more land was bought in the decade: in 1839 for example land was bought from Thomas Hustler in order to construct the Middlesbrough Dock.

The value of share holding in the O.M.E. company bears out that the venture was profitable, but by no means reflects astronomical profits. In 1841 a holding of 10% of the shares was worth £9,789.15.7. and in 1848 this value had risen to £10,182.6.2. On the original price of the land, these amounts would represent gains of 325% and 339% respectively. These amounts are obviously much more realistic than an attempt to make any calculation of profit from the scanty information based on the selling price of sites per square yard. Little wonder then, that with the share values rising in ten years by more than three times, that historians of the time can describe the original purchase as a profitable one.

By 1848 all the original lots for the planned town had been disposed of. As has been shown, already land was being acquired beyond the limits of the original 500 acres, and in addition, land was being sold south of the planned town: that is, land from the original sale, but not included in the 32 acres that had been reserved for urban development. Thus not only was the original purchase very profitable, but given the economic possibilities that Middlesbrough gave rise to, the widening of the original idea to embrace more land was equally lucrative. Even to this day the O.M.E. exists in Middlesbrough for the purpose of buying and selling land, although for a long time as a limited liability company.

In view of the profits made by the members of the Middlesbrough Estate, be they simply large profits or minor fortunes, it is interesting to glance at an inter-war newspaper account of the general profitability, or lack of it, from the venture. This account related to the centenary observations of the original Pease development, but even taking local patriotism into account, surely this example is going too far.

Under the heading, 'Six Men Buy Middlesbrough', the Stockton and Thornaby Herald, after describing Joseph Pease's first view of the Middlesbrough site, and his early prophecy, went on to note: 'Until the advent of local government ... they (the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate) ruled Middlesbrough and dispensed justice'. Even the Improvement Commissioners would have commented further, but the newspaper then concluded, 'But they were kindly despots ... Yet it (the purchase of the Estate) did not repay any of them. The first dividend was a small one about 1885'.[1]

Whatever problems there may be in fixing precisely the gains made by the Middlesbrough Owners, there is no excuse for such down-right distortion of history.

1) The Stockton and Thornaby Herald, 3rd Jan. 1931.

Chapter 2

The Urban Plan

1) The Vision of Joseph Pease

It is useful to look at three things here. First there is the general plan for the original town of Middlesbrough, and the personal responsibility for the main ideas. Here the vital role of Joseph Pease has already been mentioned in relation to the other partners in the Middlesbrough Estate. Then the physical aspects can be considered both as they were conceived before any actual building, during the construction of the town, and after the town was more or less complete. Finally the expertise and personality of Pease can be placed alongside the estimated success or failure of this urban project.

Joseph Pease was undoubtedly the moving force in both the purchase of the land on which the town and industry were first built, and the planning of the town. Asa Briggs goes farther and suggests that Pease in fact founded not only a town but also an aristocracy.[1] In a tribute to Pease, shortly after his death, a writer in the Northern Echo extols his prowess as both a businessman and an innovator. As treasurer to the Stockton and Darlington Railway[2], Pease became responsible for the Parliamentary side of the extension to Middlesbrough, for the purchase of land for the railway track and for the raising of the capital required for both these aspects of expansion. He acquired the desire (not unnaturally) to have men around him who were capable in their work and personally trustworthy. The culmination of this expansion in the activities of the railway was the purchase of the Middlesbrough Estate.

1) A.Briggs - Victorian Cities (1963). In the chapter devoted to Middlesbrough: the Growth of a New Community, Professor Briggs traces both the kinship relations of the Pease family in the mid-nineteenth century, and the subsequent economic power and possession of social titles in the years following.
2) This company was founded by Joseph's father, Edward Pease (1767-1858) known as 'the Father of Railways'

Here the Echo tribute[1] sees Pease as both the founder of the idea of a new port below Stockton, and as the principal partner in the company that purchased the land from William Chilton. Middlesbrough is actually described as Pease's 'own peculiar hobby' whose welfare was placed under 'his personal management; and of his five partners[2], the writer adds that most of these afterwards retired from the business.

In the year following the Echo article, Thomas Fenwick went into this speculative aspect of the origins of Middlesbrough in more detail.[3] Regarding the railway Fenwick observed, 'From his mind emanated the idea of constructing a line of railway between Stockton and Middlesbrough'; and regarding the purchase of the necessary land, 'he became the founder of a company, and also a large shareholder, to purchase 500 acres of land whereon to establish suitable accommodation for the shipment of coal.' This writer therefore concludes in the matter that 'Middlesbrough was thus created by the enterprise of Mr. Pease'. Even at this stage Fenwick can look ahead to a similar pattern of future developments. With regard to the later expansion of the railway he notes, 'The Stockton and Darlington Railway Company are indebted to him for the suggestion of purchasing all the branch lines in

1) Joseph Pease of Southend (1799-1872): A Memoir - published in the Northern Echo 9th Feb. 1872, pp 11-12.

2) These were: Messrs. T.Richardson, H.Birkbeck, S.Martin, Edward Pease Jnr. and F.Gibson. All Quakers.

3) Thomas Fenwick - Biographical sketch of Joseph Pease (article in The Practical Magazine, vol I, No. 2, 1873), p 211.

the Cleveland district, also to the west of Darlington. His insight indicated to him that these might be made powerful auxiliaries to the parent company.'

Leaving aside the financial involvement of Pease, the stage of the business with Parliament must also owe its success to him.[1] As his great-grandson has written, 'It was through this connection, which had already been useful to the railway, that in 1828 the capital was raised for securing the much desired shipping place at Middlesbrough ... The line was now continued from Stockton to Middlesbrough, and wharfs erected in the teeth of a powerful opposition from the mineral owners in Durham ... The Norfolk friends of Joseph Pease exerted themselves, the Bill was carried ...'[2]

We have already seen that Joseph's marriage to Emma Gurney brought him into a relationship with a very wealthy family. His father-in-law, Joseph Gurney, a Norwich banker, not only helped Joseph raise the capital for the purchase of the Middlesbrough Estate, but also used his influence with a group of Norfolk peers to overcome parliamentary opposition to the extension of the railway to Middlesbrough. A much more recent account irons out all these complications, and states, 'having seen and approved the site, Pease formed a company with his father, two Norwich bankers ... a Saffron Walden brewer, and a gentleman of Stamford Hill ... The company ... bought 500 acres ... and drew up its plans for the new township ...'[3]

1) Edward Pease - An Historical Outline of the Association of Edward, Joseph and Joseph Whitwell Pease (1903). The connection here referred to is Joseph's marriage, p 4.

2) These included Lords Dacre and Suffield who were commemorated in the subsequent street naming in Middlesbrough.

3) Colin & Rose Bell - City Fathers (1969) p 179. Middlesbrough is used

Joseph Pease's own diary gives some idea of his enthusiasm on discovering a likely site for his new town.[1] On 18th August 1828 he records, 'Rose early this morning and ... took boat and entering the Tees mouth sailed up to Middlesbro to take a view of the proposed termination of the contemplated extension of the Railway, was much pleased with the place altogether. Its adaptation to the purpose far exceeded any anticipations I had formed'.

This entry follows one of ten months earlier where he notes the usefulness of a railway extension, and mentions a possible siting. In the later entry Pease continues, '... the rising piece of land on which the Farm House of Middlesbro stands is peculiar ... Imagination here had ample scope in fancying a coming day when the bare fields we then were traversing will be covered with a busy multitude and numerous vessels crowding to these banks denote the busy seaport ...' Written from Seaton Carew, this entry is followed by another reference to this business written from Darlington on 19th September 1828.

Here Pease's favourable impressions of the future estate are further reinforced, in that 'the remainder of the day has been chiefly occupied in surveying the land in question, we were all satisfied of its local advantages, very similar ideas and ruminations were the result to those recorded at page 209'.[2]

as an example of a 'transport town'. The authors are wrong in describing the Edward Pease of the Owners as Joseph's father; he was in fact his brother. Many of the branches of the Pease family were large and the names Edward and Joseph appear in each generation. This fact also may account for a mistake made by Asa Briggs when he gives Joseph's date of death as 1903: this would have made him 104 years old. This reference (p 251, op cit) obviously concerns Joseph's son, Joseph Whitwell Pease, who subsequently became Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease.

1) Extracts from the Diary of Joseph Pease - being photocopies of some of the pages from this diary in the years 1827/8, in Middlesbrough Reference Library.
2) This refers to the numbered page for 18th August 1928: already mentioned.

Pease describes the final go-ahead in two further entries for the 3rd and 10th December 1828 respectively. In the former we read that he and other interested parties 'took a survey of the new proposed shipping place'; and a week later, 'met with the parties interested to confer respecting the purchase of Middlesbro estate' ... Yet in spite of some doubts expressed regarding the speculation, 'the general opinion was ultimately in favour of the investment ... and in order to be more fully satisfied of the reasonableness of the undertaking it was agreed that R.Otley should unite with G.Coates in making a survey and ascertaining the present farm value of the property ...'

The very reasonable nature of the land purchase from the buyers' point of view is emphasised by J.S.Jeans in a sketch of Pease.[1] Jeans suggests that 'at the time it was made there was not more than one or two farm-houses on the newly acquired property' and therefore as 'the land was used for agricultural purposes only, it was purchased at its then agricultural value, and ... it must have been comparatively trifling. But Joseph Pease and his partners had no idea of turning farmers.' This fact of almost completely undeveloped land, even agriculturally, has given rise to mild differences of opinion on just how little there was in the area before Pease and his fellow Quakers began their operations. Only six years after Jeans' book appeared, W.H.Burnett remarked, 'the site ... which had within the past hundred years, at least, been occupied by that "solitary farm house", which in every modern history of Middlesbrough has come to be regarded as a literary fixture'. But

1) J.S.Jeans - Pioneers of the Cleveland Iron Trade (1875). This is a one volume edition of a number of articles that originally appeared in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, ~1872.

in spite of this seeming uniformity there are differences of opinion as to what exactly there was on the site before the town was built.[1]

About the new plan there is no disagreement concerning the initial intention. A uniform town, built to a grid-iron pattern, was to be created to house and supply 5000 inhabitants, who would work the coal export trade and supply the normal wants of such a community. There were, however, two aspects that detracted from this uniformity: the inability or lack of opportunity to stick to the original town plan, and the encouragement by Pease in particular to other capitalists to come to his new town and provide a more diverse industrial structure.

Otley's plan which is included in the appendices clearly shows the simple, symmetrical nature of the first Middlesbrough plan. By the side of the coal staithes on the down-river side, 32 acres of land were allocated for the town. Four main streets diverge from a central square in roughly compass point directions.[2] These streets, North, South, East and West are shown as being 60' in width. At right angles to the ends of these streets are four peripheral streets, which form an outer square. These streets, Commercial, Stockton, Richmond/Gosford, and Cleveland/Durham are shown to be 36' wide. Within the square are three subsidiary streets parallel with West and East Streets, and lying between these and the appropriate peripheral streets: Commercial and Richmond/Gosford ;

1) W.H.Burnett - Middlesbrough and District: being Notes Historical, Industrial and Scientific '1881), p.11.

2) In fact there is a divergence of 15 degrees. See Otley plan for intended street widths: East Street shows 60' and Richmond Street 36'.

the only exception to this grid-iron arrangement is caused by the burial ground in the north-east corner. Thus whilst Dacre, Suffield and Feversham Streets help to form a regular grid-iron, there is no continuous street between Commercial and East Streets. These subsidiary streets are also intended as being 36' wide. Outside the square there are a number of building plots to the west of Stockton Street; these in their own way form an exception to the rule of symmetry. Apart from the central square which is reserved for public buildings, the streets are divided into building plots, each measuring 200' by 60', and totalling 125 plots.

When describing this early plan, writers, even informed modern ones, tend to stress the symmetry and ignore the exceptions. Looking at the spread of urbanisation on Tees-Side, R.H.Best described the plan 'as laid out by the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, the original settlement had a simple yet effective plan. It was built in the form of a square, the four wide main thoroughfares from each cardinal point of the compass converging on the central market square with its adjacent parish church. The minor roads were arranged in a gridiron fashion within this main framework and the railway ran to the south of it.'[1]

Apart from not mentioning the exceptions noted in the last paragraph but one, Mr. Best cannot really describe the church as being part of the original plan. The parish church came ten years after the birth of the town, and although the Owners assisted in its creation, they were after all Quakers who preferred their own meeting house.[2] Similarly Best cannot state that the railway

1) R.H.Best - The Urbanisation of Tees-Side (Planning Outlook, vol V, No. 3, 1961), p 21.

2) The first permanent religious institution was in fact a Wesleyan chapel in the north-west corner of the central square, and opened in 1838: two years before the parish church.

ran south of the town as if it had been planned that way. From Otley's plan it can be seen that the original railway ran to the west of the town, where in fact the coal staithes were situated; the railway line to the south of the town came later.[1]

In regard to the physical aspects of the site, two things have been looked at, the height of the ground, and the nature of the land. The site is situated in the north-east corner of the last northwards meander of the Tees before it reaches the sea. Certainly the area is low lying, and only well to the south of the original town does the land rise to 100 feet above sea level. Not surprisingly the land by the river is subject to flooding, the banks of the Tees being very shallow at this point.

The town was built on a piece of ground which was slightly higher than the surrounding countryside. The height of the site itself ranged from 25 to 40 feet above sea level, but even this eminence could be precarious, as has been noted, 'the Owners ... drew up plans for the new township on the small mound there which alone among the salt marshes offered any dry foundations'.[2]

The ground itself consists of superficial deposits of alluvium and glacial laminated clays and boulder clay. These clays of various thickness cover the solid (Triassic) geology, and provided the raw material for bricks and tiles for town building. However much of the land by the river has been built upon by first dumping works slag to provide a foundation. This pattern of land

1) This line came with the construction of the Middlesbrough Dock, which opened in 1842. From the 1848 plan of the Middlesbrough Estate in the appendices, one can clearly see how the new railway line severed the town from the undeveloped land to the south.

2) Colin & Rose Bell - op cit p 134.

reclamation was noted in a medical inspection of the town in 1854. The Health Board's superintending inspector wrote that, 'to the north and north-east a quantity of gravel, brought chiefly by the light colliers as ships' ballast, has been deposited, and artificial ground formed where was formerly marsh land ... this portion of the town had been raised about six feet by the deposit of ballast. Further to the east and south-east the ground still retains much of its originally marshy character. On boring, the subsoil is found to consist of silt mingled with vegetable matter, and lower down of clay.'[1]

Although the language is somewhat guarded, the inspector provides enough evidence to show that the original town plan did not turn out as intended. Quite apart from any distortion to Otley's plan, the flood menace made the land unsuitable for the construction of a town. The Bells simply say, 'No-one would have chosen the site if their first consideration had been the people rather than the coal'.[2] It seems appropriate at this point to look more closely at the expertise and character of Middlesbrough's founder in order to help understand what seems to have been an heroic but unfortunate experiment.

Pease was born into a Quaker family of Darlington textile industrialists. This family could trace their ancestry back to a family of landed gentry in the West Riding area, and in the Darlington area, to a couple who lived in the area at least from the very early eighteenth century.

1) W.Ranger - Report to the General Board of Health on the Preliminary Enquiry into Sewerage ... of Middlesbrough '1854), p 7.

2) Colin & Rose Bell - op cit p 137.

The boy was educated in Quaker schools, first in Leeds then in London. The Leeds school, Tatham's, seems to have had a good reputation. Fenwick says, 'At an early age he' (Pease) 'was sent to Mr. Tatham of Leeds whose reputation was of a high order'. It is not apparent why the boy was later transferred to London, but he later found himself 'in the care of Mr. Joseph Forster, of Southgate, near London. This gentleman was a strict disciplinarian, an active philanthropist, and possessed great abilities as a teacher.'[1] Fenwick considers that not only was this an education of a superior kind, but that the young Pease 'expaneded in mind, and the great governing principles of his subsequent life secured a sound foundation'.

His training at school was related to practical ends, which was furthered when he entered the business of his father and uncle. Here he worked in the office, and had also some experience of the factory. His father appears to have been a strict disciplinarian (like his teacher), and young Pease seems to have thrived on hard work of long hours and careful application. An example of this business training concerns the firm's correspondence. It seems that Pease had to collect the mail each morning from the post office, and would arrive so early that often he would help with the sorting. When the mail had been read back at the firm, Pease the elder would draft a reply and then hand it over to his son for completion. On completion the father was most particular about what he signed. If the reply did not reach what he considered to be adequate standards, he would hand the paper back to his son with the terse comment:

1) Thomas Fenwick - op cit p 208.

"Write it as it ought to be written." For many obvious reasons, Joseph was eager to please his father and employer, and applied himself all the more thoroughly. This very practical training instilled in him what has been described as 'a desire to excel'.[1]

Reference has already been made to the qualities he showed in his early years with the Stockton and Darlington Railway,[2] so two further aspects of character estimation only will be added. Almost as soon as his town was under way he became a member of Parliament for South Durham. This lasted from 1832 to 1841. He is noted not only for being the first Quaker M.P. but also for some of the work he actually did while a member of the Commons.

He is noted for his exertions in the abolition of the slave trade, for the amelioration of the law concerning capital punishment, for the abolition of bear and bull-baiting, and for many other less dramatic crusades. There seems to be general agreement that he attended the House regularly, was an articulate and bold speaker, and was motivated by noble intentions. This is partly borne out in Jeans' description of his resignation from Parliament, 'In 1841, finding his too scrupulous attendance on Parliamentary duties incompatible with the proper discharge of his numerous private obligations, he resolved to relinquish his seat for South Durham'.[3] Pressure to make him change his mind was of no effect.

The long term estimations of his ability and character are all

1) Fenwick - op cit p 208.

2) p 58. of the thesis

3) Jeans - op cit p 144.

favourable when one looks at contemporary published accounts. His philanthropy is never doubted: the Echo memoir cites his donations to school building in Middlesbrough, and his work with the Board of Health in Darlington.[1] Similarly his determination to do good would brook no opposition. 'I have not a single drop of coward's blood in my veins' he is reported to have stated publicly when supporting his brother's candidature for the seat of MP for South Durham which Joseph himself had vacated.[2] And Jeans goes on to say, 'Full of sanguine and well-grounded hopes, he was at the same time animated by a spirit of determination and energy that preserved unto the end with whatever he took in hand.'[2]

In this respect it is interesting to place the early history of Middlesbrough alongside two short statements by this same writer. In reference to the initial ideas regarding the coal port of Middlesbrough we could consider the statement, 'Not only did he project enterprise of great pith and moment, but he invariably carried them to a successful termination'. Secondly regarding the long-term developments in Middlesbrough in comparison with the predictions of the Owners, we can consider, 'It was truly said of him that he could see a hundred years ahead.'

Maybe his literary supporters have been over-kind to Pease by using generalisations that could not possibly have been true all the time, but about the man's sincerity there seems little doubt, although one may doubt the value of his long-term thinking, and may

1) Northern Echo memoir 9th February 1872 - op cit.

2) Jeans - op cit pp 128/9.

wonder at his naivety regarding land speculation. The Echo memoir mentions an incident in his later life that bears on the man's sincerity. He suffered from an eye complaint, glaucoma, in his middle age, and on advice received by an emiment German specialist, he underwent an operation for this serious disease. Because of his religious beliefs he refused an anaesthetic for this painful piece of surgery. Although the operation was a temporary success Pease did eventually go totally blind in 1865, nevertheless from then until his death, in 1872, he continued his work, as far as he was able, in propagating the ideas of the Quakers, and also in more general philanthropy.

2) The Grid-iron Town

a) Earlier Experience

A great deal has been said and written respecting the grid-iron plan adopted by Pease and Otley. Often one is given the impression that if the grid-iron plan was not actually originated with the Middlesbrough scheme, then at least there was no comparable attempt on this side of the Atlantic, and not one so single-minded on the other. It seems useful therefore to consider past experience in this respect, and two aspects seem most useful. First there is the concept of the grid-iron plan, then the practice linked to the particular location where the ideas and the attempts were tried.

Mumford[1] related the concept to order. Such order was expressed in two ways: political absolutism and geometric clarity. This clarity was most useful when the division of plots and property had to be accomplished, and in this respect Mumford notes that the virtue of the geometric lay-out 'belonged to no particular age or culture'. Yet at many points Mumford refers to the commercial aspects of the grid-iron lay-out, and although many cultures contained elements of commercialism, if not actually almost based on it, it is an exaggeration to extend the concept over such a wide sweep of human history. The commercial element was there at the start of the plan, and down the centuries it has reappeared whenever the commercial spirit so demanded. It is conceded by the writer that 'the standard grid-iron plan in fact was an essential part of the kit of tools a colonist brought with him for immediate use. The colonist had little time to get the lay of the land or explore the resources of a site: by simplifying his special order, he provided for a swift and roughtly equal distribution of building lots'.

1) Lewis Mumford - The City ~~of~~ in History (1961), p 224.

Turning to the actual lay-out as it appears on paper, the same writer points out that 'the beauty of this new mechanical pattern, from a commercial standpoint, should be plain'. Thus he stresses the simplicity of the expertise required, and therefore the absence of high professional cost. He goes so far as to say that 'an office boy could figure out the number of square feet involved in a street opening or in a sale of land: even a lawyers' clerk could write a description of the necessary deed of sale, merely by filling in with the proper dimensions the standard document'. As for the actual architectural work, 'with a T-square and a triangle ... the municipal engineer could, without the slightest training as either an architect or a sociologist, "plan" a metropolis, with its standard lots, its standard blocks, its standard street widths, in short, with its standardized, comparable, and replaceable parts'.

Writing the year after Mumford, Maurice Beresford acknowledges[1] the commercial aspect in the concept of the grid-iron, but chooses to see this aspect in broader terms, and then to stress the application of the concept in far more sympathetic terms than those chosen by Mumford.

Whilst warning against any attempt to understand the concept of the grid-iron lay-out in any other than historical terms, he shows that 'many of the economic forces that encouraged seigneurs to plant new towns were also prompting them to transform existing villages into boroughs'. He thus introduces the concept of the organic town alongside the one of the planned town. Both could be the result of commercial forces, and in its application, neither was less or more human than the other. Indeed a lot of

1) Maurice Beresford - New Towns of the Middle Ages (1967), p. 55.

space is devoted to those aspects of the grid-iron concept that are concerned with almost aesthetic consideration, as with the narrow commercial code.

Looking at the grid-iron town as an inter-related urban entity, Beresford shows that the plan could provide long-term flexibility rather than just cater for immediate profit. The entity was capable of expansion and contraction without destroying the essential unity of the town. Certain conditions of course had to be present, but these were not unusual, and could be taken into account at the planning stage. Beresford points out that 'if the town was not walled, a suburban expansion could easily be accommodated by building over the fields and converting a few yards of field-road into a town street'. Similarly he shows that 'when towns shrank or failed to meet expectations, an area designated for building plots reverted to fields or vineyards'.[1]

Not only is this flexibility an asset with regard to the economic fortunes of the town, but other kinds of flexibility are a feature of such planning. It is noted that 'the rectilinear street-plan was a flexible one' in that 'it could be adapted to a square site as well as to a long, narrow site'.[1] Even in regard to the internal appearance of the town, Beresford saw much scope for variation in that 'the prevalence of right-angled chequers and parallel streets does not mean that every planted town had exactly the same length and breadth, every street the same width, and every chequer the same proportions'.

1) Specifically the writer had in mind St. Denis (Aude) but his generalisation still held. In the case of St. Denis the economy had not sustained the original scheme, but in its shrunken condition, the core of the bastide remained intact, and the pattern of the surrounding fields was in chequer style, p.147.

2) The chequer was the undeveloped rectangular site, using the analogy of the chess-board.

If one looks at these two versions of the grid-iron concept alongside the Middlesbrough example, a number of observations can be made. The 'hard-line' view of Mumford could be well applied to the Middlesbrough case: undiluted commercialism; and the more eclectic view of Beresford shows up other short-comings. Flexibility was called for in a number of ways. The early rapid economic expansion was not catered for successfully by the grid-iron plan nor was the later economic fall-off; similarly the great economic expansion which came with the iron industry simply caused the old grid to be pushed to one side: there was never any question of flexibility on this scale. Mumford's criticisms can best be applied to the large town, but can equally well be applied to the small town that Middlesbrough was initially; Beresfords remarks can best be applied to the mediaeval town where economic fluctuations were on a relatively small scale: yet even at the small manageable scale Middlesbrough failed to fit into a flexible framework. Looked at sharply or with moderation, the Middlesbrough grid-iron bears out the worst and exemplifies missed opportunities.

In regard to the actual practice of building a town on the grid-iron pattern there are a number of variations with regard to both motives and actual results. In his pioneering work on the developments of town planning, Haverfield[1] saw the grid-iron as fitting into a mid-way position between the ancient world and modern experience. The great divide was between small and large, and Haverfield's date for this division is about 1800. Before this small populations had to be catered for from above, after this

1) F.Haverfield - Ancient Town Planning (1913). This book was an enlargement of a paper read to the University of London, and the Town Planning Conference in London in 1910.

there was the problem of planning for large industrial populations with growing democratic pressures to be accommodated.

Looking back to the classical world of Europe, Haverfield commented on Greek and Roman experience in regard to the grid-iron plan. He saw that 'the adoption of a definite principle of town-planning ... based on the straight line and the right angle ... are the marks which sunder even the simplest civilisation from barbarism'.[1] Forethought and consistency are essentials in this respect. In this way Haverfield is not only talking about some simple elements in urban engineering, but about moral principle. In this way he saw a great contrast between the Roman road which 'ran proverbially direct', and the British road which 'curled as fancy dictated'; the latter resembling the characteristic of the 'savage' in that he is not only 'inconsistent in his moral life' but equally 'unable to keep straight in his house-building and his road-making'.

It was not only a question of the straight line and the right angle but 'the two together'. He showed that the example of Rhodes was only a development on the way towards the complete grid-iron pattern in that 'we hear of streets radiating fan-fashion from a common centre, like the gangways of an ancient theatre'. The rule to be attained was where the 'streets ran parallel or at right angles to each other and the blocks of houses which they enclosed were either square or oblong'. Yet making the point that Beresford repeated 50 years later he notes that 'much variety is noticeable in detail'. Yet one variation that he noticed, but did approve of,

1) F.Haverfield - op cit pp 14 - 15.

was, the instance of towns that were 'stately enough in their public buildings and principal thoroughfares, but revealed a half-barbaric spirit in their mean side-streets and unlovely dwellings'. The earlier Greek towns were thus condemned, but 'in the middle of the fifth century men rose above this'; they began to 'recognise private houses', and this huge change Haverfield sees as an aspect of the 'new politics of the Macedonian era', and could be seen as 'a more definite, more symmetrical, often rigidly chess-board pattern ... for the towns which now began to be found in many countries round and east of the Aegean'. When passed on to the Romans the pattern became more rigid, in fact 'usually a rectangle broken up into four more or less equal and rectangular parts by two main streets which crossed at right angles at or near its centre'.[1]

With the fall of the Roman Empire, Haverfield saw the long lapse in the use of the grid-iron plan: 'it was less fit, with its straight broad streets, for defence and for fighting than the chaos of narrow tortuous lanes out of which it had grown and to which it now returned'. It was not until 'early in the thirteenth century (that) men began to revive, with certain modifications, the rectangular planning which Rome had used'.[2] After the 'villes neuves' and the 'bastides' of southern France, the 'chess-board' pattern came to England and was used in 'Edwardian towns like Flint and Winchelsea'.

Yet the great increase in urban scale was still over 500 years away. The writer considered that 'till the enormous changes of the nineteenth century - changes which have transferred the

1) F.Haverfield - op cit pp 16 - 17.

2) F.Haverfield - op cit pp 143 - 146.

termination of ancient history from A.D. 476 to near A.D.1800 - the older fashions remained'. By this he meant that 'towns were still with few exceptions small and their difficulties, if real, were simple'.

Writing ten years after Haverfield, Hughes and Lamborn took up the point regarding the pre-Macedonian failings. Having used the grid-iron for 'a processional way', the Greeks 'did not organise the rest of their buildings upon a regular plan until the Golden Age of the fifth century'.[1] The beauty of Athens they saw, not so much from the point of view of the plan but rather from an ideal site; 'like that of mediaeval Durham, (Athens) depended not upon harmony in the ordered grouping of a unified scheme, but in the skilful use made of a fine site to erect one beautiful group of buildings in a conspicuous position'. The social problem was untouched in that 'the dwellings of the people were squalid hovels, huddled on the lower slopes, much as the slums of Windsor crowd under the Castle Hill'. However there was a great contrast between this classical civilisation and that of Industrialised Europe. Comparing the older urban experience with the later one, the writers note that 'the Greek, unlike the modern Englishman, did not live in his slums; his life was spent mainly in the open air, in the gymnasia, agora, theatres, and other places of public assembly; and therefore he beautified these, adorning them with fine paintings and sculptures and had little inducement to develop the private house'.

The Alexandrine cities are described as being laid out in 'a chessboard pattern of crossing streets, with rectangular building-blocks marking them all'; and far from this being a minor phenomenon,

1) T.H.Hughes & E.A.G.Lamborn - Towns and Town Planning: Ancient and Modern (1923), pp 2-3.

it is seen as very common with the fifth century Greeks, almost standard with the Romans; the change coming, not from problems of siting or urban economic growth, but when the 'city had to become a place of refuge'. This was 'in the dreamful night of the Middle Ages (when) law and science lapsed back into custom and rule of thumb, and town-planning went the way of Roman statute-law and the Greek orders of architecture.'[1]

After the Edwardian revival of town-planning with the bastide the movement took up in America with the work of the puritan colonists. The writers in fact considered that 'town-planning in America' started 'with William Penn's foundation of Philadelphia'. They describe the classical and pure grid-iron plan, and see this as having 'set the type for most American cities until quite recent times'. For them the big movement away from the grid-iron was with L'Enfant's plan of Washington at the end of the eighteenth century[2], and the death of this plan came with the garden city movements in America in the late 1860's.

As has already been noted, Mumford accepted the classical origins of the grid-iron plan, and as such 'the street began to exist in its own right, not as before a devious passage grudgingly left over between a more or less disordered heap of buildings'.[3] Yet this having been achieved, the principal had been established of 'a maximum coverage of land (with) a maximum density of occupation'. Reaching its greatest influence in America

1) Hughes & Lamborn - op cit p 21.

2) L'Enfant's main variation on the grid-iron was the addition of eight diagonal avenues all converging on the Capital at the city centre.

3) Mumford - op cit pp 225 - 226.

in the opinion of Mumford, he considered that the 'anonymous gridiron plan proved empty'.[1] Here ironically he saw a problem that presented just the reverse of the pre-macedonian Greek problem. Whereas the Greeks of this time had ignored the private for the public, now the Americans sacrificed the public to the speculator. The basis for this assertion is his knowledge of American cities where in the past 'civic centres might sometimes be provided in the new towns of the nineteenth century, as they were in the plans for Cincinnati, St. Louis and Chicago; but by the time the gambling fever had arisen, these municipal sites would be sold to pay for their street expansion and street paving'. Even in the more leisurely south of the country he notes that 'Savannah progressively forfeited the advantage that its old system of town squares had provided'.

Finally writing a few years after Mumford, Emrys Jones[2] concerned himself with the ubiquity of the grid-iron plan, and alongside this he relates the human need in city-planning. Going back 4,000 years he notes that the Indus cities were not without signs of planning, and particularly Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Although these cities were 400 miles apart they showed a similarity in culture, in that Harappa was made up of 'an area of approximately one square mile and ... it had a regular grid road system consisting of two east-west streets, and three north-south, each about 30 feet wide', and this can be compared with what will be noted subsequently regarding Mohenjodaro.[3]

These characteristics are then related to classical Europe, and the changes after the fall of the Roman Empire are noted. The

1) Mumford - op cit p 485.

2) Jones - op cit pp 20 - 21.

3) See comments on the Stanislawski article in my conclusions, pp 432/3.

mediaeval hiatus is seen as being 'characterised by a freedom of form' where 'growth was natural and unhindered by a plan'.[1] Yet even given such a freedom, some crucial urban features are almost non-existent: Jones notes that 'in ... organic growth, streets were no more than the spaces which remained when houses had been built: they were irregular and often very narrow'. The main exception was of course the 'bastide towns, built by conquerors in conquered lands'.

In that the typical European city did not reflect the grid-iron culture, Jones makes contrast with American experience. 'In its plan' he notes 'the American industrial city did not have much in common with its European counterpart except for its total disregard for the separation of different functions within the city'. The big difference was that the American city was 'dominated by the grid, but this was not in any way part of a planning process'. Convenience he sees as the cause, not order or a concern for a community: prior land divisions, in their most convenient form, determined the pattern, 'irrespective of the use to which it (the land) would be put subsequently'.[2] Sometimes he shows how by accident the grid-iron plan was fortunate, as in the case of Manhattan when some of the mathematical blocks became Central Park; but in some cases the result was less useful, as in San Francisco, where an unmitigated grid pattern has resulted in a number of the most incongrous steep hills.

When turning to Britain, Jones is concerned with the major

1) Jones - op cit pp 26 - 27.

2) Jones - op cit pp 31 - 32.

influence of rapid industrialisation against the feeble claims for town planning. Even his use of Middlesbrough as an example of very rapid urban growth overlooks the fact that here was a very good example of a grid-iron planned town.[1]

Comments by all these four writers tell us something about the Middlesbrough experience. Middlesbrough was initially small but suffered from the same pressures as large towns before it became large itself. The "public" aspects of the plan were extolled and the "personal" suffered, but in the longer run the interests of a small number of persons caused even the public aspects to be undermined. The town may have been seen as part of an extensive civilised evolution in the practice of conscious planning, but in the long run it lacked consistency. The problem may have been no more than what Haverfield described as 'ancient' but the failure to apply the solution beyond a human generation rendered the town 'barbaric' in the same terms. In that various city fathers and their agents have extolled the American example in order to boost the Middlesbrough example, their claims have in the long run proved empty. Middlesbrough never even had the civic pretentions of the planned American city: her commercial priorities forestalled them. Ironically even the American city never really came up to expectations: like much of the Middlesbrough story, the finishing-off was left to myth makers. Always there was the idea of the plan: though both plans and contents changed in a most arbitrary way. The story was nearer to the Jones' pattern of freedom to concentrate. The town did experience a rapid increase in population but this did not lead to intensive urbanisation in any conscious planning sense. Rather there was sprawl of a mean

1) Jones - op cit p 55.

and squalid kind. A kind of rectilinear pattern continued, but this was something far removed from any of the examples given by these four writers on urban planning. It was a double poverty, both of money and imagination. Long before Pease and his partners planned Middlesbrough there had been many attempts at the grid-iron plan, as well as many variants on this. Not only was nothing learned from previous experience, but some of the worst mistakes were repeated. The Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate set out to provide a small planned industrial port: in many ways they succeeded in providing an example of how not to plan a town.

2) The Grid-iron Town

b) Contemporary Situation

Having looked at the long-term history of the grid-iron town, I will now consider two things: the mid-nineteenth century context of the Middlesbrough experience, and the actual events within Middlesbrough itself. The first aspect takes into account the amount of planning at this time, other attempts (both actual and theoretical), and the range of motives of the new town builders of this period. The second aspect covers two main phases. To start with there is the actual situation between the years 1830 and 1853 in Middlesbrough. The main considerations concern the possibilities ahead, the actual ambitions of the planners, and the failure to make realistic comparisons with other experience, both past and contemporary. The second phase concerns the situation in the years immediately after 1853. Mainly this is about the established town and the urbanisation that followed; the physical aspects of urban separation in this case; and some comparability in respect of the grid-iron domestic building in places other than Middlesbrough.

The amount of planning in the early part of the nineteenth century was not large, but more came after the turn of the century, and towards the end of the century there arose the garden city concept. In this sense Middlesbrough is rare but not unique. Not only were there current similarities but also examples from the past; thus Hoskins can ask 'Why are certain English towns ... laid out on a gridiron pattern ... like a mid-western American city?'[1]

1) Hoskins - op cit p 211.

Moreover 'towns ... so utterly dissimilar in other ways - Salisbury, Middlesbrough, Barrow-in-Furness and Winchelsea?' Yet a more fundamental question for Hoskins was 'Why were most English towns left to grow up more or less haphazard fashion?' Here the close relation between industrialisation and urban expansion (already discussed in connection with the work of Jones) has to be considered. In this respect the first half of the nineteenth century resembled earlier phases of urban history: particularly the age of 'barbarism' following the break-up of the Roman Empire, in that there was a lapse from established practice. In one instance this lapse was from the eighteenth century planned town, in the other from the urban inheritance of classical Rome. Revival took a long time and was sporadic. Thus Hoskins most fundamental questions remains 'Why are there so few planned towns in this country?'[1]

Cherry looks at the same problems, and considers not only the towns that actually grew up, but also those left on the drawing-board, so to speak.[2] He saw the nineteenth century as being that time when 'utopian idealism was rekindled'. In describing the intellectual framework for the search for the ideal city he uses Wilde's epigram that, 'a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing.' This Cherry saw as the aim of a number of nineteenth century thinkers and businessmen.

The actual schemes that Cherry finds to isolate are New Lanark,

1) Hoskins - op cit p 211.

2) Cherry - op cit (1970) pp 10 - 14.

Chaux[1], the Chartist Land Plans, as well as unbuilt towns such as Buckingham's Victoria. To him the theoretical was as important as the actual: both often had common roots. The great trouble was that the first might fail and the second never be attempted. In the first category must come all the post-New Lanark Owenite experiments; whilst in the second would be Coleridge's Pantisocracy, planned at the end of the eighteenth century.

Probably the best known attempt was Philadelphia, which has already been noted. Some writers however defer to Washington as 'the most ambitious attempt to achieve a model city'[2]. This of course following the Philadelphia experiment, and responding to the need to create a seat of government. L'Enfant's brief was to plan not only an ideal city, but also the largest city in a growing country. The result was a late eighteenth century 'plan ... (which provided for) an extended grid system of parallel and right-angled streets that divided the area into square and rectangular building-plots.'

Yet looking specifically at Britain this same writer can see nothing to compare with Philadelphia let alone Washington. Two factors dominate: mechanisation and rapid industrialisation. This earlier part of the nineteenth century was seen as an age that saw the "widespread installations of tracks, stations, goods yards, and other paraphernalia of the new means of locomotion' yet at the same time this added 'a further potential cause of disorder to that which rising industry was already placing upon urban and rural communities'.

1) The town designed by Claude Nicolas Ledoux for salt workers in 1776. The early quadrangle basis was modified first to an ellipse and later to a semi-ellipse.

2) F.R.Hiorns - Town Building in History (1956), p 346.

In short it was seen as an age that knew how to make and plan railways but had forgotten about cities. Yet in almost dialectic fashion a reaction to urban carelessness set in. It was not simply the railway age it was also the age of Chadwick; the period between '1832, when Chadwick became Assistant Commissioner on the Poor Law Commission, and 1854, when he retired from public life'.[1] The years of Chadwick's efforts from a public position, were the years that Simon described as having 'hardly a glimmer of intelligent public interest in matters affecting the public health'. By a sad irony these self same years saw the building of the original town of Middlesbrough.

Thus while American examples of the planned grid-iron town abound, British examples are few. The best example with which to compare Middlesbrough is Saltaire. The comparison between these two mid-Victorian towns is fascinating, whether one looks at siting, appearance, or conception. Some of the similarities are misleading: wherever there are differences it is Saltaire that comes out best.

Whilst Middlesbrough was built during the period when Edwin Chadwick was trying to persuade those with authority to build and evolve better towns, Saltaire came almost at the end of this period. Middlesbrough was conceived early in the career of Joseph Pease, and therefore played a part in his materialistic climb in society; Saltaire came after Salt had made a fortune in Bradford, and thus was a real example of paternalistic philanthropy. Both the conception of the two towns and the execution reflect these basic differences.

1) Hiorns - op cit p 320.

Saltaire was planned, like Middlesbrough, with a projected population in mind, to a certain sized area, and having a certain kind of appearance and a certain kind of amenity standard. When one notes how Titus Salt himself was involved in the planning and execution one is reminded of Penn in America.

Salt phased the creation of his town so that the economic base, his mill, was finished first; then came the inhabitants to fill the houses; and finally came the social services. It has been noted that this all came 'in the remarkably short time of ten years, and throughout at a commercial profit'.[1] Salt employed the Bradford architects Messrs. Lockwood and Mawson[2], and with them 'spent many months in close collaboration discussing every detail of the equipment and the layout of each unit of the scheme'. In giving instructions to his architects regarding the standard of workers' dwellings, he said that he hoped to see 'satisfaction, happiness and comfort around him'.

Whereas the Peases could boast of making the flags for the Great Exhibition, Salt considered buying the whole building once the exhibition was over; only the fact that the weight of his textile machinery would be too heavy for the structure to be the core of his mill deterred him. His lay-out was grid-iron, but with two important elements built in. First the street arrangement represented only a moderate grid, not the ultimate to which Middlesbrough aspired. The open space area was not in the town but to the north, across the Aire, the factory was not part of the domestic arrangement, it was adjacent, to the east. Within the grid itself there was a

1) R.K.Dewhurst - Saltaire - Town Planning Review, vol 31, 1960, p.138.

2) The same firm built the Town Hall, the Exchange, and St. George's Hall in Bradford.

kind of breathing space. Instead of the claustrophobia of Middlesbrough, there was room to expand on both the west and the south, thus fulfilling a basic element in Beresford's view of the grid-iron town.

When the scheme was complete in 1871 Saltaire had a population of 4,389, giving a gross density of 89.5 persons per acre; the Middlesbrough comparable figure would be 7,631 (for the township), which with an urban site of 32 acres would give a density of 238.6 per acre. However it would be more useful to compare the net density of Saltaire in 1871 (which was 137.2 persons per acre) with the projected population for Middlesbrough. This latter was a population of 5,000. on a 32 acre site, which gives a net density of 156.3 persons per acre. These two figures are quite similar, and even here Saltaire comes out better; but in the last resort, projections apart, Saltaire's aims were achieved, while, in the case of Middlesbrough, the levels of density became quite unreasonable.

Looking a long way ahead from the mid-nineteenth century, some writers consider that Saltaire tended to fail in the long-run. It no longer remains a model town well away from Bradford, but it is part of Shipley U.D.C., and caught up with the urban sprawl of Bradford. Yet this is a long cry from the example of Middlesbrough. Saltaire, apart from the mill itself, has not grown since the completion of Salt's plan in 1871. The fact that the town is no longer self-contained tells us more about Bradford expansion than about Saltaire. The plan and estimate proved accurate in the long-term whereas Middlesbrough had failed in this respect within one generation. The urban sprawl crept out of Bradford to engulf Saltaire, whereas Middlesbrough created its own sprawl, and in doing so disfigured

both its own initial design, and swamped a number of nearby rural settlements.

When we consider the work of early and mid-nineteenth century town planners, a number of motives emerge. No single cause accounts for even a very limited number of cases; take for example Middlesbrough and Saltaire which have already been noted along with Buckingham's Victoria.

Middlesbrough's case could be described as a piece of classical entrepreneurship in a pure sense that excludes much of Titus Salt's scheme. The founderof Saltaire had strong negative reasons for creating his town, as well as a desire to be seen as a benevolent employer. It was in reaction to some of the mid-nineteenth century problems facing Bradford that he was motivated to build Saltaire.

In regard to public health, Dewhurst has quoted from the report of the Health of Towns Commission of 1845. Here we see that Bradford tolerated 'open channels' for sewerage in the inferior streets, 'discharge into a brook' of the main sewers, 'stench' and 'fevers'. So much so that the conclusion is that Bradford is seen to be 'the most filthy town' that the commission visited.[1] Not only this but Chartist activity and the fear of Chartism by Salt and his fellow employers provided another strong negative reason for moving away from the urban centre.

Oddly Salt's inspiration came from the fictional work of Disraeli. Five years before Salt decided to move, the novel Sybil was published. In this the author portrayed the benevolent employer, Mr. Trafford, and his factory at Mowe, which became 'one

1) Dewhurst - op cit pp 35 - 36.

of the marvels of the district'.[1] One of Trafford's first tasks had been to build 'a village where every family might be well-housed', and 'in every street there was a well', and behind the factory were 'the public baths'. Many others had been inspired by Disraeli's vision, but none went as far as Salt in actually putting the ideas to the test.

James Silk Buckingham provides a great contrast with both Pease and Salt. His Victoria was never begun. His motivation was more moral and political than that of Salt. He sought to escape from a number of human 'errors' such as dishonesty, drink, and trade restrictions, and most of all sought the 'best mode of avoiding the evils of Communism'.[2] Consequently whilst 'seated alone upon the quay at Calais, waiting for the arrival of the Steam Packet from Dover, at the close of September 1848' he conceived of the plan for a model town, to be called Victoria, and which he designed and drew during a visit to the Island of Bute.

He noted that there was a great 'desirability of forming at least one Model Town' in order to expose 'the great defects of all existing towns'. Interestingly Joseph Pease was a colleague of Silk in the parliaments of the 1830's, but Silk's comments regarding 'all existing towns' do not correspond with Pease's advocacy of his own town, in the crucial decade of its formation.

Silk's model town was rectangular but not grid-iron. It resembled eight squares, all with a common centre, having a

1) B.Disraeli - Sybil (1845) chap VIII.

2) James Silk Buckingham - National Evils and Practical Remedies (1849), pp 9-10.

a progessively larger and larger side. This Buckingham referred to as a 'regular plan'. The plan included domestic accommodation of various sizes, public institutions such as libraries, schools, shops, churches, baths etc. and covered arcades for workshops. The main building material was to be iron. Buckingham compared his town very favourably with Turin, whereby the 'capital of Piedmont, which occupies about the same area (being just four miles in circuit), and is regarded as one of the most regularly built and cleanest cities in Europe, contains a population of 82,000 souls; and as the proposed Town of Victoria would contain only 10,000 on the same space, every inhabitant would have eight times the proportion of pure air to breath in'.[1] In effect he was advocating a gross density of only 15.6 persons to the acre; and this, on a site twenty times that of Middlesbrough, makes for no realistic comparison whatsoever with realised densities already noted.[2]

Thus at the time when Middlesbrough was in its most formative stage, there were other examples with which to make comparison, both real and imaginary. Equally there was a choice of motives. All the examples quoted have been seen in idealist terms, but this would really only appear in Buckingham's case, and his town was never started. Salt and Buckingham were escapists, whilst Pease was a realist. Both Salt and Buckingham were running away from unpleasant realities, whilst Pease was in search of the same reality with geographic advantages. In the long run, Salt turned out to have been the realist, whilst Buckingham's scheme never saw the light of day, and Pease's scheme failed in both its prediction and its planning.

1) Buckingham - op cit p 233.

2) See p 88 of this thesis.

Turning to the Middlesbrough situation in 1830 a number of writers have commented upon the great opportunities that existed for the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. One common note is the tabula rasa comparison whereby Pease and his partners had a clean slate on which to work. No question of a complicated palimpsest here. Savage's comments on the rise of Middlesbrough from the solitary farmhouse to the busy town have been noted,[1] and he also gives similar examples, but in every other case it is difficult to avoid some 'history', for 'even Wigan, much maligned Wigan, can boast an ancestry as old as Henry III who created it a borough, and its mayors go back to 1370'.[2] In this sense Middlesbrough had the same opportunity used by Penn or Salt, and the same as that ideally sought by Buckingham.

Writing in the same year as Savage, J.H.Ingram found Middlesbrough to be unique in that 'there are few, if any, large towns in England which do not have some roots in the past: Middlesbrough has none.'[3] Thus he saw how it was possible for Middlesbrough to be 'one of the few towns which has been laid out, American fashion, from blue-prints or an undeveloped site'. Yet the same writer was very unrealistic about both the aims and the achievements of the Owners of the Middlesbrough

1) See p 46 of this thesis.

2) Savage - op cit p 147. In this sense Savage is attempting to redress the almost jokey impression created when towns such as Wigan are mentioned. Orwell did the same with his Road to Wigan Pier (1937), whereas Evelyn Waugh sustained this kind of joke in relation to Stoke-on-Trent in Decline & Fall (1928). Middlesbrough comes within this same category often, as an 'out-of-the-way joke' place; the Grossmiths provide an example in their Diary of a Nobody (p 187) when Pooter, meeting a long lost school friend, noted that, 'He told me he lived at Middlesboro, where he was Deputy Town Clerk, a position which was as high as the Town Clerk of London - in fact higher'.

3) J.H.Ingram - Companion to North Riding (1952), p 64.

Estate. Their aims he saw as embracing not the limited coal port but the almost unlimited iron town; in reference to these aims he notes that, in respect of the Middlesbrough of the early 1950's with its area of 'over seven thousand acres' and its population of 140,000, 'never was a belief in destiny more justified'. Similarly with the achievements, he notes that the Owners not only laid out the first roads, but also 'built the first houses, offices, and factories'.[1] If this had been the case then the original plan would have had far more chance of success. In this sense Middlesbrough would not have lacked the continuous involvement of its founders, but in the circumstances such involvement was not there: far too much was left to speculative builders and the like.

Beresford gave a list at the back of his extensive study on the mediaeval town of those towns in England, Wales and Gascony which still showed clear grid-iron survivals. Naturally the example of Middlesbrough was not included, but in stressing the essential differences between the organic market town and the grid-iron creation Beresford said some interesting things about Middlesbrough's neighbour, Stockton, and enabled striking contrasts to be made between these two main elements of the Teesside built-up area.[2]

This essential difference he saw as being the 'fact that the grid-plan contains other streets and building-plots that move further and further from the market place until the town limits are reached. It is this succession of rectangular chequers that gives the envelope of

1) Ingram - op cit p 64.

2) Beresford - op cit p 153.

the gridded town its rectangularity'. In contrast to this uniformity, he saw Stockton as standing for 'an example of organic growth, the elevation of a hamlet which prospered from the presence of the bishop's hall, the ferry and the river staithes'.[1] Yet added to this example of such growth, the writer detected elements of plantation development in the central urban feature of the 'broad and straight market place ... placed at the gate of the bishop's castle, and backed by the quays of the river-port'.

Elements of plantation development or not, the morpholcgical contrast between the older Stockton and the new Middlesbrough is most striking in the main features. The Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate created a rectilinear port whereas Stockton was a very outstanding example of main street linear development.[2] Later developments made the contrast less striking but did not obliterate it. Middlesbrough developed its own kind of linear main street in an almost accidental way[3] while Stockton developed its own suburbs and absorbed some of the nearby village settlements. Yet superficially the grid development of Middlesbrough after 1850 followed Beresford's pattern, but produced a town that was very far from Beresford's thinking. The new elements were gridded and they did move further and further from the market place and not only to the town limits but beyond. However in the process the central core itself became isolated. It did not remain at the centre of this gridded development but became an appendage, and even the gridded development itself contained only the uniformity of

1) Beresford - op cit p.431.

2) Often described as the longest market street in the country.

3) The main linear street was intended to be Albert Road but as ad hoc development progressed, this turned out to be Linthorpe Road. This road eventually connected the original town with the once distant village of Linthorpe. See plate 27. Of the two linear roads in the upper left, Linthorpe Road is to the right and Albert Road is to the left of it.

such a pattern not the overall conception. Nevertheless Beresford highlights the situation facing the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate in regard to its nearby neighbour and quasi trade rival, and shows by implication how their creation was in the most striking contrast to this existing contemporary town.

Thus by the mid-nineteenth century there came into being on Teesside urban contrasts which would provide examples for what Asa Briggs has described as 'planned' and 'spontaneous' environments.[1] This was all very well but it is debatable how far the city fathers of Middlesbrough were conscious of this contrast, and what other grid-iron experiments were both contemplated and attempted. It seems that almost from the start, the town became far too inward looking, and consequently all too ready to grasp any fact or opinion that would confirm it in its own success. The people of the town succeeded in achieving in a short time what often takes longer in that 'many people have become so well used to the actual environment they live in that they are starved and deprived in the employment of their senses, unable not only to compare or to criticise but, more seriously, to appreciate.'[2]

When one looks at the urban development of Middlesbrough in the immediate post 1850 years, two main elements of development emerge. First there is a growing contrast between the old town and the later development; and second there is a kind of similarity between the two in respect of gridded uniformity, but this is not a feature that was either planned nor was it exclusive to the later nineteenth century developments of Middlesbrough.

1) Asa Briggs - The Sense of Place (Smithsonian Annual II 1967), p 81. This was a sympoaium on the fitness of man's environment.
2) Briggs - ~~op cit above,~~ ibid p 80.

The contrasts between the old and the new have frequently been commented upon.[1] Smailes noted that the housing of St. Hilda's Ward (constituted)[2] a neighbourhood that possesses a considerable degree of social cohesion, reflecting the combination of poverty and grographical isolation'. This was in marked contrast to much of the development which 'has grown up south of the railway station at and near the northern end of Linthorpe Road, the axis of the regularly laid-out town of the period after 1850'. The nearer one was to this northern end the less the contrast, for the only difference that appeared in this southwards development were those that expressed 'the age and social status of the housing'. To the north there were slums, and to the south there were suburban villas.

This expansion was seen by Harold Perkin as 'the most spectacular of the brand-new towns of the nineteenth century (which) soon outgrew its parentage'.[3] The old town thus becomes the 'Quakers' symmetrical little town (which) arose around their modest town hall and the parish church for which they provided the land'. The danger arose when the railways (might have strangled "the infant Hercules"' but in the circumstances Middlesbrough was saved by 'another group of capitalists, led by Henry Bolckow'. The contrast here is clearly brought out: in fact too clearly. The writer has been too closely influenced by the single source that he drew upon for these comments of Middlesbrough.[4]

1) Smailes (1961) - op cit p 226.

2) This ward constituted the original town.

3) Harold Perkin - The Age of the Railways (1970), p 131.

4) The source being Asa Briggs' Victorian Cities. Perkins may have done better to have followed Briggs' advice, when he counselled against 'talking about ideal types' and instead 'laying emphasis on experience'. (Smithsonian Annual op cit p 80).

Not only were there contrasts, but there was actual physical separation. In a much revised publication Smailes[1] shows that railway lines can divide areas of a community as well as connect different communities. Looking generally at townscapes he noted that 'many differences of character ... are of the nature of gradients'[2]. In Middlesbrough's case such gradients were almost none existent. From the river southwards, which is where the post-1850 expansion took place, the rise in the ground is even and very gentle for eight miles until the beginnings of the Cleveland Hills are reached. This kind of difference is thus non-existent. However the railway which 'Middlesbrough has the distinction of being the first town created by', also made for early demarcation. The area 'demarcated by the railway line from the rest of the town to the south' comprised not only the industrial areas of the Ironmasters' District and the Docks, but also 'the small planned town of 1830'. Once this original element was cut off, the 'town has rapidly spread over the plain'[3].

This particular kind of demarcation, whereby the very economic progress of a town cuts off the head from the growing body is in sharp contrast to the experience of Saltaire. There Salt built his town to the south of both the river and the railway. His town could expand and yet keep the same basic unity between homes, industry and communications as originally intended. Moderate economic progress would only enhance the general standards of living, not wreck completely the lay-out of the urban community.

1) A.E.Smailes - The Geography of Towns (5 ed 1966).

2) A.E.Smailes - The Geography of Towns, p 124.

3) To illustrate these points made by Smailes, see plates 27 and 28. In both the developments north and south of the railway can be clearly seen.

There was however a kind of continuity between the two phases of this early development of Middlesbrough. Both designs have been described as gridded. Hoskins has noted that in the 'mid-Victorian expansion to the south of the railway station ... the grid-iron plan is still adhered to until one gets well out'[1]. That there was not a great deal of change in the urban development can be gleaned from a visit paid by Nikolaus Pevsner just before Teesside County Borough came into being.

In this visit Pevsner recommended a perambulation of the town starting in the Market Place of the old town and by a circuitous route ending in the centre of the newer town. Yet he has little praise for either part: neither the Italianate original nor the Gothic aftermath.[2]

He noted that the old town had been symmetrical, that the old town hall was simple and attractive, and that the best building in this part of Middlesbrough was the Customs House (built in 1840). In the newer town he commented on more buildings, but of course there are a lot more buildings to comment upon in this part of the borough. The Exchange building he sees as 'weakly Italianate', whilst the new town hall is seen as having 'a symmetrical front' but also having a 'totally asymmetrically set tall tower'. Whereas one would expect the second town to reflect the optimism of the iron age as opposed to the earlier town's reflection of the doubts of the coal port, this is not the case.

Having noted the phenomenon of two town centres, Pevsner writes that the 'big-townish appearance goes only skin-deep'.[3] Instead of some imposing later Victorian grandeur he found that 'everywhere, looking

1) Hoskins - op cit p 213.

2) Nikolaus Pevsner - Yorkshire: the North Riding (1966). See also appropriate plates in the appendices for specific buildings. M252-3

3) Pevsner - op cit p 253.

out of the few main streets, are the interminable rows of two-storeyed cottages, and outside the centre hardly anything calls for perambulating'. Thus a kind of continuity was maintained but quite unconsciously on the part of Middlesbrough's builders. Ironically Pevsner considered that 'without doubt the most impressive building in Middlesbrough' was the Transporter Bridge.[1] This was situated on the edge of the original town but was built a decade after the second town was complete.[2]

Yet this kind of later nineteenth century experience of drab uniform urbanisation was far from being a unique experience for Middlesbrough. Hiorns[3] has commented upon by-law housing of this time by noting that 'the steps taken for improvement went through all the horrors of back-to-back house design'. The result was the 'various deadening products of Model By-Laws, and other forms of regulative control', producing the 'monotony and dreariness that commonly attaches to mechanised building rigidly fixed by rule, and from which the exercise of artistry and imagination is excluded'. In a phrase that could well apply to the more northerly parts of the post-1850 development of Middlesbrough, he has noted that the 'results rivalled the horrors they were intended to replace'. Some of the aerofilms used could equally be of Middlesbrough in their housing uniformity.[4]

1) Pevsner - op cit p 252.

2) This bridge, the first one over the lower Tees, was opened in 1911. In fact it is not really a bridge, more a guided platform above the surface of the water. Less praise is often heaped on this construction: quite apart from the frequent break-downs in operation, see Alderson's preface in the David & Charles reprint of Lady Bell's At the Works (1969).

3) Hiorns - op cit pp 325 - 326.

4) See pp 322 & 326 for the photographs of Preston and Burnley, and compare with my plates 27 and 28.

Similarly in a well-used comparison between Middlesbrough and Barrow-in-Furness, D.S.Landes saw the social expression of the rise of the Cleveland iron industry as being the 'grimy boom town of Middlesbrough'.[1] In this particular comparison, Barrow becomes what Middlesbrough is often, the 'frontier mill town'. Here Landes has in mind as much the uniformity of the housing as the actual grime from industrial smoke.

Taking a long-term look at this second urban development in Middlesbrough a number of ironies emerge. The fact that the housing was 'grimy' could not be ignored, although rationalised. Yet the sheer uniformity of the housing is often seen as a virtue in that the symmetry of the original town was maintained. This view, widely held, ignores any faults in the initial plan both in its conception and execution: it does however gloss over any mistakes that were repeated in the development of this later town. Yet even in Middlesbrough some major changes were eventually called for.

In 1910 the borough engineer, S.E.Burgess, put forward a scheme for the redevelopment of the town. By taking advantage of the Town Planning Act of 1909 he hoped to transform the town into not only the city practical but also the city 'beautiful'.[2] In a very mild way he criticised the post-1850 development as having gone along the 'lines of least resistence' where landlord rights and fiscal barriers were concerned; in place of this he wanted a city without the previous congestion, and free from the

1) D.S.Landes - The Unbound Prometheus (1969), p 228.

2) S.E.Burgess - Town Planning for Middlesbrough (Town Planning Review, vol 2, no 1, 1911), p 201.

domination of the grid-iron pattern of roads. This latter aim was to be achieved by a widening of the radial from the centre to the boundaries and a linking of these on the periphery by a ring-road. No doubt with one eye on the 'planned' past of the town, Burgess hopes 'that owners and lessees wil co-operate with the Corporation ... so that the development and extension of Middlesbrough and district can be carried out on a well-defined plan'.[1]

At the same time the Director and Designer of the new Philadelphia, W.E.Groben,[2] was presenting his ideas to the Third National Conference of the City Planning Association in America. There he extolled the new Philadelphia, and in doing so described the grid-iron as impracticable and monotonous. His solution as far as Philadelphia was concerned was to 'superimpose upon the rectangular gridiron system a series of borad diagonal avenues radiating from City Hall as a centre'. This would thus cut away the rectangular appearance of the urban blocks and in doing so make way for parks and other open spaces. This new system, Groben called the French or boulevard system, and traced its origins back to the work of L'Enfant, who had laid out Washington. Emphasising that the Philadelphia proposals were part of a general trend, he noted that the same modifications were being instituted in 'Chicago, Buffalo and San Francisco, where they are endeavouring to do away with the less fortunate gridiron plan, so universally used by the early planners of American cities'.[3]

1) Burgess - op cit p 205.

2) W.E.Groben - The Replanning of Philadelphia (Town Planning Review, vol 2 no 1, 1911), p 208.

3) W.E.Groben - The Replanning of Philadelphia (Town Planning Review, vol 2, no 1, 1911, p 207).

Thus a phase of Middlesbrough's urban history had come full circle. Now the much boasted grid-iron development itself was under attack both at home and abroad. Many of the earlier virtues (at least those claimed to be so) were now seen to be incumbrances to a reasonable town, not only from the practical point of view, but also visually. In Philadelphia itself, where the plan was much more thorough-going than in Middlesbrough, the same trend was evident. Yet even at this late stage Middlesbrough lagged in practice. Her grid-iron plan was no longer seen in clear-cut terms, and her solutions were based on compromise and dependent on private property owners. At least the improvers in Philadelphia saw the earlier town plan for what it was, and their solutions were on the grand scale. Middlesbrough continued to look in on itself: comparisons were unmade. Even within the terms of its own plan, Middlesbrough proved faint-hearted. Within the first couple of decades of growth the flaws were there for all to see.

3) Some Early Flaws in the Plan

In order to illustrate some of the early flaws in the Pease Plan, I will look first at the housing stock from the point of view of absolute quantity. This will be followed by reviewing some accounts of what the houses (and some other buildings) actually looked like in the period under discussion. I will also consider the actual state of the houses: how substantial or meagre; and attendant problems. This inevitability leads on to some preliminary remarks regarding the state of public health.

A start to understanding the development of housing in this time is to compare the Otley plan with the Ordnance Survey of 1853.[1] The former has space and symmetry, as has already been discussed; the latter shows how far Middlesbrough had moved from the initial ideas even within one generation. Not only is the area of urban development spread out, especially in the south and east, but there is also much evidence of infilling (both in the form of extra streets, and in the form of meagre courts). For statistical information the census reports are useful.

For 1831, 26 houses are listed as inhabited, but no figure is given for those building or uninhabited. In the next report the number of inhabited houses goes up to 877, and details are

1) See a copy of this map in my appendices.

given for houses under construction and those standing empty. In 1851 the first figure goes up to 1262, and the other details are given.[1] But to cover these factual bones with some sort of flesh one must turn to verbal accounts of the town, however suspect or subjective these accounts may be.

Looking back a generation Taylor[2] saw the Middlesbrough of 1832 as a leisured sort of place, especially his account of the routine of the coachman; and in this same year he noted the appearance of some shops and mentioned particular streets, but already some of the streets to which he refers are not shown in the Otley plan. Thus the distortion seems to have started long before the population increase beyond the projected 5000. Not that Taylor's account is all sweetness and light. In his account of the working of the coal staithes, he remarks on the dangerous nature of the work, and twice in his notes cites and death of a child whilst bringing food to the father who was employed on the staithes.

Similarly after a corresponding space of time Burnett[3] noted that in 1834 'the town had grown to such an extent that gas works were established and were in successful operation' ... Looking at other public aspects he added, 'in 1840 the church of St. Hilda's in the Market Place was consecrated, and the same year a public market was established.' This latter establishment was considered of note by Richmond[4] who entered for 12th December 1840: 'The market

1) Full figures given in the appendices, p 525A.

2) W.Taylor - op cit passim. See also plate 5 for an impression of the town in this same year.

3) W.H.Burnett - op cit p 12.

4) Thos. Richmond - op cit p. 186.

established at Middlesbrough was held the first time, this day (Saturday).'

Postgate saw this phase of urban development in terms of the attraction for settlers.[1] Considering the early town, he remarked that the 'new port soon attracted considerable numbers of tradesmen with their families ... those engaged in commercial pursuits and the conducting of the railway and shipping.' This same, somewhat optimistic, view is also taken by the engineer Turnbull[2] writing at the time of the actual development.

In his 1846 address he noted that, 'The town has been laid out in a regular manner with a large square in the centre, and the streets diverging from it at right angles to each other. A handsome church, built of stone has been erected at one side of the square, and there are also several chapels for dissenters of different denominations. There are also public schools, and besides the Exchange Hotel, a handsome building erected by a company, there are several good inns, and shops of all kinds. A commodious market-house has recently been erected.[3] All the streets ... are lighted with gas.

Turnbull makes it sound as if he were actually looking at the town that Pease wanted and Otley planned. But by 1846[4] there were too many exceptions to the original scheme to take Turnbull's description as the objective truth. That major changes were taking place within the formative years of the early town can be seen from a number of sources, including some of the actual deeds to which the

1) Chas. Postgate - op cit p 23.

2) Geo. Turnbull - Account ... Coaldrops, p 250. See p 118 f 2 for fuller reference.

3) See also p 118 of the thesis. Although Turnbull found the capacity to criticise the coal staithes, and see superior ones even as close at hand as Port Clarence, he found no criticism with the town.

4) See plate 6 for a view of the town in 1846.

Middlesbrough Owners were party. One such deed is the agreement to sell John Vaughan some land in 1840.[1] One of the most interesting aspects of this document is the way in which it echoes the benevolent past whilst having a substantial change in the grand design at the very core of its being.

The agreement concerns the sale of eleven plots of building land, and reference is made to the Otley plan of 1830 to describe their location. The plots are numbered 60 to 69, and 182. They are so described in the document that two things become apparent. Giving the area as 5250 sq yds or thereabouts the document goes on, 'being lots 61, 62, 65, 66 and 69 and the southern moiety of lots 60, 63, 64, 67 and 68 described on a certain map '.[2] And as can be seen from this map, over half the length of Suffield Street is so affected: in order to use the street as originally intended then an extra street between Suffield and Richmond Streets becomes inevitable. Here is a case of almost certain infilling.

Similarly on the third page of the document lot 182 is mentioned, but as can be seen from the map used with the document, this lot is in addition to the Otley plan. The lot is off Cleveland Street but outside the original periphery. As can be seen from the 1853 map, more building sites on this side of Cleveland Street were sold and then developed, but in doing so the original symmetry was destroyed.

Yet in spite of these infringements of their own original intentions, the Owners reiterated some of the earlier assurances about the original town. On the fifth page they state that these

1) Agreement for the sale of land between Richard Otley (agent for the O.M.E.) and John Vaughan (dated 1st August 1840).

2) See map section in the appendices. Compare lots 60 to 68 on the Otley plan, with their diminished version on the 1840 plan.

same 'pieces or parcels of ground ... are arranged with a view to the formation of a town at Middlesbrough'. On the last three pages of the document are recorded the assurances of earlier deeds, such as the Covenants of 1831. Such assurances read that the O.M.E. shall 'at their own expense, carry out many functions such as laying-out and surfacing the streets, paving footways, making sewers under such streets, and these afterwards to be maintained by the 'owners for the time being'.

Similarly there are restrictions on builders in order to preserve uniformity. This uniformity refers to height of the houses (not less than 19'), size of windows (not less than 5' 6" by 4'), size of doors (not less than 6' 8" by 3' 6"), and to roofing (slates or blue tiles).[1] Apart from slight details of difference in these rules and those of 1831, there seems much less conviction on the part of the Owners. Inevitably the question must be asked, did the compliers of the deed have any real intention of creating and maintaining the town of 1831, or was this simply an exercise in legal rhetoric?

Certainly there is strong evidence by 1841 that things are getting out of hand, at least from the view of maintaining any reasonable standard of public health. Even the eulogistic Burnett remarks that 'In 1841 the powers of local government for the unwieldy colony being defective, an act for the improvement of the town was

1) Apart from far less attempt at detailed restriction, there are differences when comparing the 1831 document. The windows become 6" narrower, whilst the doors become 1' shorter. See p 50 of this thesis.

obtained and Commissioners appointed.'[1]

On 21st June 1841 Middlesbrough received its improvement act.[2] This act describes itself as being an act for 'paving, lighting, watching, cleansing and otherwise improving the town of Middlesbrough ... and for establishing a market therein'. The document falls into two parts, first there are 238 clauses concerned with the means and implementation of the act, followed by eight schedules referred to in these clauses.

The clauses can be analysed as referring to officials, duties and finance. The officials are twelve commissioners voted into office on the basis of the poor relief rate. Their tenure is three years: $\frac{1}{3}$ retiring each year. They proceed by monthly meetings and appoint committees and a treasurer, clerk, collector, common crier, surveyor etc.

Their powers are to make by-laws, purchase land; clause LXXXI serves as an example' ... that for purposes of forming approaches to the said town ... and of widening and improving the streets and ways within the said town, it shall be lawful for the Commissioners to agree with the Owners ... for the absolute purchase of any such lands'. The clause goes on to state that such streets etc. shall be deemed public as soon as such work has been completed.

Other specific examples of function include the provision of sewers and the prevention of nuisances. Under the first clause CXI states that, '... it shall be lawful for the Commissioners ... to cause such common sewers, drains ... as they may think necessary to be constructed in or under any street within the limits of this act ... '

1) W.H.Burnett - op cit p 13.

2) Middlesbrough Improvement Act 1841.

Houses were to be numbered and streets named. Nuisances were to be prevented, and constables appointed. Owners of property were made responsible for the provision of guttering and fallpipes; and they were prevented from the future use of thatch in roofing. They were also responsible for seeing that pavements were swept and cleaned. Income for the work of the Commissioners was to come from both rates and market tolls. Regulations were also laid down regarding this market, as to weights, opening times, etc.

The fact that these stipulations so closely resemble the covenants of 1831 suggests that either the functions were quite sufficient but the town had grown too much for the O.M.E. system of local government, as in fact Burnett states [1]; or maybe the stipulations were not being adhered to, and a stronger authority needed not only to continue governing the town in the pattern of the 1830's, but in fact to rectify all that had already gone amiss in the previous ten years. The very first minutes of the Commissioners suggest that the latter was most likely the case. [2]

Early in August 1841 they record that the town was carefully perambulated and recommendations were made as a result. These recommendations include the proper covering of cellar hatches, gratings, and drains. The following month handbills regarding nuisances are printed, and gas lights placed at various points in the town. In the initial minute there is the reminder that some 'courts and alleys' were left over for further inspection;

1) See previous p.

2) Minutes of monthly meeting of the Improvement Commissioners, 2nd July 1841.

but more revealing is the mention of many street names that do not appear on the Otley map, e.g. Garbutt Street, Hilda Place, Newcastle Row and Thomas Street, all examples of distortions to the original plan; and before (at least comparatively speaking) the rise of the iron industry.

With the onset of the local iron industry, housing boomed, and it is often to this boom that some historians look for the main cause of the distortion of the Pease Plan. Within two years of Vaughan's rediscovery of workable local iron ore, one finds reference to the housing response, such as, 'A building mania seems to have set in at Middlesbrough'. Descriptions often follow, such as, 'Houses, springing up with great speed, mushroom in every direction; blank building sites are filling up ... every aperture is closing in with houses'. The mania concept is completed with phrases such as, 'Cottages are rattling forward at a time, and people are tumbling into them - some before they are finished'.[1]

By 1853 such distortions were all the more evident. In his report to the General Board of Health in 1854, W.Ranger[2] records some of his own notes on town inspection in an appendix. He lists a total of 22 yards, courts etc. which he himself visited in the company of Mr. Richardson, the surgeon of the union. Of these 22 none appear in the Otley plan, but some have already been mentioned

1) Sunderland News and North of England Advertiser, 11th September 1852.

2) W.Ranger - op cit pp 27 - 30.

in the early minutes of the Improvement Commissioners, e.g. St. Hilda-place and Newcastle-row. Often the exact location is given so that the houses can be seen in relation to the original plan, e.g. Captain Cook's-yard, Durham-place and St. Hilda-place all abut onto the churchyard; Chapman's-yard is off Durham Street and Trimmer's-yard is off Stockton Street.

Taking at random his first and last examples we find that in Baltic-yard 'which is entered by a covered way' (there are) 'nine houses on three sides. In the yard is a butcher's midden with a house over it. The children in this place showed symptoms of scofula.' The last example concerns Victoria-yard: this 'contains four houses, none of which have any back outlets. There is a privy at the end whilst others appropriated to the use of the adjoining yard are immediately in front of the houses in Victoria-yard. In one case in this neighbourhood new houses are being built and sleeping rooms made over the privies, which are provided with open ash-pits.'

In the 20 locations[1] between these two main examples there are many shocking disclosures. Ranger notes, 'one privy for the joint use of six of the dwellings ... occupied cellars in this place with the liquid refuse oozing through the walls from the ground above ... In one place as many as sixteen people were living in two rooms ... Union cottages have been erected within the last twelve months, yet there has been as little attention paid to proper ventilation here as elsewhere ... ash and soil pits are close to the house door, and in some cases separated from the house by

1) See plates 18 to 20 for examples of some of these locations.

a half-brick wall only, through the joints of which I observed the soil was percolating.'[1] And so on.

Ranger summed up some of the health dangers in his concluding remarks. ' Apart from the ordinary evils of defective sewerage and a scanty domestic supply of water ... the chief defect ... was the bad structural arrangement of the poorer kinds of houses.'[2] By this latter he criticised the lack of ventilation through the crowding together of too many houses with no real space in the centre between them. The term court thus became meaningless in this sense.

Looking at the problem as a whole Ranger gave remarks from the town clerk, Mr. Peacock, who argued that many points of the law[3] were in need of amendment. Particularly the town clerk was concerned about the restriction on borrowing powers, the lack of powers of coercion to enforce the construction of private drains, and the lack of means to compel houses to be supplied with water.

1) Ibid pp 28 - 29.

2) Ibid p 18.

3) This refers to the position after the 1853 Act of Incorporation, but where some of the 1841 restrictions continued.

In spite of these local government weaknesses other reasons for the dangerous health situation were given. Sometimes the builders would be blamed, sometimes the O.M.E., sometimes it was the nature of the site, and sometimes the hazard was almost denied.

Blame for the landlords comes in at least three instances. Ranger notes that he was informed that in regard to the supply of water for domestic purposes 'the owners of the houses refused to lay in the service pipes and the tenants werein no position to do so for themselves.' Commenting on the houses during his two-day inspection he notes that, 'each house builder has made it his chief care to put together as many houses as possible on the smallest space'. This however follows a remark about the scarcity of building sites with population increase. On the last page of his appendix he notes Dunning's[1] evidence that the O.M.E. were 'willing to do all in their power to prevent the overcrowding of the houses on insufficient space. The evil however ... ought to be laid ... on those who purchased the building sites, and made as much of them as they could.' Nevertheless Dunning follows this apportioning of blame by praising the principal streets for their width.[2]

The builders' response was otherwise. In the part of the report

1) John Dunning was agent for the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate.

2) See plates 9, 11 and 12 for photographs of three of the four main streets.

in which he deals generally with the condition of the houses, Ranger notes that in regard to the construction of courts and yards the builders 'defend the practice on the score of the high price of building sites compelling them to erect as many houses as possible to enable them to make their building speculations pay'. In a similar way a large owner of house property is quoted in the appendix as saying that 'space was so valuable that houses were built without there being room for proper conveniences'. In the same page of evidence a Mr. J.Kneeshaw, the owner of three houses in Stockton Street bemoaned the fact that the houses were six or seven feet lower at the back than the front. This meant that he had to 'pay a man 21. (£2) a year to pump the slop water out of the basement stories into the drain in the street in front'.

Ranger himself seems to take the view that the Middlesbrough situation is not unusual, and most faults can be remedied by the application of the 1848 Public Health Act. He says at the end of a short passage on the geological formation of the town that the general evidence of the medical men and others describes the town as 'being generally healthy'. This he follows with some details of mortality, in which he estimates that in the years 1851/2 the mortality rate was 30, rising to 35 during 1853.

Some of this general medical opinion Ranger gives in detail. John Richardson, surgeon and union medical officer considered the general physical character of the district such as to make the town a 'naturally healthy place'. Recent epidemics were seen to be less severe than those suffered by neighbours. G.Kirk Esq., surgeon, similarly considered that the town was 'naturally healthy', but some qualifications were made. The site of the burial ground was

objected to, and houses built too close together could not afford proper air circulation.

Ranger himself took a very similar line. He considered that in Middlesbrough there was neither a preponderence of bad housing nor was that most recently erected of this nature. During his inspection of the housing he notes that his attention was called to a statement in the Times of October in the previous year.[1] This report had given great offence to the town so Ranger attempted to clarify the trouble publicly.

The piece in the Times concerned a short inspection of Middlesbrough by a Dr. Lewis during a cholera outbreak in Newcastle and other northern towns in 1853. Lewis criticised the large number of bad dwellings and in blaming both local authority and builders for the situation alleged that 'there is no one here to check the building speculators, who it is said, buy a small quantity of land to erect thereon the largest number of dwelling houses'. As a consequence health was disregarded, sewers unthought of, and houses almost newly built ought to be closed down.

In refuting this statement as 'somewhat over-coloured' Ranger noted that at the time his paragraph was written, cholera was threatening the town. He urged that the inhabitants ought to be roused to make better sanitary regulations, but then noted with relief that the threatened attack passed although diarrhoea was prevalent. Unfortunately for both Middlesbrough and Ranger he includes a note written whilst the report was being prepared, and

1) The Times 10th October 1853 - report of comments by Dr. Lewis on Middlesbrough.

presumably Ranger himself back in Whitehall. In this note he says that he is 'sorry to learn that the town has not been so fortunate this autumn,[1] but that cholera has made its appearance with great virulence.' Concluding thus, 'However I may regret the fact I am not aware that it requires me to alter or qualify any of the preceding remarks'. Probably a remark by Burnett would best conclude this chapter, 'In 1855 the town suffered from a very severe visitation of Asiatic cholera, in consequent of which the Public Health Act was applied'.[2] I will return to this aspect of early Middlesbrough history towards the end of my next chapter.

1) This must refer to Autumn 1854.

2) W.H.Burnett - op cit p 13.

Chapter 3

Town Affairs & Experience

1) Economic Changes, 1831 - 53

a) Diluted Optimism

In the way that I started Chapter 1 by considering the economic framework within which Middlesbrough was born, I will now look at the economic changes that took place during the first generation of Middlesbrough's history. In this first section, I will use the coal trade as the unifying element in an increasingly complex economic structure, and in the next section I will use the coal trade as the ailing element in an economy that was heroically saved by the iron industry.

Thus we can start by saying that the basic industry for gauging Middlesbrough's material progress in these years must be the coal carrying trade. Related of course are rail transport and work on the shipping staithes. Statistics of amounts of coal moved can be quoted, although care has to be taken not to confuse the figures for Stockton and Middlesbrough. Without doubt the increase in the number of staithes indicates increasing economic activity, as does the erection of a dock during this period.

Other industrial activity must also be looked at. This seems to be covered by three different kinds of work. First there are trades that would be inevitable in any growing community, such as the building trade; this incorporates both the aspect of construction and the supply of basic materials. Then there are industries that may have been related to the basic economic activity but which were not inevitable. Examples are shipbuilding and engineering; the sail-cloth industry provides another example, whilst the early pottery was a trade much more remote from the initial economic situation.

Finally there are the service industries and the professions. Information is available on these from a number of sources: deeds regarding land sales, general accounts of the town in these early years, and references to specific individuals.

In 1842 the Middlesbrough dock was opened. This presented unmistakable evidence of economic progress, and was a further advance on the increase in the number of staithes available. One of the two engineers who designed this dock was George Turnbull[1] and in a professional address four years after the dock began working he gave his opinion about the state of the coal trade.[2]

Regarding prosperity Turnbull was in no doubt. He gives figures for the shipment of coal from 1825 to 1841, that is from the opening of the branch line to Middlesbrough till the opening of the dock. These figures show an increase in coal shipped at Stockton and Middlesbrough as increasing from 7,296 tons in the year 1825/6 to 498,092 tons in the year 1840/1: it is interesting to compare this increase of nearly seventy-fold with the pre-1830 estimates of Joseph Pease.[3]

Part of Turnbull's thesis is to justify the new dock. His later figures, given in an appendix, are concerned with Middlesbrough for the most part. Coal figures are again given, this time for Middlesbrough alone from July 1841 to December 1845. These show an annual increase from 392,110 tons to 505,486 tons for the years 1841/2 to 1844/5.[4] In this last full year he gives a total for

1) His colleague was W.Cubitt.

2) G.Turnbull - Account of Middlesbrough Coaldrops ... (Institute of Civil Engineers, vol V, 1846).

3) Turnbull's figures are given in the appendices. Pease estimated a trade of about 10,000 tons per year.

4) The final figure is for six months only, July/December 1845.

Middlesbrough and Stockton of 562,583 tons: the Stockton trade thus appearing as only a fraction of that of Middlesbrough.

Yet the idea of continuous progress is not borne out even by the figures Turnbull quotes: in the 15 years down to 1841 there is a fall-off from a peak year in 1839/40; and the figures for the years 1841/5 do not show a pattern of continuing build-up. The engineer's critical faculties do come into play however when he discusses the old coal staithes.[1]

He notes that eight drops at the river side handled the coal trade from 1830 to 1842, and describes the process of lifting the waggons by steam power to a platform 20' above the railway, before these same waggons are then lowered to the ships' decks. Then he remarks that, 'the latter method being found expensive in maintenance and inadequate to the increasing trade, a commodious dock has been constructed ...' and adds, 'the expense of raising the waggons by steam power is saved, as well as the damage and risk avoided, to which the coals and vessels had previously been liable in the tideway of the river.'[2]

It is interesting to compare this rather restrained criticism of the mechanical 'life-blood' of Middlesbrough, in its early days, with an account of eleven years earlier. In 1835 George Head did a tour of the manufacturing parts of England, and in the process glanced at Stockton and Middlesbrough. In his account of the Tees ports he expresses the usual amazement at the speed of Middlesbrough's

1) In view of his role in the replacement of these staithes by a dock his criticism is not surprising.

2) G.Turnbull - op cit p 250.

growth in this way, '... the nascent town of Middlesbrough[1] may afford matter for rumination ... sympathies are engaged perhaps more profitably among the expanding element of youth than the withering features of age'.[2] Yet the sight that seems to have impressed him most in Middlesbrough is not the growing town, but the coal staithes, in particular the complicated nature of their operation.

Having briefly mentioned the first appearance of the staithes, he then notes that 'the laden coal-waggons are, in the first instance, raised by a steam engine to the upper floor, and then lowered again to the vessel below'; this he concludes is, 'a circuitous application of additional labour, than which it certainly appears a more direct mode might have been devised'. He then follows this by a long and incredulous description of the working of the staithes: machines, devices, animals, and men.

However the most accurate statistics to date for the coal trade at this time have been suggested by Peter Barton.[3] His figures for the years 1825 to 1833 agree with those of Turnbull, but he opens up the complexity of the situation in a way that the engineer seemed oblivious of. Nevertheless Barton's conclusions do not differ so very widely from those of Turnbull.

Barton takes the year 1840 as a very good example of how statistics can mislead. It was in this year that the figure of

1) Sir George Head - A Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts of England in the Summer of 1835 (reprint in 1968 of 1836 edition), £ 300.

2) He consistently mis-spells the name of the town as 'Middleborough', but his naming of the river as the Tyne is less excusable.

3) Peter Barton - op cit p 129.

1½ million tons of coal handled was reached: and although the figure is no doubt accurate, it is interesting to see how this 'milestone' has been used and interpreted. The Tees Conservancy Handbook (1953/4) states that the figure of 33,000 tons shipped from Middlesbrough within two years of the railway extension, reached 1½ million tons by 1840. Asa Briggs in 1963 credits Middlesbrough with having raised its total of coal exports to over one and a half million tons by 1841, and concludes that 'the early prosperity of Middlesbrough was thus guaranteed'.[1] J.W.Wardell varies the account by saying that the total of coal shipped from the Tees between 1830 and 1840 was 1½ million tons, and that it came mainly from Middlesbrough.[2] Finally Charles Postgate in 1899 may have given rise to this trend of thinking by stating that the Stockton exports dwindled into a very inconsiderable proportion from the time when the shipment of coals started at Middlesbrough. From this he surmises that 'for all practical purposes the coal shipments from the Port of Stockton may be regarded as the Middlesbrough exports'.[3]

Luckily there is a variety of statistics available for the year of 1840 from which a revealing break-down can be made. Barton shows that Middlesbrough's real total was just over four and a quarter thousand tons, while that of Stockton was just over one hundred thousand tons; the difference is made up of the total of nearly a million tons from Seaham Harbour, Port Clarence, and Hartlepools.

1) Asa Briggs - op cit p 244.

2) J.W.Wardell - op cit p 10. Cf with remarks on p 5, footnote 2.

3) Charles Postgate - Middlesbrough, its History, Environs and Trade (2nd and revised edition in 1899 of the original 1889 ed), p 22.

Most interesting of these latter places is the fact that the Hartlepools total exceeds that of Middlesbrough by sixteen thousand tons.[1] The conclusion must be that the growth of the Middlesbrough coal exports was nowhere near as dramatic as some historians have alleged, therefore the on-rush of increasing economic activity did not in any sense overtake Middlesbrough over-night. At the same time Stockton did not decline at the rate that some suggest, but in coal exports it did take a second place to Middlesbrough. Yet Middlesbrough itself had to take a second place to Hartlepools before the end of the 23 years with which I am currently concerned.

Apart from industries which were a necessary adjunct to the coal carrying trade, the most interesting economic addition to early Middlesbrough was the establishment of a pottery. Lillie calls it 'the most exciting venture of this era', but also adds that it 'was the most unlikely'[2], while Asa Briggs calls it simply, 'the first local industry'[3].

The pottery was started at the beginning of 1834 in premises to the north-east of the town, on the river side, and it is on record that their first order was shipped to Gibralta in the Autumn of that year. Nevertheless the history of this concern, known initially as The Middlesbrough Pottery Company, was hardly a healthy one. In 1834 Edward Pease (Joseph's father) records in his diary: 'Cousins Isaac Wilson and his two sons John and Isaac here (Middlesbrough)

1) Details given in the Appendices, p 525.

2) W.Lillie - op cit p 65.

3) Asa Briggs - op cit p 244. Having noted the construction of the docks (opened 1842) he says, '... with the staithes and the docks came the first local industry', in reference to the pottery.

on their troublesome pottery concerns, in which they have got deeply involved, and my beloved son Joseph by his over kindness has not only sustained grievous loss, but great perplexity from the reviling of some who owe him the greatest gratitude'.[1]

In a footnote the editor explains that the pottery was carried on until about 1882 under the name of Isaac Wilson & Co. but in fact had long been the property of the Pease family. He accounts for the Pease long-term support of this uneconomical concern in three respects. First was the hope that one day it may become profitable; then there was the reluctance to throw men out of work by closing down the business, and finally it was for the sake of the Wilson family who had founded the concern.

Regarding the final close-down he notes that about 1881 his father (Joseph Whitwell Pease)[2] asked him to look into the business, and he saw that its continuance would simply be a 'continual source of loss and worry'.[3] Thus the business closed down, the owners being 'faced' with 'a very heavy loss in the winding-up'. Regarding its products he estimates that it had turned out a great deal of good china and earthenware.

Nevertheless Middlesbrough continued to expand albeit not in the heroic fashion that some would have it. A short useful look at the town has taken in 1837 when the Municipal Boundary Commission

1) A.E.Pease - Extracts from the Diaries of Edward Pease (1907). These extracts divide into three periods: 1824, 1838/51 and 1853/7. p 194

2) See footnote 3, pp 14/15, in Pease' book.

3) A.E.Pease - op cit p 194.

visited Stockton in reporting on the boundary and ward divisions there.[1] When referring to the land adjoining Stockton on the south bank of the Tees, the Commission saw little likelihood of expansion there. Specifically they were looking at the area that became known as South Stockton, and later Thornaby; and here they could advise no extension of the Stockton boundary because 'there is not such a number, nor is there much probability of such an increase taking place, as to render it advisable to extend the Borough on this side of the Tees'.

In spite of this error in forecasting, their view of Middlesbrough seems to have been far more accurate. Referring to 4½ miles lower down the Tees on the opposite bank to Stockton, they noted that there 'had risen up within the last five years a great mass of houses, constituting Middlesbrough'. After describing the railway extension and the coal staithes they add, '... the place already presents the appearance of a busy port; larger vessels can come here than can get up to Stockton ... so that in a few years it' (Middlesbrough) 'will probably deserve the name of a rival port to Stockton'. Not surprisingly in the circumstances, the Commission recommended a large extension to the Stockton boundary to the north, west and a little to the south, but no extension to the east, across the Tees.

Similar impressions to those of the Commission, though maybe of a less partial source, came from Edward Pease just three years later. Early in 1840 he records that he was 'at Middlesbrough this afternoon accompanied by my beloved sons, John and Joseph; to the

1) Report of the Municipal Boundaries Commission 1837. No page numbers given but places listed in alphabetical order: Stockton information in the last of the three volumes.

efforts of the latter this busy bustling place owes very much of its thriving prosperity'. Yet some misgivings are present; not for the town but for the son. 'Whilst I in no inconsiderable degree was cheered with the hope that the comforts of 3000 or 4000 there were increased, yet the constant mantle of my spirit ... was that the spirit of this world might not drink up the Spirit of the Lord which was in him (i.e. Joseph).'

Maybe the father had an unusual sense of guilt concerning the material success of this son: his training and parental decisions had done much to create Joseph's personality. At least this is the universal impression from accounts of the lives of the two men.[1] Edward may have been Darlington's largest factory owner, and no doubt had the major role in creating the first public railway, but Joseph had actually created a town from next to nothing; thus the father's fears may have been better directed towards the responsibilities that his son ought to bear. Nevertheless these fears continued: at least as far as one can gather from the scattered evidence of his diaries.

Late in 1844 Edward Pease was in Middlesbrough noticing the progress of the town, 'its increase, bustle, population and the number of vessels excited my surprise, and though it afforded me satisfaction to see so much employment and so much comfort for the various classes of the inhabitants, yet underneath I felt ... a concern and apprehension that all this was produced by the exertions of my precious son Joseph's untiring mind, and fears are mine that too much of his time and heaven granted talents ....'

1) See remarks on this, pp 29/31 in this thesis.

Shortly after this entry Pease notes that the Stockton and Darlington Railway were opening some iron foundry works at Middlesbrough. In spite of his fears regarding his son Joseph and the possible struggle between Quaker witness and Mammon he notes that several Friends were about to be employed as managers and workmen in this new concern.[1]

Yet given the fact of Middlesbrough's expansion and the relative fall-off in the coal-carrying trade, it is to this last industry mentioned by Pease that one must turn for an account of the industrial phoenix that arose in the Middlesbrough of the 1840's. Reference has already been made to the relative check in Middlesbrough's expansion, especially vis-a-vis Hartlepools[2], and general post-hoc impressions bear this out.

Writing at the very beginning of this present century, J.S. Fletcher noted that 'in 1843 there were some signs of a check in the flowing tide of Middlesbrough's prosperity, but a boom in pig iron, which assumed a rapid increase in price, set things going again, and the population continued to increase'.[3] It is the second half of this statement that the same writer chose to amplify some seventeen years later, 'In 1841 two men, Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan, appeared in the rising town of Middlesbrough ...' He continued in a way already familiar from some of the comments on Joseph Pease. 'They were men of great foresight and vast enterprise ...' Inevitably some of the manifestation of this enterprise follows; the same focal year being

1) A.E.Pease - op cit p 205. Ironically the penultimate reference to Joseph concerns the fact that his father left him a larger share of his property in his will than the other siblings, including an elder brother. Two reasons are suggested: Joseph's work efforts, and the size of his family, p 308.

2) See p 122 of this thesis.

3) J.S.Fletcher - A Picturesque History of Yorkshire (1901), p 286.

used: 'They immediately began the manufacture of machinery, and in 1843 built the engines of the first steamships ever launched on the Tees. They became large employers of labour, and during the first ten years of their Middlesbrough career, an increase of the town in area and population was largely due to their enterprise.'[1]

If this estimation had referred to the decade from 1851 to 1861 few would argue with this judgment, but to see this increase as stemming from 1841 is premature. Certainly there is often a haste on the part of historians to introduce the iron industry: it quickly came to occupy the central position in the Middlesbrough 'drama' in the second half of the nineteenth century. Even Dr. Warren writing long after Fletcher shows the same tendency. Referring to the mid-1830's he says, 'Already however the essential preconditions for Tees-side industrial growth were being laid ...' And in 1841 in reference to Bolckow and Vaughan, 'they opened their iron works in York Street, Middlesbrough. It was a good location: accessible to waterborne Scotch pig iron, then the cheapest in the world, able to tap Durham coal supplies and with a big local market for the bars and rods it produced ...'[2]

This period of 23 years saw the start of the decline in the coal trade, the start to a number of other industries, and the basis of the later iron industry. Yet the essential factor in making the town into an industrial capital came only towards the end of this period. Until the availability of nearby iron ore the area would continue to serve as a point of transhipment, with only a small amount of metal finishing industry. In 1850 the break-through

1) J.S.Fletcher - The Making of Modern Yorkshire 1750-1914 (1918), p 119.

2) Dr. K.Warren - op cit p 187.

came, although not by a shooting accident as has sometimes been said, rather as a result of systematic probing. As Warren notes, 'In March 1849 Marley[1] opened negotiations with the landowners at Eston but some were reluctant to grant access so that not until early in 1850 could systematic search go ahead. On 8th June Marley and John Vaughan went out onto the hills behind Eston to decide on a suitable location for a borehole, but in fact discovered the Main Seam at the surface.' From this time the build-up of blast furnaces and ironworks along the lower Tees banks went quickly ahead.

1) John Marley was a mining engineer with the firm of Bolckow and Vaughan.

1) Economic Changes, 1831 - 54

b) Pessimism & Magic

Having explored the optimistic viewpoint in the previous section, I will now consider the coal trade as the harbinger of the iron industry. I will look at sources, handlers and destination, as well as considering the original aims of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company in regard to markets for the coal moved. Regarding the eventual coming of the iron industry, I will comment on two things. First, how the local iron was discovered at this time, and then what were the consequences for Middlesbrough from the use of this discovery.

During Smiles' research for 'authentic' material in his work on the Stephensons[1] he commented on the success of the railway. He took what is still a common view that 'what the company had principally relied upon for their profit was the carriage of coals for land sale at the stations along the line, whereas the haulage of coals to the seaports for exportation to the London market was not contemplated as possible'. Specifically in respect of Stockton 'the projectors never contemplated sending more than 10,000 tons a year'. With such a figure Stockton could have acted as a market in a limited way for the south Tees area, but could not have been a port for the shipment of coal on any scale at all.

Yet writing much later, a historian of Newcastle noted that 'it was the railway ... which gave the North-East collieries easy access to the sea and so enabled them to build up an extensive export trade, especially to the Baltic ports'.[2] The same writer going from effect to

1) S.Smiles - op cit p 169.

2) S.Middlebrook - Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Its Growth & Achievements (1950), p 192.

cause, noted that 'the original purpose of the Stockton and Darlington Railway ... was to facilitate the movement of coal from the Bishop Auckland area to the mouth of the Tees. After 1825 therefore coal, which previously had been imported into this river, was now exported for the first time.'

If Middlebrook is correct in his estimate of the aims of the Stockton and Darlington proprietors, then it seems strange that they chose Stockton as their Tees terminal instead of a point further down the river, be it Middlesbrough or some other point, where there was deeper water, and where therefore larger ships could be managed. On the other hand, these proprietors may have simply used Stockton as a stage in their eventual plan for a large trade in coal exports. Stockton gained in the fall in the price of coal but did not expand much as a result; in contrast Middlesbrough came into being, and became the senior partner in a bi-nuclear conurbation.

The coal mines that provided the traffic were situated in West Durham. Previously this area had been land-locked, precluding any large export market. Fordyce mentions the particular collieries as being Evenwood, Witton Park, Butterknowle, Woodfield, Adelaide, St. Helens, Whitfield, Old Etherley and North Bitchburn etc., all in the West Durham area. Much of the coal was for the London market until after 1851 when coking coal was needed for the rapidly growing iron industry. There is an expected close pattern of ownershop from source to market. The Peases, along with other Quakers, owned most of the coal mines, although under other names. Their concern for their own mines was illustrated when they spent £30,000. trying to prevent the opening of another railway line from central Durham to the Tees. A historian of Hartlepools has shown how 'the citizens of Stockton were

naturally indignant' when 'the merchants of Darlington were not only actually planning a new town to supplant Stockton, but, to add insult to injury, it was to be called Port Darlington'.[1] Thus a railway line was planned as a better alternative to the original line of 1825. This new line was to link the mines of central Durham directly with Stockton, and avoid the detour to Darlington. This the Quakers opposed both in Parliament and outside. Even when, after delays, the line was constructed, the Quakers used obstructionist tactics against the Clarence Railway in order to slow down the movement of freight, and put up the rates.

At the other end of the chain of ownership, the coal handlers in Middlesbrough, there is again, quite expectedly, Quaker influence and involvement.[2] Postgate describes the first of the coal handling companies and shows its connection with Thomas Richardson.[3]

After showing Richardson's involvement, almost domination at the initial stage, in the Stockton and Darlington Railway, and the extension to Middlesbrough, Postgate notes that 'in the summer of 1825 before the Stockton and Darlington Railway had been opened, Joseph Taylor ... journeyed (from London) ... to Darlington, at the request of Thomas Richardson, for the purpose of examining the coals in the vicinity of the railway, contracting for the same, and also to make a careful examination of the capabilities of the River Tees with a view to the establishment of an export trade'. So much for the limited aims of the Darlington Quakers.

Out of this journey from London, and a subsequent one, Taylor joined with Richardson and a third partner, Thomas Harris, to form the Tees Coal Company: Richardson provided the capital, and Harris managed the Stockton office while Taylor managed the London end. In the next

1) Robert Wood - West Hartlepool: the Rise of a Victorian New Town (1967), p 10.
2) Chas. Postgate - op cit p 8.
3) Also one of the original members of the O.M.E.

year the Darlington Quaker banker, Jonathan Backhouse[1] wrote to the Tees Coal Company with encouragement. He was a railway shareholder and a large coal owner, and he begged Richardson and his partners not to give up their scheme if the initial period of trade was bad, for he would do 'all I can to promote the Tees Coal Company'; any such faint-heartedness would mean that 'nothing of moment will be effected for years'.

In the circumstances the company lost nearly £2,000. in its first year of trading, but put pressure on the railway company for a better point of shipment, and these efforts resulted in the establishment of the Middlesbrough extension. There the company flourished.

Writing in 1857 Fordyce refers to 'eight coal fitters' offices' in Middlesbrough, yet back in 1840 there were more listed in White's Gazetteer.[2] This could of course simply indicate that trade was brisk in the 1830's but fell off in the 1840's. In his gazetteer, William White assured his readers that the work was thorough, that almost every house had been visited and information either revised or collected on the spot, and that much help had come from 'numerous literary and official gentlemen'. In the circumstances, White gives a directory for Middlesbrough, but only about 300 names are listed. If these are taken to be heads of households, then his listing must be limited to about 35% of the total number of households.

Nevertheless we can assume that White is listing the more prominent of the citizens, among whom the coal fitters would be found, and of

1) Beside the Peases, the Backhouses represented the other wealthy Quaker family in Darlington.

2) William White - History, Gazetteer and Directory of the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire (1840), pp 700-2.

these he lists 11 altogether: nine of these, including Joseph Taylor as agent for the Tees Coal Company,[1] are listed under the heading, 'Coal Fitters', and two more are listed in a general list that precedes the specialised followings. The impression is that these two were added after the initial nine were listed which could mean that the number of coal fitters was increasing in the town with growing coal exports.

That the trade was there in the first place must be attributed solely to the railway, and thus Quaker involvement was to be expected, and this either in the form of direct participation as in the case of Richardson, or in the form of encouragement as in the case of Backhouse. In a rather odd way, John Kellett[2] looks at this phase of Middlesbrough's economic development, and categorises the town, along with Barrow, as a 'second flight' railway town. By this he excludes railway towns per se[3], and concentrates on 'those more representative towns which had a firm and independent economic base of their own but gained abnormally ... from their railway linkage'. This is further amplified by saying that 'raw materials were unlocked by unusually early and effective railway enterprise'.

All three bits of this statement are questionable. Middlesbrough not only did not have an independent base before the railways, but did not even exist; it did not gain abnormally by this linkage, it was actually created; and it is not clear which raw material is referred to. If it is coal, then the unlocking was before the birth of Middlesbrough; if it is iron, then the railway had already been there for twenty years, which suggest a long waiting period.

1) Written, Lees Coal Co., but presumably a printing error.

2) John R.Kellett - The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities (1969), p.3.

3) For example, Crewe, Swindon, Wolverton or Redhill.

With regard to the discovery, or more accurately rediscovery,[1] of Cleveland ironstone that was suitable for working, there are two main accounts. One long-term and systematic; the other short-term and miraculous. Not only was this rediscovery important for the town of Middlesbrough in that it revived the urban base, which was beginning to fail due to the success of Hartlepool in the export of Durham coal, but it was also important in that it provided one of the great myths that has helped to sustain the community ever since.

Within the first generation of Middlesbrough's iron age, Isaac Lowthian Bell[2] gave a paper on the manufacture of iron. Among many other things, he attempted to describe the iron find in non-emotional terms. Having described how in '1846 Bolckow and Vaughan erected the furnace at Witton Park[3], in the Auckland district, for smelting ironstone', he showed how their hopes for using iron from the coal measures were frustrated, and so they had to utilise other possible sources. This led them to explore the Cleveland Hills for suitable ironstone seams. Thus Bell shows John Marley, who was employed by Bolckow and Vaughan, to have been one of the two men mainly responsible for the exploitation of the local ironstone deposits; the other man being Joseph Bewick. As Bell also points out, both men spent a lot of time on actual field-work before the successful find; and not only this, but both men wrote about the ironstone area before the break-through was made. Given the work of these men, there was nothing accidental in the rediscovery of ironstone: there had been a long

1) Iron had been mined in Cleveland at least as far back as Roman times.

2) Isaac Lowthian Bell (1816-1904) came to Teesside in 1854 and with his two brothers started the Clarence Works, opposite to the original coal port.

3) Part of the West Durham coal area.

systematic lead-up to it.[1]

At a more popular level Tweddell[2] points out that in 1846 a certain Dr. Merryweather said in support of a branch railway from Whitby to Stockton that 'there is one feature connected with the Dales which is of the first importance, that is, the ironstone with which they abound'. Even more accessible to the public eye was the work of Ord[3] which was published in the same year, and as Tweddell points out stresses the availability of ironstone. Ruefully Tweddell comments that 'it was not to be expected that a mere man of letters could see the commercial value of that which so many who were deemed experts in the manufacture condemned as utterly worthless, and his remarks were written in 1843 when the ore would scarcely have been received as a gift by the majority of North of England smelters'. Thus whilst stressing that the iron ore was 'not to be so easily discovered as by a sportsman stumbling over something when out shooting on the hills, carelessly stooping to see what had nearly upset him, then raising it up and exclaiming "This is IRONSTONE"', Tweddell logically bemoans the fact that as a result of this account 'a fiction ... has been circulated around the globe'.

Yet even the realistic and systematic account can be distorted. The discovery of ironstone was neither accidental nor long-predicted. Quite recently a historian of the local railways[4] wrote that the importance of the Cleveland iron industry was brought about 'by the

1) I.L.Bell - The Manufacture of Iron in Connection with the Northumberland and Durham Coal-field (Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining Engineers, vol XIII, 1863/4).

2) G.M.Tweddell - op cit passim.
3) J.W.Ord - The History and Antiquities of Cleveland (1846).
4) Kenneth Hoole - Railways in Cleveland (1971), fn 6.

discovery of a plentiful supply of iron ore in the Cleveland Hills, and also by the foresight of the directors of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the Pease family, who decided to built a dock at Middlesbrough, further down river from the original terminus'. It has already been shown that the dock was built at the height of the coal export boom in Middlesbrough; there was no thought of a locally fed iron industry. Whilst Joseph Pease did encourage other manufacturers to come to the area, particularly Bolckow and Vaughan in this context, their supplies were not locally based: their initial plant was concerned with the iron finishing process not its smelting. Hoole is too kind to Pease in crediting him with a foresight which even Pease himself (not the most modest of men in spite of his quakerism) would have claimed.

Probably the fullest account of the systematic discovery of the local ironstone is the one given by Joseph Bewick only ten years after Bolckow and Vaughan began their large scale exploitation of the metal,[1] Bewick shows how a number of early accounts of the deposits have been overlooked, for example Young and Bird in 1822, and Professor Phillips in 1835, and wisely asks 'How often has it happened in the history of discovery and invention, that the authors of such have been entirely overlooked and forgotten, and the merit which was so justly theirs bestowed upon others, simply because they were in a position successfully to adopt the principle of the discovery ...?' In this case the beneficiary was 'Messrs. Bolckow and Vaughan... through the exertions of their mining engineer, Mr. Marley'.

1) Joseph Bewick - Geological Treatise on the District of Cleveland in North Yorkshire (1861), pp 7, 31.

In spite of these and many other more or less scientific accounts of the rediscovery of Cleveland ironstone at Eston, it is the rabbit-hole story (or something similarly absurd) that has prevailed in the local folk lore. Repeated denials of the accidental version of the discovery only seem to add fuel to those who need a magical explanation for the saving of Middlesbrough from the coal trade fall-off. Pease may have started the town but Providence approved; and in its time of need, Middlesbrough was not only saved but uplifted by a deus ex machina.

The most recent repeating of the miraculous account comes from the writer Naomi Jacob [1], but this is part of a long tradition, which doubtless will continue, as long as people require such explanations.

Writing about Middlesbrough, with which she was acquainted at the beginning of the century, she criticises its architecture very strongly but begins her short article with an account of the ironstone discovery. Accordingly Bolckow 'dislodged a stone with his stick, and surprised at the weight of it, retrieved it, and weighed it in his hand. "That's ironstone", he said. They investigated and, sure enough, the hills were filled with ironstone ... Nothing could have been more favourable.' Apart from anything else, Bolckow was not present when Marley made the real discovery, and it is not even certain that Vaughan was there.

Yet once the ironstone was used on an increasing scale the future

1) Naomi Jacob - Middlesbrough - Child of England's Greatness (in Yorkshire Life, Illustrated, vol XI, no 4, April 1957). Miss Jacob worked in Middlesbrough as a pupil-teacher from the age of 15, in the early years of this century. She must have known parts of old Middlesbrough very well for her school was in St. Hilda's ward; thus for this reason, as well as for professional reasons, her repeating of the 'miracle' story is rather inexcusable.

of Middlesbrough was secure: far more so in fact than when the basis of the town's economy rested on the coal trade. Smailes has put the change in geographic, but spectacular, terms when he said that 'after 1850 Tees-side experienced an industrial expansion of a suddenness and magnitude as great as any in British industrial history. It began when, immediately after the discovery of ironstone at Eston, blast-furnaces were set up on the Tees to smelt the local iron ore with coking-coal from Durham.'[1]

Yet the area demanded more than a firm economic base. The miracle of iron had happened, and this called for some kind of sanctification. This came in 1862 with a visit to the town by Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a complimentary remark that he made in an after-dinner speech. This was his likening the town to 'an infant, gentlemen, but ... an infant Hercules'. Once said, some remarks are never forgotten: the 'infant Hercules' tag has become a piece of local folk lore in the same way as the miraculous ironstone discovery.

In an Edwardian booster article by the Town Clerk the story is given in typical fashion. Mr. Sockett impresses his readers that 'the late Mr. Gladstone, when visiting Middlesbrough in 1862, made use of the expression: "This remarkable place - the youngest child of England's enterprise - is an infant, but it is an infant Hercules'.[2] As bad as the repetition of such a piece of self-congratulation is, it is surely worse when the story becomes so distorted that the initial understanding of the situation is lost.

Very recently a large study on the landscape of ideas used the

1) A.E.Smailes - North England (1961), p 179.

2) Alfred Sockett - The Remarkable Growth of Ironopolis (Iron and Steel Trades Journal, Colliery Engineer and Metallurgical Review, 25th September 1909), p 346.

example of Middlesbrough a number of times.[1] In a very laudable attempt to examine the total environment, including man's subjectivity, the author refers to Middlesbrough as being 'the most extraordinary' example of a town undergoing a 'sudden growth in the population'; but spoils his use of this example by attributing to the prodigy the phrase 'an infant, but an infant Hercules' as being said by 'one of the Councillors' to describe the town 'at the opening of its Town Hall'.

The very fact that it was Gladstone who made the remark, gives it value, and even here the value is enhanced by the career of Gladstone subsequent to his making it. Many councillors and others in the town have repeated the phrase but always stressing that it was Gladstone who first said it. There was no town hall opened in 1862 when the remark was made but there had been a town hall opened almost a generation earlier, and there was to be another one opened a generation later. The fact of two such buildings ought to excite more interest than Gladstone's phrase.

1) Patrick Nuttgens - The Landscape of Ideas (1972), p. 85.

2) Town Management

a) The Improvement Commissioners

I have looked at this subject from three main aspects. First I deal with the Improvement Commissioners: their origins and affiliations, the tasks before them, and their response to the challenge. Then I consider the success or failure of their work: here I will make use of evidence by prominent citizens of the town given before parliamentary select committees that were considering private improvement bills in 1856 and 1858. Finally I will make some comparisons between housing developments in the town and some contemporary schemes and ideas that were reasonably publicised during this initial phase of Middlesbrough's urban development. Thus I will not only have looked at the work of the Commissioners from their own minutes, but I will have made two important assessments of this work: one in the form of a contemporary post-mortem by the leading citizens of the town, and the other by placing Middlesbrough's housing record alongside some examples of enlightened contemporary ideas and experiments. First therefore, the Improvement Commissioners.

The Improvement Commissioners came into being as a result of the Act of 1841.[1] They held their first meeting on 2nd July 1841, formed two standing committees, and made anumber of appointments. They reviewed the powers of local government exercised in the period from 1830 to their taking up office; and they went through the details of the Deeds of Covenant. Their meetings were fixed at monthly intervals.

The officials appointed initially were an inspector for lighting and watching, an overseer for the highways, a clerk to the commissioners and a surveyor. Salaries were fixed; and in this sense it is interesting to follow the subsequent development

1) See Chapter 2, section 3.

of these official positions. Not only is there a fairly sustained attempt to reduce the salaries or wages initially offered, but there are periods when formerly separate functions become combined. The initial rates of pay were £10. p.a. for the Clerk, £40. for the Surveyor, and later appointments were a Common Crier @ 1/- p.w. plus accommodation, a Scavenger @ £20. p.a. and a Constable @ £50.

Four standing committees were soon appointed: finance, streets, watching and lighting, and market. At the second meeting of the Commissioners, it was noted that 'the town having been perambulated a general inspection of the streets took place and the following cases are now recorded as requiring the early and continued attention of the Commissioners and their Surveyor'. This was followed by a list of safety and other requirements, including 'cellar hatches' and their fittings, 'gratings', 'fencing', 'flags and pavements', 'signboards', and 'drains'. In most cases the actual streets and property owners were named for the attention of the Commissioners, and it was resolved that each property owner should be sent a copy of clause 148 of the 1841 Act.[1]

Not only were the Commissioners empowered to deal with the streets, and watching and lighting, but they were also given the task of instituting a market. Consequently at a meeting of 17th September 1841 a committee was appointed for the 'management of the matters relating to the Market';[2] and in regard to tolls etc. the sub-committee were recommended to give their serious and early attention to this matter. Thus the Commissioners were attempting not only

1) This clause imposed a fine of £5. per day for disobedience of the Commissioners' orders. Such a fine started after seven days' warning, and continued until the fault was remedied.

2) Minutes of the Middlesbrough Improvement Commissioners, 17th September 1841.

to improve the general health and convenience of the new town, but they were also intent on adding a positive new element to urban life. In the same way that the promoters of the railway extension from Stockton to Middlesbrough hoped to rival Sunderland and Newcastle in the coal export business, so the Commissioners hoped to institute a market for the local inhabitants in order to rival established markets such as Yarm, Stokesley and Stockton.

Yet this latter ambition proved no more successful than the former. It is notable at this point how slow the Commissioners were in organising their market, and to where they looked for their criteria. Early in 1842 the Clerk reported that 'he has not been able to procure any Market Bye Laws as precedents but is daily expecting those of Newcastle and Sunderland'.[1]

Turning more specifically to the duties confronting the Commissioners, one can list these under a number of heads. They had to improve the streets, to create an adequate system of sewerage, to name the streets, to light the town, to organise the market, and finally to build the first town hall. These duties often meant imposing restraints as well as positive action. Such restraints concerned various kinds of anti-social behaviour either in pursuit of economic gain, because of general carelessness, or simple rowdyism. The Commissioners chose their tactics according to the offence and the offender.

Examples of such tactics can be given. At the end of 1844 the minutes note that 'the usual notice be given to William Carling to remove his pigstye', also 'that Mr. Sharp is requested to under drain and new spout his property', and 'that Mr. Bolckow be requested

1) Minutes op cit 4th February 1842.

to form a good and proper drain along the entire front of his property in Newcastle Row'.[1] Sometimes however such gentle persuasion was of no avail. At the same meeting it was recorded that 'Mr. Strong's having refused to pay any expense towards removing the grate near his house the same must remain in its present situation'.

Sometimes complaints against citizens would have to be followed up a number of times, as when the Street Committee was instructed to 'inspect the pavement opposite the Majestic Inn and order the same to be repaired in such manner as they may think fit and the Committee give notice to the Middlesbrough Owners to pave the footpaths in all the public streets not yet completed'.[2] Yet in cases like this, where very prominent citizens were concerned, the following up of complaints could have the opposite effect to that which was formally indicated. Late in 1842 the minutes of the Commissioners note that 'various complaints having been made by inhabitants of the Town of the very serious nuisance caused by Messrs. Bolckow & Vaughan's Engine, their most earnest attention is directed to its early remedy and that a copy of this minute be forwarded to them'.[3] The meeting of the following month notes, not that the nuisance had been cleared up to the satisfaction of the town's inhabitants, but simply changes the nature of the charge by saying 'that the minute of the last meeting on this subject be altered to "an individual having complained"'.[4]

1) Minutes op cit 5th December 1844.

2) " 5th January 1844.

3) " 11th November 1842.

4) " 2nd December 1842.

Sometimes quite positive action was taken, as when the Commissioners directed 'that the unwholesome meat seized by the Market Committee be publicly burnt in the Market place tomorrow.'[1] Similarly in the case of lighting the town, and the building of a town hall the Commissioners made very positive changes to their town.

In connection with the lighting of the town, the minutes of the Commissioners reveal a kind of running battle between themselves and the Gas Company, which was owned by the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. Three main aspects emerge here: the extension of the area enjoying gas light, the priorities of the Commissioners in respect of where the lights should actually be, and how much should be paid for this service.

Three months after their inauguration the Commissioners noted that 'the Gas Company have made the following offer for 1842 ... viz. £2.15.0. per light as heretofore but an extension of time is to be allowed by the Company equal to the hours of business at Stockton'.[2] By this means more gas was obtained for the same price, although it would have been hard for the Gas Company to resist the request of the Commissioners, given the precedent at Stockton. This particular minute however reappeared in all the subsequent meetings down to February 1842 when the Commissioners noted that they and Mr. Pease were ready to sign the agreement. No doubt a lot of negotiation went on between the Gas Company and the Watching and Lighting Committee, details of which do not appear

1) Minutes op cit 11th November 1842.

2) " 8th October 1841.

in the minutes of the monthly meeting of all the Commissioners.[1]

Early in the following year the Commissioners noted that the Lighting and Watching Committee were 'desired to endeavour to obtain a reduction of the price of gas'.[2] Yet two-thirds of the way through the same year they were still requesting the appropriate committee 'to have an Interview with the Gas Company on the subject of a reduction in the price of Gas'.[3] This meeting simply paved the way for more meetings, but at this point the Commissioners became adament. Noting that as a result of the meeting, 'Mr. Pease ... will make the necessary enquiries as to the "Street Lamps in other towns and give an early reply", they requested their sub-committee to "see Mr. Pease again on an early day and in case of no agreement being concluded with the Gas Company they are requested to order a special meeting of the Commissioners to be called in order to consider the subject'. At the same time the Clerk was requested to inform the Gas Company that 'they are not to light the public lamps until an agreement is finally come to'.[4]

Yet this rather tough line of action seems to have misfired. The following meeting recorded that the Commissioners 'being anxious to avoid the expense of a reference have concluded to offer to the Gas Company the sum of 5/7½d per lamp per month during the remainder of the season'. The meeting was then adjourned to the end of the month to await the reply from the Gas Company, a copy of the minute

1) The only minutes of the Light and Watching Committee that are extant, cover only the period from December 1848 to March 1853.

2) Minutes op cit 6th January 1843.

3) " 4th August 1843.

4) " 1st September 1843.

having been forwarded to the Gas Company.[1]

The reply from the company was written by Isaac Sharp, agent for Joseph Pease in this particular enterprise, and one of the original Improvement Commissioners for Middlesbrough; this position of Sharp shows the dual role in which many of the prominent men of Middlesbrough found themselves from time to time: representing the public good whilst making sure that their private goals were not frustrated. Sharp began his letter by pointing out that the Company were 'very unwilling to forgo the reference' but in order to exhibit good-will they were willing 'to meet the views of the Commissioners'. In this sense they would allow a '10 per cent cut off last years price ... subject to punctual payment'; also they would 'make a fair allowance for the number of days already past'. However in case the Commissioners saw this as a victory, Sharp pointed out that 'in the event of a reference, this letter is to be without prejudice to the Gas Company if the Commissioners do not accept the offer made'.[2] On this, the Commissioners agreed, and accepted the price of 55/0d per lamp subject to the 10% allowance, for the season.

Eight months later the same theme recurred. The Commissioners noted that the terms of the contract for gas had nearly expired and so determined to enter into a 'fresh agreement' for the ensuing year.[3] Yet no details appear regarding any agreement for over a year. Finally, fourteen months later, the Lighting and Watching Committee were instructed 'to wait upon the Owners of the Gas Works

1) Minutes op cit 26th September 1943. This price in fact works out dearer than the previous offer (see p 89) being equivalent to 67/6d p.a. as opposed to 55/0d.

2) " 6th October 1843. This price of course goes the other way being 49/6d, after the 10% allowance.

3) " 14th June 1844.

and endeavour to obtain either a reduction in price or an extension of the time of lighting or one of those concessions'.[1] Yet only two months later the Commissioners agreed that 'the Lighting of the Town be continued on the same terms as those of last year, and the Agreement be prepared accordingly'.[2] So two months later it could be reported that the 'Agreement (had been) produced and signed by Mr. Pease'.[3]

The justification for these attempts at a more economical price was naturally that of doing well by the townsfolk, but a glance at some of the priorities regarding actual placing of lights suggests that it was the more influential townsfolk, especially the manufacturers, who gained most. At the beginning of 1844 the Watch and Lighting Committee were instructed 'to arrange for the Lighting of the Lamp near Mr. Sidney's Foundary'.[4] At the end of the same year the attention of the committee was drawn to the 'expediency of placing a Light at the Corner of Mr. Geo. Chapman's property in Queen's Terrace',[5] yet at the same meeting it was minuted that 'the application for a Light near the Post Office be refused'.

1) Minutes op cit 1st August 1845.

2) " 21st October 1845.

3) " 22nd December 1845.

4) " 5th January 1844.

5) " 5th December 1844. Like Isaac Sharp, George Chapman was one of the original Commissioners. He built the first house in modern Middlesbrough; became a substantial landlord; and eventually started a saw-mill business in the town.

In relation to the building of the town hall, the values of the Commissioners are best seen. The first indication that the minutes give of the possibility of a town hall for Middlesbrough comes at the end of 1844 when it is minuted that 'notice be given to the Middlesbrough Owners of the intention of the Commissioners to quit the Market House unless a reduction of the rent is made to them'.[1] At their next meeting the Commissioners requested that 'Mr. Fallows procure a copy and scale of the plan of the Newport (I. of Wight) Market House & Buildings.'[2] After this the idea of the town hall occupies a lot of their time over the next year, and in fact from February to June 1845 the Commissioners' minutes contain little else.

Tenders were proposed, and by March 1845 specifications and general requirements were agreed upon. The structure was to comprise 'a large room for the town meetings, a Commissioners' room, a Market Lockup & House for the Superintendent of the Police'. Apart from any money obtained from the county towards the lockup and superintendent's house, the Commissioners fixed the maximum cost for this building at £1000. They agreed that 'the sum of £10. be offered for the most approved plan', and advertised their requirement in the York Herald, Newcastle Courant, and the Leeds Mercury.[3] Out of five plans submitted, the prize went to a Mr. Moffat of Doncaster, although at the time living in Leeds.[4]

Moffat came to Middlesbrough to meet the Commissioners, who

1) Minutes op cit 5th December 1844.

2) " 3rd January 1845.

3) " 16th March 1845.

4) " 2nd May 1845.

accepted all his recommendations with the exception that 'the roof of the proposed Building (be) completed either in Cast Iron or Woodwork'.[1] After this a few other changes are mentioned as recommendations from the Commissioners, but not specified. Yet whatever these were they did not prevent Moffat from returning to Middlesbrough and building its first town hall. The cost of course was more than the Commissioners wanted to pay, for after tendering their requirements, they eventually had to foot a bill for almost one-and-a-half thousand pounds[2], but in spite of their penny-pinching they did get a simple but stylish building.

This of course suggests quite rightly that the Commissioners made little attempt to raise vast amounts of money for their schemes. Their income came from two main sources, the market tolls and the rate on property. Neither yielded very highly: the market tolls were regularly given out to tender; the property rates were almost uniformly low.

In July 1843 the Commissioners minuted that 'a public notice be given to receive tenders for letting the Tolls, the taking out and putting in of the Stalls'.[3] Yet little enthusiasm seems to have been shown to take advantage of this opportunity: no doubt this reflects the relative lack of business carried on in the Market at this time. Shortly afterwards the Commissioners had to note that 'for the present the Market Tolls be retained in the hands of the Commissioners.'[4] They do not say however what the income was from this source. Two years later their confidence was

1) Minutes op cit 12th May 1845.

2) " 5th September 1845.

3) " 21st July 1843.

4) " 4th August 1843.

greater when they minuted that 'an advertisement be issued that the Tolls of the Market till June next will be let by tender to the highest bidder and that the Lessee do take out and take in the Stalls and keep the same in repair'.[1] The final agreement was nevertheless hardly momentous. They accepted an offer of £22. for the year ending 'the first day of June next (inclusive)' and also conceded that 'the Surveyor do render his assistance to the Lessee when required'.[2]

Four years later a much healthier picture is evident. In October 1849 tenders were accepted for the eight month period from 12th October to 30th June, and these ranged from offers of £87 for nine months down to £45 for the stated period. An offer of £64. was accepted, and although this was not the highest bid, maybe the bidder was considered reliable in regard to his payment.[3] From this time the value of the tolls rises.

James Oliver whose bid of £64 was accepted in October 1849, put in a bid of £85 in May 1850,[4] but this time the period of the tender was extended to one year, so proportionately the size of his bid had fallen. This suggests that £64 had been too much from the bidder's point of view. However, larger bids were noted: the largest, of £105, being accepted. Two years later, Thomas Ingledew, who had bid this £105 increased his offer to £108, but this was beaten by a bid of £121.10.0. This latter bid came from Robert Manners, who as the Surveyor, no doubt had an accurate idea as to the profitability of the transaction.[5]

1) Minutes op cit 1st August 1845.

2) " 8th August 1845.

3) Draft Minutes 5th October 1849. No approved minutes exist after May 1846. Thus all minutes quoted after this time refer to the draft minute book.
4) Draft Mins. 28th May 1850.
5) Draft Mins. 25th June 1852.

The rates of course yielded a larger income. Initially the Commissioners seemed to make careful enquiries as to likely needs and necessary income to meet these needs. Three months after their first meeting we find minuted a request to the Finance Committee to 'turn their attention to the amount required to be raised by the first levy under the Middlesbrough Improvement Act' [1]. At their next meeting they requested the Surveyor and the Street Committee to 'report to the next meeting the probable expense the Commissioners will be at during the ensuing year including the lighting and watching and all other expenses' [2]. Again at their next meeting the item of 'Rates' is minuted, but there is no reference to any actual estimate of likely expenditure. Instead the Commissioners appointed a sub-committee 'to enquire of the Surveyors of the Highways and the late Inspectors of the Town and ascertain the present state of their accounts with a view to ascertain the probable expenses the Commissioners will be at during the ensuring year' [3]. At this point a suspicion arises as to the willingness of the Commissioners to make an adequate decision as to their first rate. Either they are putting off such a decision because the necessary sum required would be too high for their taste, or they are genuinely trying to find some way of trimming the necessary expenses before having to fix this first rate.

Their next two meetings rather confirm this suspicion. In

1) Minutes op cit 8th October 1841.

2) " 3rd November 1841.

3) " 19th November 1841.

December a proposal was moved, seconded, and carried that a 'rate of one shilling and six pence in the pound be collected at three times subject to the confirmation or otherwise of an adjournment of this meeting to be held at half past one oclock on Friday the tenth instant and that a copy of this minute be handed by the clerk to the absent commissioners'.[1] Yet at this meeting of the tenth, a resolution was proposed and seconded that 'a rate of four pence in the pound on all property liable to Rates under this Act be forthwith made ...'[2] An analysis of the composition of these two meetings raises some possible explanation for this vast difference in the necessary rate.

At both meetings there were six Commissioners present. Four attended both meetings; but whereas at the first meeting Chapman was in the chair, and Holmes proposed the rate of 1/6d, both were absent at the second meeting. Sharp, who seconded the proposed 1/6d, was present at the second meeting, but there is no mention of his attitude to the great reduction. At the second meeting Fallows, who was absent at the first, took the chair, yet the proposal was made by Blenkinsop and seconded by Laws, both of whom were present at the first meeting. It could be interpreted that the first group were impatient with the body of Commissioners as a whole, and were attempting to make those absent come to a reasonable decision. More likely however there was a genuine difference of opinion between members of the body regarding the size of the rate, be this based on what was actually needed, or what was deemed reasonable as a maximum rate regardless

1) Minutes op cit 3rd December 1841.

2) " 10th December 1841.

of need. This latter explanation is strengthened by the meeting which confirmed the low rate of 4d. At this meeting there were only five members present when it was resolved that 'a rate of four pence in the pound' be 'signed and allowed as provided by the Act'[1]. There is no mention of a unanimous decision even given such a small number of Commissioners present. Certainly three of these were for the resolution: the chairman, Fallows, and Laws and Blenkinsop, the proposer and seconder of the resolution; but obviously opposed was Chapman, the original chairman, and possibly also Gribbin, who, like Laws and Blenkinsop, was present at all three meetings.

Interestingly, at a meeting held between the second and third meetings discussed above, there was a meeting when Commissioners, identifiable in both camps, were present. At this meeting the minute on rates concerned only the property value not the poundage. Here it was resolved that 'the rateable value of the land under the present rate shall be one third of the rateable value of the land according to the poor rate'[2]. The point is made in the minutes that this resolution was accepted unanimously. This meeting could of course represent some kind of compromise whereby the great differences of opinion regarding the poundage was overcome by concessions on the value of the property to be rated. Fallows and Blenkinsop were absent from this meeting, and this could have been a means of saving face.

Not only had there been this reduction in the rate to be raised, but where the proposal to raise 1/6d in the pound had mentioned three payments per year, the approved resolution of 4d in the pound made no

1) Minutes op cit 7th January 1842, held in the evening.

2) " " held in the early afternoon.

such provision. In the circumstances a system of two payments per year evolved, and this continued throughout the time of the Commissioners. This low rate of 4d did not survive long. In June 1842 a minute appears to the effect that 'a rate of six pence in the pound be immediately levied'[1], and this was confirmed at the following meeting.[2] Thereafter a pattern of a rate of 6d in the pound becomes almost the normal levy, with two main exceptions: in September 1844 the rate fell to 3d and in 1848 both rates were for 9d. This higher rate of 9d was prevalent from February 1851, with the exception of September 1851 when the rate dropped just for that time to 6d again.

From the point of view of expenditure, it is only from the end of the 1840's that a note of the rate yield is given. Figures are available for the two collections of 1842, one of the two collections for the years 1850, 1851 and 1852. The expenditure for the first year of operation can also be calculated from the approved minutes.

In 1849 the yields from a 6d rate were estimated at just over £338 and £348; in 1850 the same rate was expected to yield £343; whilst in 1851 and 1852 a 9d rate in both cases was expected to yield £525 and £509.[3] Thus not only has the poundage to be taken into consideration, but also the fact that the general value of the yield was increasing given the quick urban growth of Middlesbrough.

Looking at the same equation from the expenditure point of

1) Minutes op cit 3rd June 1842.

2) " 10th June 1842.

3) Draft Minutes for 16th February and 7th September 1849, 30th March 1850, 28th March 1851 and 6th February 1852.

view, the outgoings from December 1841 to November 1842 add up to just over £467. Of this however about £150 was for pay bills to officers of the Commissioners £155 was for debts incurred by the pre-1841 Market Committee, and £11.10.0. was for the old highway surveyor for materials handed on to the Surveyor for the Commissioners. Thus the outgoings for this twelve month period, apart from the debts of the previous town governors, are about evenly divided between wages and salaries of the officials of the Commissioners, and materials used in repairs and the provision of street lighting.[1]

There were of course cases where certain rate payers received concessions, and other cases where people did not pay their rates until prosecuted. The main case of rate concessions was in respect of the property of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. At the start of 1842 it was resolved that 'the nine staithes above the Warehouse be rated at the sum of £50 each that sum to include the approaches subject to a deduction of £20 per cent', and similarly that 'the depots including the Weigh be rated at £100 subject to a reduction of £20 per cent'.[2] At the end of that year however the Commissioners have to note that, under the heading 'Stockton and Darlington Rate: Arrears of Rate', 'the Clerk is requested to look after this rate and get it paid'.[3] This was after the continued attention of the Surveyor had been called to the task of collecting this rate throughout the year. Given that the Commissioners were evading payment to the Gas Company, owned by the Pease interest, and

1) Minutes op cit 10th December 1841 to 4th November 1842, passim.

2) " 7th January 1842.

3) " 23rd December 1842.

the Stockton and Darlington Railway, also owned by the Pease interest, were evading payments to the Commissioners, it suggests a game of tit-for-tat. Certainly such a situation well illustrates the delicate relationship between the owners of industrial property in the town, and the representatives of the town's ratepayers. Not that this was the only case of non-payment of rates. In November 1842 for example it is noted that a report from the Surveyor showed that 'a balance was due on the first rate of £10.4.0. and on the second rate of £148.10.9.'[1]

Not only did the Commissioners have to depend on the goodwill of influential citizens for a part of their rate income, but frequent loans @ 5% were borrowed against the rates: and naturally it was the wealthier citizens who were able to make such loans. One whole series of such loans concerned the cost of the 1841 Act itself. At the fourth meeting of the Commissioners, they note that 'the deputation appointed to wait on Mr. Pease relative to the amount of expense incurred in procuring the Improvement Act, and to ascertain from him, whether he and his co-proprietors will contribute a larger amount than that originally offered by them'.[2] This amount was two hundred pounds. Moreover the Commissioners hoped to 'solicit his assistance in raising the balance on loan for a stipulated number of years on the security of the rates'.

This deputation reported back that Mr. Pease would 'call the attention of his partners to the application of the Commissioners

1) Minutes op cit 4th November 1842.

2) " 9th August 1841.

as to a further grant towards the expense of the Bill - and that he will readily assist them in raising the further sum necessary for paying off the Balance of the said expense, for as long a period as the necessity of the case will require'.[1] Pease was obviously much more open to lending than to giving. After an interval of six months another deputation was requested to see Mr. Pease in relation to both the cost of the Act and the payment of the same.[2] Following this minute, the Commissioners determined to advertise for a loan of £500 @ 5% payable half-yearly.

In the circumstances two mortgages were arranged. At the following meeting it was reported that a Mr. Robert Addison from near Darlington had advanced £140 to the Commissioners, and the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate had advanced £300: both loans at 5%, and both towards the costs of the 1841 Act. The amounts were paid into the hands of the Treasurer, Mr. Frederick Backhouse. In both cases it was agreed that 'a mortgage be given ... of the rates, tolls and assessments ...'[3] Following these advances, the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate agreed to 'contribute towards the expense of the Act a further sum of £66.4.2.'[4]

A few months later a minute appears requesting Sharp, one of the Commissioners, to enquire for a loan of £300 'in order to defray the remainder of the money owing for obtaining the Act'.[5] It seems from this that the total cost of this act of 1841 was about £1000, but a complication is that no further mention appears of the loan

1) Minutes op cit 9th August 1841.

2) " 10th June 1842.

3) " 17th June 1842.

4) " "

5) " 11th November 1842.

made by Addison. However in July 1843 it is reported by Sharp that there is the 'probability of borrowing the sum of £1000 at 5 per cent on mortgage of the Tolls'[1], and furthermore Holmes, another Commissioner, reported that such a loan might even be available 'at a less rate of interest'. Not surprisingly the Commissioners show great pleasure in the prospect of cheap money, and, at their next meeting, authorise Sharp to 'negotiate a Loan of £1000 for the Commissioners and report therein to the next Meeting'[2] But at this point another complication arises in trying to analyse fully this complex situation, for at the next meeting[3] Sharp is absent, and no mention is made of the loan. In fact the next mention of Sharp that appears in the minutes is in his capacity as agent for the Gas Company when he is in negotiations with the Commissioners regarding the price of gas.[4] Furthermore Sharp is not present again at a meeting of the Commissioners until the following February where he appears as chairman.[5] No mention of this possible loan of £1000 is mentioned at this particular meeting although another loan had already been secured for a lesser amount, but no mention of any part being played by Sharp.[6]

1) Minutes op cit 7th July 1843.

2) " 4th August 1843.

3) " 18th August 1843.

4) See p 146 of this thesis.

5) Minutes op cit 13th February 1844.

6) After the meeting of 4th August 1843 this long absence of 6 months gives the initial impression that Sharp had retired from the Commission. One-third had to retire every year by statute law, but Sharp was one of the third who did not retire until after three years from the inauguration of the Commission. Furthermore he was elected back as a Commissioner in October 1844 in place of Unthank, who had retired prematurely (having one more year to serve). It seems that in spite of his absence from meetings, and his dual/ of the Commissic role vis-a-vis the Gas Company, his membership was considered vital to the conduct

After this hiatus, the loan that is actually taken up is first mentioned at the end of the year. The Finance Committee reported that 'they have been offered the sum of £650 at 5 per cent ... from Mr. Rathbone and Mr. Thomas Richardson as trustees of Messrs. Richardson.'[1] The loan was agreed to, and the Clerk was instructed to write to Pritt and Sherwood (the counsellors of 1841) with the amount of '£229.2.1.'; yet determined to economise to the last, the Commissioners also instructed the Clerk to apply to these lawyers 'to remit a portion of their claim for interest amounting to £11.17.6.' Also the Clerk was instructed to give to Pease and partners the sum of'£306.18.0. on receiving from him cancelled the mortgage for £300 to Thos. Richardson, Hy Birkbeck, Joseph Pease the younger and Henry Pease'.

From this situation the Commissioners begin to pay back some of their debts without prior re-borrowing. There are a number of minutes recording repayments of £100, but it is not always certain that some of the notes don't refer to the same payment.[2] Yet this situation of paying back again comes to an end with the cost of building the town hall. In November 1854 there is once more talk of a £1000 loan at 5%[3], and this then develops into well-worn channels when it is minuted that the correspondence is to be 'proceeded in by Mr. Sharp'.[4] This time the loan is secured for this full amount of

1) Minutes op cit 2nd December 1843. This reference must be to Richardson of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, the Tees Coal Co., etc. If Pease was the uncrowned king of early Middlesbrough then Richardson was the main power behind the throne.

2) The Minute refs of 4th July and 6th September 1844 certainly involve separate payments of £100, but the refs of 1st August and 3rd October 1845 seem to be talking about the same payment. Also the ref of the Minutes of 6th March 1845 is odd: £22.10.0. is named as a half-year's interest repayment, but in fact is more than 5%; £32.10.0. would be 5% on the entire principal for the whole year.

3) Minutes op cit 7th November 1845.

4) Minutes op cit 2nd January 1846.

£1000 but not before very adequate collateral was assured.

In February the Clerk reported that the lender, a Mr. Saunders, was 'still willing to advance the £1000 at 5 per centum but that before it is done he required the soil on which the Market House stands to be regularly conveyed to the Commissioners from the Middlesbrough Owners'.[1] Not only this but Saunders also wanted details of 'the gross value of the property rateable under the Act. The amount of a sixpenny rate thereon. The gross amount of the Market Tolls and other sources of income not arising from Rates... (and) Copies of the annual Balance Sheets of the Commissioners.' The Commissioners complied, and the Clerk was instructed to obtain the conveyance, and forward the necessary information, 'as quickly as possible'.

Without doubt matters at this point seem to be moving away from financial dependence on the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. The following month, two of the Commissioners, Wilson and Whitell, were instructed to 'go over to Guisborough tomorrow to see Mr. Saunders ... respecting the contemplated loan of money on security of the Market House and Town Hall and endeavour to expedite the completion of the business'.[2] The last recorded minutes in the book of approved minutes notes that 'the documents necessary for completing the loan of £500 on security of Town Hall and Market House not being quite ready for signature Resolved that this meeting do adjourn till the call of the Clerk'. So at some point, in spite of mortgaging the recently

1) Minutes op cit 10th February 1846.

2) " 26th March 1846.

built town hall, somehow the loan had dropped to £500; but further down the same page of the minutes it was noted that 'a mortgage deed to Mr. John Barnett of Yarm for the sum of £500 and Interest was produced and signed by the Commissioners present.'[1] It is hard at this point to see what the Commissioners had left to mortgage; but at least there had been a shift away from the influence of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate - although what the precise circumstances were, and what other considerations and tactics were involved, is not clear from the minutes available. Even if such a shift regarding financial dependence had really taken place on the initiative of the Commissioners, and against the wishes of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, there still remains proof that other kinds of dependence on the influential and established citizens, carried on.

The fact that the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate both gave money towards the obtaining of the 1841 Improvement Act, and later lent money to the Commissioners to pay off the debts incurred by this act, show that there was no antagonism between the two groups concerned. Pease was a supporter of the act personally, as a number of later statements by him indicate. Yet a question here can still be posed: was this merely in accord with an unexpectedly rapid growth of the town, or was it simply that Pease and his partners wanted to shift the responsibility of looking after the public aspects of the new town on to other shoulders whilst still retaining many aspects of control. All written accounts simply see the inauguration of the Improvement Commissioners

1) Minutes op cit 24th April 1846.

as a function in the urban growth of Middlesbrough, e.g. 'it was soon found that voluntary organisations were not sufficient to provide good order, good government, or the amenities a growing population required for good living. The rapid growth of urban districts rendered necessary the appointment of Improvement Commissioners.'[1] Yet the basic fact that Pease estimated for a population not much smaller than that of the 1841 Census does not bear out this easy explanation. On the other hand, there are a number of varied, but not always perfectly documented, sources which suggest that the alternative suggestion is much nearer the truth, although as yet not a part of the written history of Middlesbrough. Far too often the shadow of Joseph Pease falls across events at vital decision-making times; but too often also, his goodwill in concrete terms, as opposed to his literary image, is not forthcoming.

Examples of this kind of continuing dependence arise when the Commissioners look ahead and try to improve the status of their small but growing town.[2] At the end of 1846 the Commissioners hoped to secure a local court order for administering the Small Debts Act, and asked Joseph Pease to help them. This request was more explicitly stated a fortnight later when they asked Pease to approach the Earl of Zetland with a view to sending a memorandum to the Queen on behalf of the Commissioners. In such a way one can trace a chain of influence from the person of the monarch down to the town managers of Middlesbrough: in this chain Pease was obviously considered to be a vital link.[3]

1) W.Lillie op cit p 78.

2) Yet relatively speaking the decade that the Commissioners occupied represented a low rate of population growth. Comparing the decades before and after the Commissioners, one sees that there was a growth rate of 4547.41% from 1831-41, 49.69% from 1841-51 and 145.25% from 1851-61. In all four countings the figures for Middlesbrough township have been used, viz. 154. 5463. 7631 and 18,714.

3) Draft Minutes 15th December 1846 and 1st January 1847

2) Town Management

b) Mid-Century Post Mortem

When we turn to the question of how successfully the Commissioners coped with their task during their twelve years' tenure we can be specific in our answer, or general. We can ask simply if Middlesbrough was better paved, better lit, better drained, better policed, and if the town's market had improved. Also we can note what various people have said about Middlesbrough at this time from various viewpoints. One very important factor however, when we attempt an evaluation of the work of the Commissioners, is that they were not dealing with a static entity. Their town was growing at an appreciable, if not a dramatic, rate for some of the time of their tenure, especially towards the end. It was not simply a question of patching up and improving; it was much more a question of renewal and initiation, often against private interests that veered from the public good.

Looking at Middlesbrough from the point of view of trade and of the town as a whole, many judgments suggest that the work of the Improvement Commissioners was a success. Work opportunities had helped to make the town grow, and in its turn the town proved a suitable place to house a growing industrial work-force. The two are closely bound up in the work of many writers on the area, and often little distinction is made between them: the health of one implied the same state in the other.

Some of the evidence given before parliamentary select committees on improvement and extension bills throws light on this dual aspect. Speaking in 1856, three years after the demise of the Improvement

1) Draft Minutes 15th December 1846 and 1st January 1847.

Commissioner system, John Shields Peacock commented on the value of land in Middlesbrough. This evidence was given under questioning; and, in that Peacock was the original Clerk with the Commissioners as well as Clerk of the recently formed Borough of Middlesbrough and of the local board of health, such testimony comes from a well-informed local witness. The problem with this witness was deciding where his civic responsibility ended and where his private interests began. The bill was an attempt to extend the boundaries of the town; and against this move there was a number of petitioners, principally local landowners, Thomas Hustler and Thomas Pennyman. It was under questioning from their counsel that some of the imperfections of Middlesbrough were examined.

In defending the attempt to secure the proposed private bill of 1856 Peacock felt obliged to state the success of the town of Middlesbrough to date. His main defence was that the value of urban land was increasing rapidly. This he dated mainly from the 'last three or four years'[1], and the cause he put down to the ironstone finds in the Clevelands. Having made his stand on this basis of land values, he was then pressed on two main points by Denison, counsel for Pennyman. These points were concerned with the market of the town as a specific case, and the pattern of land ownership in Middlesbrough as a much more general case.

Wishing to show the popularity of the market, Peacock observed that 'on Saturday night it is very crowded', and as an after-thought added, 'on the whole of Saturday'[2]. Yet pressed to say what kind

1) Commons Select Committee evidence on the 1856 Middlesbrough Extension and Improvement Bill, pp 12-3.

2) " p 105.

of a market it was, he hesitated at definition. Asked if it were a corn market he answered, 'No, it is not a corn or practically a cattle market at present - if we get the Ferry it may be'. In this respect the successof the earlier Improvement Commissioners must be doubted. They had secured full legal right to operate a market in a growing urban area, yet fifteen years later Peacock has still to look to the future for the fulfilment of this aim: the matter still depends on the will of the central government.

On the broader question of the pattern of land ownership in the town, Peacock's replies are interesting, for, having established that the situation is a sellers market, he is then pressed to say who had done the selling in the past, and who would be likely to do the selling in the future. Of course the counsel's aim was to show that the Act would increase the value of land in the area but he was concerned to make sure that the land of his client appreciated for his client, not for someone else.

Counsel sought initially to bring to light the interests of Joseph Pease. Noting that 'the Gentlemen called the Middlesbrough Owners are represented by Mr. Pees', he pressed Peacock to acknowledge that not only was Pease the 'chief' owner, but in fact the 'principal' owner, and received the answer 'Yes - I think he has the largest number of acres'.[1] Then, under questioning, more information of the property of Pease came to light, including 'one of the private roads', 'part of another private road', and 'the gas works'.[2] In connection with these latter, Peacock denied that they were not proposed to be

1) Common Evidence op cit p 36.

2) " p 37.

sold, by saying that 'It is not proposed to sell them, it is proposed that the Town should buy them'.[1] In an equally circuitous way the Town Clerk avoided showing any awareness of moves by the Middlesbrough owners in relation to securing property adjacent to the land of Hustler; and similarly when asked 'how many owners of property do you know of in the District which you proposed to include in this Bill approve of the Extension?' He responded that he really couldn't say. Only after a number of further questions on this point did he concede that Joseph Pease 'has some property to be added to the Borough, and he does approve of it'.[2]

This answer now seems incredible when one knows that Peacock was not only at the very centre of civic affairs in Middlesbrough from 1841 at least, but also had been the solicitor for the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. Not surprising in this case, were answers regarding the amount of Middlesbrough actually owned and sold by Pease. In answer to the question 'All Middlesbrough almost is built on land which did belong before it was sold to Mr. Pees's family', he responded 'Not to Mr. Pees's family alone - to friends of theirs'. Yet when it was suggested that the term 'Middlesbrough Owners may be used as a convertible term for the Peeses' he merely agreed that 'You may use it so if you like'; and when pressed on the accuracy of this, added that he did not know as there were other interests besides theirs.[3] Yet when counsel correctly showed that these other interests really meant

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 77.

2) " p 94.

3) " p 95.

no more than a 'gentleman of the name of Birkbeck who has about a touch of it', Peacock's memory suddenly sharpened, and he could respond 'No, three tenths' yet he then had to admit that Birkbeck was a 'connection' of Mr. Pees's'.[1]

Regarding actual town property, Peacock revealed some useful information when questioned about how much current property the Peases held and how much they had acquired since the inauguration of the town. He admitted that 'they have some property that is built upon in the Town, but it has rather come into their hands from different circumstances - it was not built by them'.[2] This is good proof against those who see the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate as both land developers in Middlesbrough, as well as land sellers. They had drawn up a plan for the houses but they did not build the houses: in this they offer a very striking contrast with (say) Titus Salt, and one can only ask how serious they were in visualising their symmetrical town: their rhetoric dwarfed their actions.

In this connection also, Peacock, although not intentionally, revealed how the pattern of ownership evolved through the selling policy of the Owners. When it was suggested to Peacock that 'he (meaning Joseph Pease) has not been accustomed to let upon building leases', he responded that 'they (meaning the Owners: Joseph Pease, relations, friends, and others) have sold the freehold'.[3] Here also a distinction comes in between the town north and south of the railway. Denison draws aside 'those properties which have accidentally come back into their hands', and Peacock concurred

1) This was the son of Henry Birkbeck, one of the original Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. See p 34 in this thesis.

2) Commons Evidence op cit p 96.

3) Peacock persisted in his attempt to blur the ownership pattern by seeing Joseph Pease as simply, one among many.

by agreeing not only, that 'of the old town a great portion is sold now north of the Railway', but that there is still about '300 acres ... remaining ... and not built upon'.[1] Other questions regarding directorships of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the Pease family were turned aside as far as possible by Peacock. The whole kernel of this cross-questioning came out when Peacock was asked about the costs of attempting to put this bill into law.

Asked directly 'who are the parties that are paying the costs of this Bill supposing that it should unfortunately fail (while noting that) the Corporation cannot pay', Peacock replied 'I shall have to pay it - I have no guarantee other than the Corporation'. Yet he also admitted that he hoped the Corporation would help him out in this cost; but beyond the Corporation he saw no help. This he maintained even when counsel asked him if he 'cannot form any kind of guess whom you would go to?' So it had to be put quite bluntly that he would think 'of asking the Peases for the money'.[2] To which the response came 'No I would not'.

At a number of levels this testimony is illuminating. The Town Clerk found it necessary to cover up the fact that owners of property would gain from the Bill: his main argument in support of the town as a progressive element in an otherwise backward part of the North Riding, was that property values had risen sharply - although he did try to limit this to the coming of the local iron industry. This attempt at limitation was belied far too often

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 96. This 300 acres was of course south of the railway.

2) " p 98.

by the implications of other parts of his evidence. At a second level, when it was obvious to all that owners of property had the most to gain from the Bill, he tried to hide the fact that the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate had the most to gain by far, and that of these owners Joseph Pease was the king-pin.

In order to make the role of the Pease family seem less than it was in the development of Middlesbrough, Peacock emphasised how they sold freehold, and thus broadened the net of ownership; yet by this same token, Peacock was directly implicating the Owners in any criticism that may have been raised regarding the state of housing in the town. Yet under the cross-questioning of Denison this did not arise: the counsel was concerned for the property of his client, not the urban history of Middlesbrough, however recent.

Turning to the evidence of Pease himself, given two days later, it is of interest to compare the words of the c entral character in this minor legal drama, with those of one of his lesser protectors. From this evidence emerges his attitude to Middlesbrough, his attitude to his own property, and his view of the results of his work.

Regarding Middlesbrough, Pease emphasised three aspects: his concern for the inhabitants, his involvement in the planning of the town, and his view on why the plan did not mature. In the description of Pease as a party to the bill, he is described as an ex-M.P., and owner of coal mines, ironstone mines, and a farmer. Nowhere as a property speculator or a town planner (in whatever phraseology would have been used). His first evidence was given under questions from Johnson, one of the two counsellors

for the petitioners in favour of the bill, and therefore it was at this early point in the evidence that he was given most chance to establish a favourable image. The questions covered the welfare of Middlesbrough, the town plan, and the price of nearby agricultural land. After it was put to him that he was the owner of large amounts of property in the North Riding, the counsel linked this to concern for the people living there, in the eighteenth century spirit of rights and obligations. Thus 'And you are much interested I dare say in the welfare of Middlesbrough', to which Pease agrees, adding that he had always been so. Assuming the urban success of Middlesbrough, counsel then added that 'I believe you have been mainly instrumental in the prosperity to which it has attained', to which Pease again agreed, in that he had 'done (his) utmost to promote it'. So switching from the recent past to the present, counsel could then get Pease to agree also that he had 'the interest of the Borough at heart at the present moment.'[1]

In order also to move the stress away from current and future land values, the counsel gave Pease a chance to offer broad altruistic motives for his support of the bill. He invited Pease to tell the Committee why he was in favour of an extension of the boundary of Middlesbrough, and thus an extension of the health powers obtained under the adoption of a local board of health. Pease explained that 'I originally laid out the town of Middlesbrough myself, and I find that I have made very great mistakes, and after laying down as many conditions as possible I found they were liable

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 184 on 16th April 1856.

all to be subverted and to become useless.' Thus having named the fault, he could then go on to suggest the remedy in line with the current bill. 'I now know as an active member of one of the largest Boards of Health in the District that there are no powers which reach the case but the Parliamentary powers'.[1] Yet in spite of this frustrated intention, Pease could bring out the point that the presence of a mark in Middlesbrough provided a boost for farm prices and thus pushed up farming land in value: one did not have to become part of urban Middlesbrough to benefit from its economic activity. The implication was that owners of farm land nearby had nothing to fear from the industrial area that was growing in their midst: on the contrary they could gain in monetary terms from the opportunities offered in the process of food consumption.

Under cross-questioning Pease did return to the fact that his plan had been undermined. Yet he presented the reason as a general rather than a particular case. Answering Pickering, counsellor for a small local landowner of a mere 131 acres, he admitted that the advantages of being included in Middlesbrough would be small until the land was developed, but then the advantages would be great for the occupiers of such developed land. Drawing on his newly acquired awareness of the world he stressed that 'there must be some protection therein over the working people if I understand the object of Legislation. I am the owner of 800 houses as well as leasing several hundreds besides and I know that if I do not do the drainage

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 193. The board of health referred to here must be that of Darlington.

of my own houses nobody does it for me and I know that the Landlords will not do it for the poor man unless there is a Health of Towns Act to compel them'.[1]

This is by far the most direct statement by Pease regarding the town plan and the early urban development that I have seen. Yet during this same afternoon when this evidence was given, the case was made even less specific by a statement of Pease in regard to the amount of poverty in Middlesbrough, for implied in this statement regarding the undermining of his plan was the idea that it was only the houses of the poor that were neglected in respect of sanitation: the question thus arises, how much poverty existed at the time in Middlesbrough? From all the statements so far, none existed if one were a landowner, but what of the rest?

On the subject of ownership and influence Pease kept faith with the broad picture painted by Peacock, but used a more modest brush stroke. Asked about the recent past, he became vague; for example when asked about the circumstances of the passing of the 1853 Charter for the town he said that he did 'not remember whether (he) was (examined) or not; but when the counsel read from a report on the passing of the Act that 'Joseph Pease was next examined who was one of the owners of the Middlesbrough Estate' he felt obliged to agree that there was not more than one Joseph Pease who was an owner of the Middlesbrough Estate.[2] Yet when asked how many acres of land 'you have as an owner of the Middlesbrough Estate within the present Borough', he answered vaguely that 'I do not know what quantity I

1) Commons Evidence op cit pp 294-5.

2) " p 228.

have sold', and added unhelpfully that 'I have all left that I have not sold'.[1] However when pressed he guessed that he had about 200 acres of agricultural land left for sale. Yet in an earlier answer to Grey, counsel for Hustler, he had claimed intimate local knowledge of the land in the area in that he had 'looked at every field with the view of every field being eligible for building manufactories in the district'. Following this up he was asked also if he had 'ridden round the district outside the limits of the proposed borough' to which he assented that 'I have for ten miles - there is no limit to the district'.[2]

It seems most strange that having taken such a particular pecuniary interest in every field in and around the borough, he should not know how much of that land was owned by himself. As with Peacock, Pease was using certain facts such as ownership of houses and knowledge of the development possibilities of the area in order to back up his support of the 1856 bill. Yet the other side of the coin was that he himself must have been in part, at least, responsible for some of the untoward development that had already taken place in the area, and similarly he himself stood to gain a very great deal from further development of the area, whether reasonable or untoward.

Almost at the end of Pease' evidence Pickering took up an earlier point of evidence when it had been suggested by Pease that poverty

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 233.

2) " p 222.

was practically non-existent in the town. This particular link-up by the counsel followed Pease' reference to the need to secure general legislation to help poor people with housing. Pickering simply returned to the earlier remark by noting that 'According to you, in Middlesbrough there are no such things as poor people'.[1] Pease attempted to make some sort of regional issue of this by stating that 'I do not know what you call poor in London. We do not call a man a poor man in Middlesbrough who has £100 a year coming in to him'. To which the counsel attempted ridicule by showing that 'The man in a position which would cause him elsewhere to be called a poor man has £100 a year in Middlesbrough'. Thus Pease had to move in the other direction from the counsel's implication by enlarging on his statement to the effect that (£100 a year) is extravagant for a man if he has not a family'. When the counsel put it that 'You do not think that there is a class of poor people there', Pease had to defend himself by saying that 'there may be sick people and widows - but every man has his price, and a good price it is'.

This particular exchange took place only seven years after the first of the Henry Mayhew findings had been published in the Morning Chronicle, and only four years after the publication of the first four-volume-version of London Labour and the London Poor. Not only was poverty being currently discussed, but Mayhew was claiming that his study was the first history of the people from 'their own lips'. Yet the world that Pease seemed to occupy was separated by more than

1) Commons Evidence op cit pp 295-6. It is interesting to compare the evidence of Pease in this matter with similar evidence given by Isaac Wilson two years' later. See next page. See also Empsall evidence, p 234, f 2.

distance from London. Pease had had to boost Middlesbrough in the respect of earnings in order to support his own initial vision of a busy seaport etc., but in doing so he had undermined his own analysis of why his plan had gone wrong: if there was no poverty, then most people were in a position to provide for their own housing amenities, and thus no external aid was needed and there was no advantage to any areas being brought within the boundary of Middlesbrough by the bill under discussion. Of course Pease's statement was not accurate. Only two years later John Vaughan the iron-master gave evidence to another Commons select committee in order to obtain the boundary extension that had failed in 1856. Here Vaughan, under cross-examination, stated that he had in his employ 5000 men, and his average wage bill per week was £5000. This represents only 50% of the Pease figure, and refers to those definitely in work. Not only was Pease wrong about the rates of pay for work, but he was also wrong about the amount of work: more than the sick and widowed suffered from poverty in the town.

Earlier that same morning Isaac Wilson gave evidence to the effect that Middlesbrough was a place with a future and worth the enlargement of its boundaries that some of its leading citizens were petitioning for.[2] He was hardly a disinterested party, but unlike Pease his credentials were more indicative of his bias. He was described as an ironmaster, smelter, and engine manufacturer:

1) Commons Select Committee on the Middlesbrough Improvement Bill 1858, p 118 on 14th June 1858. See also p 234 f 2 of this thesis.

2) Isaac Wilson had come to Middlesbrough in 1840, aged 18, at the invitation of Joseph Pease. Apart from many business connections with Pease, one of his daughters married one of Pease's sons.

obviously a man of the future Middlesbrough; his subsidiary interests were given as director of the Middlesbrough and Guisborough Railway, partner in the Middlesbrough Pottery, and director of the Stockton and Darlington Railway: in some senses, a man of the past Middlesbrough also.

The sympathetic part of the questioning evinced that new boundaries were needed for the town in order to provide better sanitary arrangements generally, and specifically to improve the new land that was to be built upon. He was quite adamant in his assertion that the new legal status asked for was not for the benefit of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. Yet under cross-questioning he had to defend Middlesbrough in a much more specific way.

When asked if the 'reason why all this building has been growing up in the neighbourhood' was 'the Town of Middlesbrough', he assured counsel that this was so, and added as a cause 'the Manufacturers connected with it'.[1] So taking the rapid advance of the urban area as a direct indication of the prosperity of the town, and so by implication a proof of the success of the Improvement Commissioners, the counsel asked 'what do you take the prosperity of Middlesbrough itself to be due to'. Of course Wilson made no attempt to define prosperity in any social sense, but went ahead to give an 'ironman's' version of Middlesbrough growth with a quick acknowledgment to the past.

The real cause of Middlesbrough's prosperity was due to 'the Iron Trade - The Rise of Middlesbrough was in consequence of the

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 54 for 16th April 1856.

of the Coal Trade - It was a great exporting place for Coals.'[1] In this way Wilson helped to perpetuate the Pease myth of business foresight whilst reserving for himself and the other ironmasters the future development of the town. He did however correct the counsel who suggested that Middlesbrough began about 20 years earlier, by pointing out that '27 years it was said I think'. This itself seems surprising. It is understandable that Denison the counsel should underestimate the short life of industrial Middlesbrough; after all Middlesbrough itself boasted of its short quick growth. It is not so understandable that Wilson should be at all vague about the date of origin: he himself came from Kendal only ten years after Middlesbrough had started, and this at the behest of Joseph Pease himself, the actual founder of the town. Nevertheless Wilson gives the appearance of drawing on some kind of long folk memory, not simply recounting quite recent events.

Similar innocence was shown regarding the rate of growth of the population, and the year-by-year fortunes of the much vaunted coal trade. At this point the counsel was obviously trying to make the point that the growth of the town had been uneven. After a rapid start the growth had slowed down: the coal trade had not been what it was already described as having been only fifteen years hence. Middlesbrough's history was being corrupted almost before it was acted out. The counsel chose to use the recent report by Mr. Ranger[2] as the implement to dent this particular myth, and said that 'in Mr. Ranger's Report I find that between

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 54.

2) See this thesis, p 66 et al.

the years 1831 and 1841 the population had increased (it is almost incredible) from 383 to 5709'[1], and somewhat lamely Wilson responded that he did not know, he had not seen the report.[2] Nevertheless the counsel could comment in wonder that this increase 'in round numbers (is) of something like fifteen times as much', and making the contrast with the next decade notes that 'from 1841 to 1851 the population had only increased from 570[illegible] to 7800'.[3] To which Wilson who was not prepared at this point to dispute the statistics could merely answer monosyllabically, yes.

At this point the counsel attempted to link population fluctuations with economic changes in order to disrupt the rather simple, complete picture that Wilson, and others also, had painted. Ironically he suggests that 'I have no doubt (the above situation) is consistent with your observation of the general progress of the town'; and so Wilson was forced to suggest a more complex pattern of progress than that already put forward. He attempted to do it by stating that 'during those years the trade of the place was extremely depressed', and went on to justify the town within this situation against the cross-questioning of Denison.

He chose the years 1847 and 1848 as the bad years, and in contrast to these he cited the years 1345 and 1846 as being years when the trade was not depressed, and the years between 1851 and 1856 when the success of the iron trade caused the population to nearly double. He tried to excuse the lapses in the coal trade

1) These figures are for the parish of Middlesbrough, not the township nor the town.

2) It is both surprising that Wilson neither had read the Ranger Report nor knew the population figures for the first decade of Middlesbrough's industrial history.

3) As mentioned in f 1, the first figure is for the parish. The second figure is somewhere between that of the township and the parish. If the counsel had stuck to the figures for the township his contrast would have been more dramatic. See p 162 of this writing, f 2.

by referring to national trends, and he totally ignored the fact that Middlesbrough would never equal Newcastle and Sunderland as a coal export town, and also ignored the successful rival nearby, Hartlepools. Unlike Pease, Wilson did not feel responsible for the early patchy development of the town and some of the mistakes already made. He was willing to gloss over the near past for the sake of the future in which he had a very large stake. Superficially, Wilson's evidence suggests that the work of the Improvement Commissioners was successful and simply continued the progress of the decade before; but when Wilson had to qualify his statements in face of demographic statistics, the decade of the Commissioners comes out as a failure, in spite of his attempts to salvage a couple of years in the middle of the decade and a couple at the end.

Turning from the town's industrial aspects to the town as an entity, there are many accounts which suggest, as does all the Select Committee evidence cited so far, that the work of the Improvement Commissioners had been a great success. In a sixth edition of his directory,[1] White can look back at Middlesbrough from the vantage point of 1867 to his first edition of 1840, the year immediately prior to the coming into being of the Commissioners.

After the usual description of Middlesbrough's origins, White included a section on the town itself. Although the description was ostensibly of the 1860's, he was in fact often talking rather about the 1830's and 1840's. Where there was 'but one house' there 'now exists long lines of stately streets, innumerable warehouses, foundries, churches, wharfs, and docks, a proud array of shipping,

1) Wm. White - Directory of the East & North Ridings of Yorkshire (6 e 1867).

and all the evidence of a rich, prosperous, and populous community'.[1] Not only is the town of the Commissioners praised but some of their works also. Looking at the market, White commented that it is held in the 'Square in the centre of the town, and is well supplied with all the necessaries of life'; and looking at its origin he notes that it was established in 1841 'in pursuance of an act obtained in that year, which also gave powers for paving, lighting, watching, cleansing, and otherwise improving the town'. The implication here is that the powers of paving etc. were as well executed as the authority to establish the already laudable market.

Not simply this, but particular aspects of the Commissioners' town are thought worthy of mention. The town hall becomes a 'good white brick edifice with stone dressings erected in 1845, at a cost of £2500,[2] and the Corporation Hall, at the end of North Street, becomes a 'large and handsome Grecian structure of stone, erected nearly 30 years ago, at a cost of £5,500'.[3] Yet having extolled both the facilities of the town and some specific buildings, White cannot help but imply that not all was right with the town between 1841 and 1853.

In praising the town hall he added that it had a 'clock tower, 80 feet high, added in 1857, at a cost of £700'. This seems a long time to elapse from the erection of the main part of the

1) White '1867) op cit p 552.

2) It is interesting to compare this amount with the limitations initially laid down by the Commissioners. See this writing p 148.

3) This was the building used by the Commissioners as their committee room before the town hall was built. Previously it was the Exchange Building, and subsequently (down to the present) it became the Customs House. See plate 17.

structure. In fact, from the time that the town hall was being completed, the Commissioners discussed the possible addition of a clock tower, but, for years on end, they simply carried on the discussion; never did they take any concrete steps towards its realisation. Similarly in vaunting the Corporation Hall, White had to add that it was originally erected as an 'Exchange and Hotel, but having proved an unprofitable speculation it was purchased and altered by the corporation about fifteen years since'[1]. This purchase by the local authority was of course immediately after the tenure of the Commissioners had expired: it was to house the larger body of members and officials who comprised the new Middlesbrough Corporation under the 1853 Charter. Nevertheless this does show that the boom town idea could not always be taken as far as the actual out-lay of money.

Samuel Smiles was in the area only the year after the Improvement Commissioners ceased as a body to exist. He saw Middlesbrough as one of the Stockton and Darlington Railway's 'most remarkable and direct results'[2]. Thus he felt obliged to tell the brief but heroic history of its rise. This history resembled his histories of equally heroic men, in that 'a town sprang up; churches (etc.) were built, with a custom-house (etc.); and in a few years the port of Middlesbrough became one of the most thriving on the north-east coast of England'. Referring directly to the year immediately before the inauguration of the Commissioners, Smiles

1) William White has been noted as an accurate compiler of directories since about 1822 when he collaborated with William Parson in work with Baines' earlier directories of Yorkshire. His own series began four years later, and although he concentrated on the north of England, he also did work in Devon, Hampshire and Birmingham. His comparative knowledge was thus quite wide by the time he visited Middlesbrough, and he professed to place great importance on historical and scientific information.

2) Smiles op cit pp 176 - 7.

noted that 'in ten years a busy population of some 6000 persons (since swelled to about 20,000) occupied the site of the original farmhouse', adding that 'more recently, the discovery of vast stores of ironstone in the Cleveland Hills, close adjoining Middlesbrough, has tended still more rapidly to augment the population ...'[1] Whatever problems the Commissioners had, they were not of this order: if they had been, Smiles' praise would have been all the more remarkable. In fact the population increase in the time of the Commissioners represented almost a lull in the pattern of Middlesbrough's demographic change.[2] The population was in fact not much more than a third of that suggested by Smiles, on the eve of the discovery of ironstone in the Cleveland Hills. Thus the impression that Smiles gives of the situation in Middlesbrough at this particular time is quite misleading.[3]

Writing only three years after Smiles was in the north-east, Fordyce described contemporary and past Middlesbrough. He saw as a result of the railway extension from Stockton, 'a well-built and commodious town speedily sprung up'.[4] Yet he saw no cause for alarm in the very speed with which the town grew up: the commodious town of the plan, was for him an actuality. In a

1) Smiles op cit pp 176 - 7.

2) See actual figures on p 162 f 2 of this writing.

3) This account by Smiles suggests that he never actually visited Middlesbrough, although he lived at Newcastle for a time, had certainly visited Darlington, and ostensibly attached a lot of importance to the birth of Middlesbrough. This lack of actual observation contrasts most strongly with his summer evening visits to the haunts of Stephenson, such as Wylam, Dewley, Callerton, Newburn, and Willington Quay. (See his Preface p x.)

4) Fordyce op cit p 202.

way reminiscent of the later William White, he noted that the 1841 Act covered paving etc. and similarly went on to describe the town hall in a way which suggests a well-run town; thus, 'the town hall, with an enclosed market, was built in 1846 - it is a neat building, faced with a fine fire brick, with appartments for various public offices.'[1] Yet as in the case of Smiles, one gets a strong feeling that he never actually visited the town. His facts are right, but selective in a particular way. He gives a strong impression that he wants to deal with the case of Middlesbrough as quickly as possible, and then spend much more time on areas that he obviously knew much better, viz. the towns and villages of county Durham. Middlesbrough then comes in for a lot of praise from him; and such praise obliquely extends to the Commissioners: but all in a very stock sort of way. He neither spends time in considering any unfavourable aspects of the town, and nor for that matter does he really follow up any of his praise in a more personal way. He seems only to have read about the town: never to have actually seen it. On such a basis it is not difficult to say that the work of the Improvement Commissioners was an unqualified success.

When one turns from the town as an entity, to housing in a more specific way, doubts must be cast on some of the above noted judgments. Writing 40 years after the event, Tweddell bemoaned the fact that an informed authoritative history had not been written about Middlesbrough in its initial formative period.[2] In particular he wrote that 'It is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Fallows, instead of publishing his little pamphlet on Ancient Middlesbrough, which is chiefly a reprint of Lionel Charlton's

1) Fordyce op cit pp 202 - 3.

2) Tweddell op cit pp 54 - 5.

translation of some of the Charters of Whitby Abbey, and adding nothing new to local history, did not favour us with a full and graphic account of the infant colony'[1].

Tweddell had in mind the decade from 1830 to 1840; a decade which would have illustrated the problems facing the Commissioners. Some of Tweddell's own memories however extend to the 1840's: although living at Stokesley, knew the town well in its early stages, but was only a child of seven when the first house was built. Nevertheless he goes on to talk of the town in its early stages.

Somewhat fancifully Tweddell considered that the history of the very early town would be as amusing in its chronicles as 'those of New Amsterdam as told by Washington Irving' in that a varied number of unexpected events took place. Here Tweddell lists some of the things that Fallows would have had to say, but we cannot be sure whether Tweddell is speaking from actual observation or local hearsay.

He notes that Fallows might have shown that the early town was 'scarcely more attractive than the trans Atlantic City of Eden as delineated by Charles Dickens in his Martin Chuzzlewit', but Tweddell did make the distinction that Middlesbrough was an improvement in the 'important matter of bread winning'. Then he notes, obviously with regret, how the forest and the deer had disappeared; and in its place came the indifferent streets of 'mire, calf deep'. Thus

1) Fallows came to Middlesbrough at its inauguration as shipping agent for the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Pease referred to him at this stage as 'his right hand man'; moreover he was the first chairman of the Improvement Commissioners. Turning aside from his unique position for writing the early history of the town, he concentrated on the town in the 600 years before industrialisation: in the 1872 edition of his book he makes one reference only to the Middlesbrough of the Commissioners saying that 'in 1846 the removal of a portion of the old farm led to the discovery of some of the remains of the ancient chapel' (p15).

having described a town of work, but not of residence, Tweddell merely mentions that the Commissioners were empowered 'to make bye-laws, and to enforce them, and full authority was given them by the act'.[1] No mention is made of any positive good that came from the existence of the Commissioners.

An older contemporary of Tweddell's was Mrs. E.Storm, wife of the Middlesbrough Dock Master, Captain Storm. She recorded some of her recollections of early Middlesbrough, including comments on the date when various houses and streets in the town of the 1830's were constructed. Included in this was a reference of 1832 to 'only Commercial Street, Stockton Street, Thomas Street and Twenty row'. Of these four streets that had been completed after only two years of the town's modern existence, only two appeared on the original Pease Plan: thus 50% of the streets already built at this pristine stage represented a corruption of the urban ideal. This suggests that far from the pressure of population spoiling the plan, it was already spoilt almost before the echo of Pease declaration had faded. Yet nowhere in the deliberations of the Improvement Commissioners was there a mention that such a state of affairs had occurred. They were content to look at a limited number of specific

1) Unlike much of the witness that can be used for this period, Tweddell can be classed as a disinterested party: there is no string of official positions for him, nor any commitment, overt or otherwise, to the Pease family. Rather a sympathy for the under-dog. Almost twenty years after Tweddell's manuscript was written, J.H.Turner pointed out that he had suffered not only from the 'bite of keen and unrelenting poverty', but also that his very birth was 'not an auspicious event, suffering from scorns and contumely', (Yorkshire Genealogist, vol II, 1890). This late Victorian way of describing Tweddell's illegitimacy accounts for his concern for the under-privileged, and his own exclusion from some social institutions for 'being too outspoken to suit the local nabobs'. An example of this outspokenness is his defence of Henry Heavisides in the pre-1832 reform years, when he supported Heavisides' description of the 'political brigandage which reigned rampant in this country previous to the passing of the famous Reform Bill of 1832'. (Bards and Authors of Cleveland

issues, but not the town as a complete entity. Yet they like Mrs. Storm could see the town for what it was and make comparisons with what is was intended to be.[1]

Yet in spite of the fact that some writers have seen slight imperfections in the early town, the impression can still be given that the tasks before the Commissioners, were too overwhelming for human kind.[2] Writing only las' year a local historian of a specialist kind described 'the impatient hordes of labourers flooding into the area in the 1830's' having to be housed in 'mud and wattle huts'.[3] This implies a formidable task for any group of Improvement Commissioners. The more conventional 'brick' houses came a little later according to this historian when the builders 'answered the demand for cheap homes with ready access to the works and furnaces, by throwing up row after row of "little brown streets" with mews and yards and back alleys, some only three feet wide'.

1) Mrs. E.Storm - Middlesbrough in the Forties. These notes are kept in Middlesbrough Reference Library, and were taken down in shorthand by Baker Hudson (Borough Librarian 1889 to 1925) at some unspecified time. The notes are concerned with 1832 for the most part, and the last reference is to 1839, so the title is a misnomer: it ought to read the "1830's".

2) Mrs. K.Blott - A 100 Years (1974). This is a history of the development of the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Middlesbrough from 1872 to 1972. This institution did much social work in the old town in the later nineteenth century: the body was founded in early nineteenth century France by a well meaning lady aristocrat.

3) Blott op cit p 8.

Mrs. Blott takes no serious account of urban Middlesbrough during the time of the Commissioners: before this time a situation is described that is more akin to Anglo-Saxon England than to the early nineteenth century. For her the problem really starts with the coming of the iron industry in a fundamental way, and this occupied only the last three years of the Improvement Commissioners. In the demographic sense, that the town ought to have been completed by the 1840's, one could say that the Commissioners had failed. Yet in spite of this, Mrs. Blott considered that by the early 1870's the development of the town 'had already proved the accuracy of Pease's prediction'.[1]

Turning back to the Commons Select Committee of 1856, there is apparently a great deal of implicit criticism of the work of the Commissioners. It has already been noted that Pease himself made a number of criticisms of the town but chose to blame the landlords and speculators. His plan had been satisfactory in his own estimation, but he had been frustrated by narrow profiteering. Of course one of the Commissioners' main functions was to compel recalcitrant landlords to provide a proper means of sewerage etc. so some of Pease's criticism must go their way. Yet in spite of all the influence that Pease had with the Commissioners, he chose to use his guidance in other and more personally profitable directions. His criticism of early Middlesbrough landlordism was well founded, but the story was more complicated, and blame was more widespread, and at varying removes.[2]

1) Blott op cit p 7.

2) See pp 171-2 of this writing.

Some rather odd evidence was given by Thomas Parrington[1] during the 1856 hearings. He could affirm that he remembered Middlesbrough 'when it consisted of one house only ... and two cottages'[2], 28 years previously. This on the strength that his father 'farmed the whole of what has constituted since the Middlesbrough Estate'. At the time of giving evidence Parrington was a land agent and farmer at nearby Lazenby, so he was in a good position to note the changes in the area year by year, as well as knowing personally many of the main initiators of such changes.

He tended to agree with Wilson's evidence regarding the origins of the increase in land values: attributing these to the ironworks rather than to Middlesbrough itself. Yet given that the iron finds were a number of miles from the town, and that transport facilities could be obtained on the Tees in places other than Middlesbrough, the counsel put the very important question: was the town really necessary? In other words: why should the urban containment of the coal trade, which had not really succeeded, take over the newer iron industry when there were other alternatives? In the process of this taking over, the town of course would be likely to expand partly at the expense of the surrounding areas: which was what the bill under discussion was about. Parrington however chose to side-step this question by looking simply at the growth of industry in the Tees area, be it coal or iron; and he could thus suggest that 'a town would still have been needed'. Yet even within this somewhat

1) See this writing pp 40-1.

2) Common Evidence op cit p 82 for 16th April 1856.

bland response, he did suggest that all was not well; he mentioned that 'many anxious Middlesbrough inhabitants, traders especially, would like to live out of the town': what the deterrents were he did not specify.

Much more specific however was the evidence of John Dunning. He was described as the Surveyor of the local board of health of the borough of Middlesbrough, and also the manager of the gas works for the past ten years, and former agent for the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate up to the previous year.[1] He had in fact drawn up the plan for the new boundaries proposed in the bill, and he also had to attempt to answer many questions that the Town Clerk had avoided by referring to the Surveyor. Given that Peacock, the Town Clerk, had been forced to reveal some of the seamy side of urban Middlesbrough, it was more than likely that Dunning would have to reveal more, in that the most urgent and pressing questions on this aspect came his way. Altogether his questioning accounted for 244 pages of evidence.

Three main aspects of his evidence related to early Middlesbrough housing: what happened, what were the consequences, and why it happened. Dunning had to show how bad things had been in the recent past in order to justify the extension of the town now that it had become a local board of health; otherwise the same mistakes could presumably recur. Generalising he noted that 'parties who purchase land from gentlemen like Captain Pannyman and Mr. Pees (sic) endeavour to get upon that land as many buildings as they can possibly get to increase the rental, without any regard

1) These capacities are only a fraction of the posts and positions held by Dunning. Middlesbrough did not lack, especially in its early days, characters who continually crop up in many different capacities but Dunning seems to be by far the most ubiquitous. See appendices for a diagramatic representation of his career.

whatsoever for the sanitary conditions of the houses they build'.[1] Moving to the specific case of Middlesbrough he noted that 'In Middlesbrough we have had a fearful example of that. There are places which are not fit for stables and yet human beings were living in them until we got the Public Health Act'. Asked later in the evidence to amplify this aspect of early Middlesbrough experience, particularly with regard to the problems that arise when 'allowing houses to be built without reference to any uniformity of design and having to adapt them afterwards to any system of drainage', he became more specific. He noted that 'there have been cases in which the parties before they were obliged to submit their plans to the local Board have constructed the cellars deeper than the drains in the streets'.[2] The consequences being that 'the Corporation has been compelled to lower the whole of their new drains very often for the sake of a few cellars'. The problem, Dunning considered, was made even worse by a tidal river such as the Tees. Thus by allowing the few to break the rules, the Commissioners made things unduly difficult for their successors after 1853.

Turning to the question of why this recent neglect happened and was allowed to happen, Dunning consistently brought out two points: the need and the opportunity. Regarding the need he stressed the population growth but chose to give statistics for the rate of house building in the early 1850's. For 1852 he related that there had been about 1500 houses in the town, and by 1856

1) Commons Evidence op cit pp 46 - 7 for the 15th April 1856.

2) " p 61 "

this had increased to 2300; moreover there were then currently plans passed for 170 to 200 more houses to be built.[1] Dunning's point here was not so much to account for why there had been so much bad housing in the past, but to show that given the current rate of increase in Middlesbrough, nearby areas would also experience similar increases. Yet without the granting of the asked-for extension, such nearby areas must inevitably suffer from all the old problems.

The opportunity for such past mistakes was, in the opinion of Dunning, the lack of control on the part of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. When questioned about any controls that had been imposed before the adoption of the Public Health Act, Dunning had to say thatno regulations were imposed up to that time; and when the counsel asked, 'No consideration whatever for the health of the people?', he had to reply, 'I believe none whatever'.[2] He agreed that absolute power in this respect had been in the hands of the Middlesbrough Owners; they could have imposed conditions; and he added 'They might have improved conditions but they did not do so because they wished everyone to do what they liked with their own. Till now ...'

Finally Dunning was brought back to this same point again in some cross-questioning by Denison, counsel for Pennyman. He had to agree that in the laissez faire attitude of Pease there was a maximum of freedom, including the 'dirt'. Also he had to agree that 'the more they allowed them to do what they liked with it (land for building), the more they get for the land, do not

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 28.

2) " p 108.

they?'[1] Dunning agreed only that this was possible, not that it had actually happened, but he had to agree that Pennyman's houses[2] were better than those of Middlesbrough, but that he did not know Pennyman's doctrine.

Three generations later however the distinctions made by Dunning between the houses of the old town and those of the newer growth were hardly distinguishabl - whatever the doctrine of those in authority. Miss Jacobs described the coal port as 'a huddle of houses, mostly built on a piece of land which was subject to flooding with every neap tide'.[3] Where one might expect some later amelionation confirming the testimony of Dunning, there is instead the comment that 'new houses were built, on land which was never drained', so that nearly three generations later she could say that 'Houses were built - and terrible they were. I was a teacher in one of the lowest parts of Middlesbrough and I have seen some of the most dreadful spots imaginable. Dirt and disease flourished. It would be too terribly sad to tell you of the conditions in those days'.[4]

Yet in the years just before and concurrently with the time of the Improvement Commissioners in Middlesbrough, new ideas in respect of working-class housing were being voiced, and in some cases

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 158.

2) This was the industrial estate laid out by James White Pennyman in the 1850's with the rise of the iron industry. In design, this estate of North Ormesby resembled the original Middlesbrough in that it was symmetrically built around a market square. It was clearly intended to rival the older town.

3) See p 137 f 1 of this writing for brief biography.

4) N.Jacob op cit p 12.

the ideas were put into practice. Pevsner has shown that not only did the Inquiry into the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain of 1842 prepare the way for the 'foundation of all slum clearance', but also that ideas towards this end had already been written up, and that within a short time of the Report, some actual remedies were being tried out.[1]

1) Nikolaus Pevsner - Early Working Class Housing (The Architectural Review, XCIII, 1943), also reprinted as one of the essays in Pevsner's Studies in Art, Architecture & Design, Vol 2 (1968), p 193.

2) Town Management

c) Contemporary Housing Schemes

In this second main assessment of the work of the Improvement Commissioners, I will concentrate on housing. First I examine some interesting ideas that were current in the 1830's; then I will look at some schemes that were effected in the 1840's; and finally I will link the obvious connections between bad housing and ill-health.

Three sets of reform ideas at least were made public in the very early years of the Middlesbrough plan, and thus were known before the Improvement Commissioners came into being. J.C.Loudon had conceived of the idea of working men's colleges as far back as 1818.[1] These were seven storey buildings each containing eight dwellings for families. All had steam tubes for heating, cooking, and washing; and each had a water-closet and an inclined tube for the descent of heavy refuse. A very far cry for what came in Middlesbrough ten and twenty years later.

Similarly in the second year of Middlesbrough's modern development, Junius Redivivus condemned the erection of small houses for the residence of the poor, on the grounds of expense.[2] Instead the favoured blocks of flats as high as possible where a landlord could provide domestic comforts very cheaply: securing for himself a return of 7½% without difficulty. Redivivus recommended the form of a hollow square as the best form of building with access

1) Loudon was a well known author of many handbooks on building and gardening. He drew attention to his 1818 scheme in a letter in the Mechanics' Magazine, vol 16, 1831/2, p 322.

2) Redivivus's real name was William Bridges Adams. He was by profession a railway engineer, and a known writer of pamphlets on architecture. All the ideas quoted above are taken from a letter published in the Mechanics' Magazine, vol 16, 1831/2, pp 165-71.

to the rooms by galleries in a manner of traditional English inns. These ideas are probably a development on the buildings at New Lanark, but in that Redivivus looked for blocks of almost unlimited height his work points towards the high rise flats of the mid-twentieth century. Without going as far as this writer in the pursuit of height, the planners of Middlesbrough could have housed their projected population within the street plan as they themselves laid out. Instead they let what Redivivus called the 'multiplication of expenses' take over in the form of many small dwellings, and the result was the cutting down of reasonable standards by the property developers. Similarly insular were the Commissioners: no reference was ever made in their meetings to the town plan, let alone what alternatives were possible, or how the problem could be rectified by the consideration of contemporary ideas on working class dwellings.

Finally in 1834 Sydney Smirke put forward ideas that were very different from those of Redivivus but equally advanced in comparison with the events in Middlesbrough at the time. He proposed using unoccupied ground on the outskirts of cities for the erection of working class villages. He detailed the plan as being based on avenues that 'should be so laid out, as to be wide, clear and regular; and every means that ingenuity can devise for securing cleanliness and airiness should be adopted'.[1] The arrangement resembled the Pease Plan in some respects, but where this plan went wrong, Smirke warned that 'the houses should be arranged

1) Sydney Smirke - Suggestions for the Architectural Improvement of the Western Part of London (1834). Apart from this interest in working class dwellings, Smirke was an established architect in the field of public buildings, including having designed the Carlton Club and the Reading Room of the British Museum, p. 61.

and constructed on a plan totally differing in every respect from the small, close, inconvenient tenements usually let out into lodgings'. He recommended also that a drainage system, a fresh water supply, and a central method of heating be included [1]; space for leisure activities was considered equally essential. He recommended that the land should be bought from a public fund (in that the site was on the outskirts, it could be assumed that economic value was low) by way of a loan. Thus even charging low rents (one of the Middlesbrough problems given the social structure of the early town) 'an income would arise quite sufficient to pay a reasonable interest on the money expended'. Like the other two visionaries noted, Smirke thought in terms of reasonable housing at an economic price: there was no suggestion of a utopia as in the case of Buckingham, nor any anachronistic reference to subsidised rents. The architectural ideas were in advance of their times but not the financing of them. Yet advanced or not, the Middlesbrough Improvement Commissioners chose to deal with their housing and borrowing problems without any reference to ideas outside their own committee room, save possibly with the single exception of those of Joseph Pease - his presence, although never actual, was ever there.

If the Commissioners could ignore useful ideas from the earlier decade, they could also ignore actual attempts at improving working-class housing during the decade of their tenure. In the latter half of the 1840's, there were erected a whole variety of working class dwellings ranging from model cottages and lodging-

1) Smirke mentioned that the idea of laying on heat to a long range of such dwellings from a common source was first put to him by the versatile engineer, Brunel.

houses to blocks of working class flats, public baths and wash-houses.

In 1844 for example the Society for Improving the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, under the chairmanship of Lord Ashley, began a development of 15 houses in Pentonville. These were intended to house twenty families and thirty single persons. Half the family houses were to have two bedrooms, and half, one. The single people, aged widows were envisaged, were to have one room each in a central block with the use of a common wash-house.[1] Although this small project was somewhat criticised shortly after completion, on the grounds of too much crowding-in of the houses, it was atleast a brave try for the time. Such conditions were far superior to contemporary affairs in Middlesbrough, and the idea of including accommodation for single people as well as for families would have been useful in meeting the needs of Middlesbrough's population. The single rooms would not have been needed for old ladies, Middlesbrough's population was a young one, but would have been very useful for the large number of men without families who were attracted to the area.

Only towards the end of their tenure did the Improvement Commissioners look into the problems of the town's lodging houses, and then only under the influence of the recent Act dealing with the Common Lodging House. In the autumn of 1851 two members of the Light, Watching and Police Committee of the Improvement Commissioners were appointed to prepare a report on a visit to several lodging houses in the town.[2] This report was duly laid

1) The Builder, vol 2, 1844.

2) Minutes of the Light, Watching & Police Cttee. 1st October 1851.

before the general body of Commissioners; and the main elements brought out concerned the state and size of the lodging houses. The inspection was carried out by the Commissioners, Jordison and Gilkes, accompanied by the Relieving Officer and the Surveyor. These gentlemen noted that 'there appears to be four lodging houses which will come under the denomination of Common Lodging Houses within the scope of the recent Act[1] ... ' Even given such a small number of cases, the inspection showed up a large variety of circumstances.

Two of the houses took in almost anybody, whilst the other two were selective. Of the indiscriminating pair, they took in lodgers 'of both sexes' ... at '3d per night ... but no extra charge is made for children where they occupy no more space than that allotted to their parents'.

One of these unselective houses had 'two bedrooms used for lodgers; one has four beds in it, which in many occasions have as many as 10 occupants a night'. Not only was there this woeful over-crowding, but 'the fire place was stopped up, and the windows shut down, and though the rooms appeared to be clean, yet the want of ventilation was apparent'. The second bedroom, a smaller one, had one bed and contained a woman and her two children, 'the latter recovering from an attack of small pox'. The other house in this category was one of a row of six cottages, run by a Mr. Wilson, but owned by a Mr. Foster of Darlington. Not only was there only one 'very dirty' yard for all six houses, but the water pump was 'locked up ... for the reason that the tenants refused to join in the

1) This quotation and subsequent ones are taken from the six page report submitted to the main body of Commissioners on 3rd October 1851.

expense of repairing it when damaged'. As with the other house, there were two bedrooms, and these contained a total of seven beds, as opposed to five in the case of the former house.[1] Again there was obvious over-crowding, in that 'during the months of February and March there were never less than 8 lodgers a night there, and on some occasions as many as 16'. At this point the moral aspect emerged, as the report noted that on average there were often 'rather more than 2 to each bed: the proportion of females is as 15 to 50'. Whoever's honour was at stake, in the opinion of the party of inspection, is not made clear, but they recorded that 'the lodging-house keeper states that female vagrants seldom travel without "husbands", but when they do, they are supplied with beds to themselves in the sleeping apartments occupied by the men and "married couples"'. The houses were criticised for being over-crowded and lacking ventilation. Even where the windows and chimneys were open, it was observed that 'a close smell pervaded the place'.

Of the two discriminating houses, one was for packmen, and the other for the 'better class' of travelling people. The first was well received: neither over-crowded with beds nor lodgers. The other, which from its pretentions should have been the best lodging house of its kind in Middlesbrough, was found wanting. Although it seemed (at least from the testimony of one person) that there was never any over-crowding, there was at least a health problem in that the bedroom 'chimney was stopped up, and the place smelt close and mouldy'.

Apart from a general criticism of the shifting element of the town's population, the Commissioners accepted that bye laws ought

1) These totals are derived from a short table appended to the report of 3rd October 1851.

to be framed in accordance with the recent Common Lodging House Act, for 'their governance and regulation', and that means of enforcement be ensured. Yet all this is a far cry from the Pentonville experiment of seven years earlier. In the year following the ending of the Commissioners' tenure, the situation for the housing of men without families seemed no better.

Writing to the secretary of the Woolcombers' Aid Committee in Bradford, a newly arrived worker to Middlesbrough noted that he had 'got very decent lodgings', but nevertheless described the more general and less satisfactory situation. He wrote that 'the statement made with regard to robbery committed by those who keep lodgers, is in a great many instances true'. Not only were the houses thus precarious, but the newcomers had little option but to use them. The same writer added that 'with regard to taking a house here, there is as much chance of taking a house as there was in Bradford about 2 years ago, for they are spoken for before the foundations are laid'. Yet optimistically the writer informed the secretary that 'as soon as I see a chance about for a let' he would take it, for 'I believe that if a Bradford family could get a house and take in lodgers, that would be a means of a great many (workers from Bradford) settling better, for that would suit them'.[1]

The lodgings occupied by this writer do not seem to have been among those inspected by the two Commissioners three years earlier, although the writer did mention one of these two Commissioners, Mr.

1) Letter sent by George Hopton to Mr. Thomas Empsall on 23rd July 1854. This document is part of the Empsall Collection kept at Bradford Central Reference Library. This particular letter is somewhat illiterate, only a small part of the first page having been corrected by a literate person, but the above quotations have been converted into more conventional grammar.

Gilkes, as being one of the firm of ironmasters then in the process of laying off men; and so, in the opinion of the writer, making possible (obliquely) the availability of a house in the wake of the departing unemployed. Nevertheless, the example of the lodging house inspection shows that the attitude of the Commissioners was well behind both earlier written ideas and contemporary practical steps in housing the labouring classes, especially in the case of single people; and the experience of Hopton suggests that far from the situation having improved following the work of the Commissioners, it had in fact got worse. The customers during the time of the inspection had to endure over-crowding and lack of ventilation: but three years later the problem of theft had been added to their trials.

Another actual development in working class housing, this time nearer home, came from the Birkenhead Dock Company in 1845. In this same year as the Improvement Commissioners were grappling with the financial problems of acquiring a town hall, the Birkenhead Dock Co. built the first blocks of working class flats in English history. The buildings were in rows, each four storeys high, and divided up into separate dwelling flats containing a living-room, two bedrooms, and a scullery.

Not only had this project attempted to avoid the criticisms of the Pentonville experiment of the previous year, but the interiors were more lavish. Each flat had a sink for washing, a water-closet, and a dust shaft: all dust and ashes could be instantly removed from any flat by this means. Although the rents were not the very lowest of the times: 3/6d to 5/0d per flat, which could be more than

the 3d per person per night charged in some of the Middlesbrough lodging houses, there were other facilities also included. Each set of rooms was supplied with constant pure water, the use of a gas burner, an oven, two bedsteads, and rates and taxes inclusive. Moreover the scale of this development dwarfed the Pentonville scheme: 324 families were catered for as opposed to the 20 (plus 30 single people) in London. Even Edwin Chadwick was impressed when he inspected this development, although his high critical faculty came into play when he suggested that a central heating system would be a further improvement.[1]

Finally, in 1848, a profit making company, the Metropolitan Association, put up working class flats on a scale even larger than the Birkenhead one. They erected a model block in the Old Pancras Road of 6 storeys high, having both two-room and three-room apartments, each with scullery, sink etc. and at rents of 3/0d to 7/0d per week. Moreover the Association itself was not only assured of a profit, but put a self-denying ordinance upon itself by limiting its profits to 5% per annum. The capital for this project amounted to £100,000, made up of 4000 shares of £25 each.[2] Such capability in financial management and such a sense of social obligation compare most starkly with the goings on of the contemporary Improvement Commissioners in Middlesbrough, whose attempts to secure loans at less than 5% proved abortive, although unadmitted, and whose social ends were lost in the need to placate the influential.

Even more ironical is the fact that Middlesbrough was begun

1) The Builder, vols 3 and 4, 1845 and 1846.
2) " vols 5 and 6, 1847 and 1848.

at a time of significant changes in both the exteriors and interiors of ordinary homes. M.W.Barley has attempted to trace back the original of the back-to-back house, or the 'not-throughs' of Seebohm Rowntree. He noted that the 'earliest known examples are a pair in Bermondsey, built in 1706'[1], although this particular pair were not the homes of artisans; and although they were found in a part of London, this type of building for working class homes never became a common type in London. Yet they did become a common type in the industrial towns of the early nineteenth century. Some towns, Leeds for example, persisted in this type of dwelling well into the twentieth century; but, as has been already noted, other models were being tried out by the 1840's in at least parts of London and Merseyside. That Middlesbrough should choose to follow the bad example instead of being abreast of its own time, seems deplorable; and equally so does the attitude of the Commissioners who chose only to look into the problem of lodging houses because of the passing of the Common Lodging House Act, 1852/3, right at the end of their tenure.

Middlesbrough began to develop at a time called by Barley, the 'second phase of the Industrial Revolution'[2]. By this phrase he meant the time when 'technical developments began to be applied to the consumer market'. Thus specifically there was for example the oil lamp, 'perfected in the 1840's, to burn vegetable or animal oil, or best of all turpentine'. Similarly with wall decoration, in the later eighteenth century, 'most people had only white-washed walls' but by 1800 'printing with wood blocks

1) W.M.Barley - The House and Home (1963), p 61.

2) " " p 66.

and distemper colours began to oust flock and stencilled and hand-coloured papers, but the great revolution was caused early in the nineteenth century by the introduction of cylinder printing machines'[1]. During the time of the first houses in Middlesbrough, the technical difficulties associated with cheap wallpaper 'were so mastered ... that prices fell considerably and wallpaper was much more widely used'. Similarly with floorcloth, 'shortly after 1800 a method was found of painting it or impregnating it with oil to make it easily cleaned and so resistent to damp'. This helped with the chief problem of many houses built before the middle of the nineteenth century: damp - brought about by the lack of a damp-proof course. Not only did many of the early Middlesbrough houses suffer in this way, but the site itself has often been criticised for being on low lying ground beside a tidal river. It is ironic that the Improvement Commissioners too often looked back to the past for their models, rather than their being aware of the many changes that were occurring around them in domestic architecture and homely comfort. Instead of attempting to bring about a reasonable tradition from which to progress, they accepted too many bad habits and so created a tradition that would encumber the future.

Finally looking at the health situation generally as a result of the twelve years of activity by the Improvement Commissioners, John Dunning had some remarks to make, both general and specific in his 1856 evidence to the Commons Select Committee.[2]

In a general sense he criticised the jerry building of the

1) Barley op cit p 66.

2) See appendices for outline of Dunning's positions etc.

early houses, and the lack of drainage facilities; more specifically he spoke of some of the dangers that came from this situation. It has already been noted what Dunning said in relation to the laissez faire attitude of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, and the lack of responsibility shown by the builders and landlords, although Dunning did stress that 'since the Public Health Act came into force there has been more care taken that they (the houses) should not be over-crowded'.[1] Yet on the issue of cholera, even Dunning tended to become imprecise, although his remarks can easily be analysed into fairly clear cause and effect.

Very early in his evidence, Dunning had it put to him by counsel that 'I believe Middlesbrough was some time since unhappily visited with an attack of cholera',[2] to which Dunning assented with the dates 1849 and 1854, being 'two severe attacks'. Whilst not asking him to 'pronounce a medical opinion' the counsel put it to Dunning that it (the cause of the cholera) was attributed rightly or wrongly to one of the open stells[3] which abutted upon the Borough itself', and Dunning agreed that the outbreak was at that point, and in fact was the main cause of the outbreak.

Yet Dunning's object here was to get the stell, which was then part of the boundary to the west of the town, included in the new area. He described the stell as 'a nasty open ditch full of fedit matter', into which the inhabitants of the town threw

1) Commons Evidence op cit p 108 for 15th April 1856.

2) " p 7 "

3) Stells were long open ditches, draining into the Tees.

their refuse, and which the action of the tidal river made all attempts to flush out, in vain. The ownership of the C.L.C. extended to the mid-point of the stell, and thence under the ownership of the adjoining landowner, Thomas Hustler. In spite of an order by the magistrates at Stokesley, who summoned both Hustler and the C.L.C. to cover the stell, Dunning considered that it needed to be under the public health act, by being part of Middlesbrough, which had adopted this act the previous August.

Counsel however challenged the idea that the stell had been the cause of the outbreak of cholera, and for his basis, he went to the Ranger Report[1] and quoted John Richardson, the Union Medical Officer, who had not mentioned the stell. Dunning however tried to get around this problem by maintaining that the Report's comments on cholera referred to the outbreak of 1849, whereas he was alluding to the cholera of 1854. Yet further reference to the Report by the counsel revealed that Dunning's own evidence in that report had made no mention of the stell as a possible health hazard. At this point Dunning's pioneering stance seems to become somewhat artificial, especially so when he was asked why he did not have the stell cleaned out in 1854. His reply was that 'It was so sudden'; to which the counsel's response was 'That was so sudden, the dirty' Leaving Dunning to reply rather lamely, 'No, the cholera'.

Dunning's attitude is typical of that of the Improvement Commissioners. Undoubted health hazards existed simply through various kinds of neglect, but severe reminders of such risks,

1) See p 110 et al of this thesis.

2) Commons Evidence op cit pp 138 - 42.

as cholera was, were always treated as special cases, hardly related to general circumstances. In such a way even two visitations of cholera only five years apart, could be regarded as if they had nothing in common; and shock be felt as a result, even though such visitations were almost inevitable. However, as I said at the end of chapter 2, I will deal with cholera in Middlesbrough later in this chapter.

3) The Quality of Life

a) Poverty

Interwoven with the problems of bad housing and sickness, was of course the problem of poverty. We have already seen how the original urban plan had been undermined by cheap, overcrowded housing, and how the incidence of cholera was related to this cheap housing. Also we have noted a number of statements which claim a relative absence of poverty in the town. Joseph Pease himself did not deny the bad housing and sickness, but he did have an inflated opinion with regard to the level of earnings and the amount of regular employment that his town afforded. One problem is to say precisely just how much poverty there was in the town during this formative period, and one is hindered by the fact that no local record of the poor law authorities exists for Middlesbrough before the 1880's. However the correspondence between the central and the local authority helps to some extent, but even here the material is incomplete; yet on the basis of this imperfect material, I will look at three questions: what kind of poverty existed in the town, what was the local attitude towards pauperism, and what was the relation between the central authority and the Guardians etc. in Middlesbrough.

Apart from very special cases, such as young orphans and imbeciles, two main kinds of poverty emerge with regard to the 1840's and 1850's. First there was the straight-forward case of unemployment. In May 1843, it was reported to the Commissioners that relief had been given to sixteen 'able bodied paupers' in consequence of the stoppage of work at the Middlesbrough Pottery. This outdoor relief had been given

because of the impracticability of obtaining material (stone or oakum) in order to apply the 'labour test order'. Similarly it was impossible to use the 'workhouse test' for there were only two workhouses in the union: in Stockton and Hartlepool, and each was limited to a maximum number of 40 inmates. Nevertheless the response from London was to discontinue the practice of out-door relief, and obtain (even if expensive) labour materials, or 'offer the workhouse to single men and ones with small families'.[1] In this case the weekly relief ranged from 3/0d to 8/0d per week according to personal circumstances: these in their turn ranged from a wife and two children to a wife and seven children.

In April of the following year, the contract for Abraham Bradley was not renewed. This man had been the superintendent of pauper labour for the Stockton Union, and the reason given to the Commissioners was that 'no paupers (are now) requiring attention'.[2] Yet in this same year of 1844, there was a lot of correspondence concerning aid given to a pauper woman. In October a ruling on who should have the power to grant and withdraw relief was requested by the Guardians of the Commissioners. The case arose when Hannah Barker, mother of three and deserted by her husband, was granted relief by one official, and then it was withdrawn by another. The Guardians sought the backing of the Commissioners in dealings with their paid officials.

Finally, in 1849, Mr. Richardson, Union medical officer, wrote to the Commissioners requesting an increase in salary, which had previously been turned down by the Guardians. The request was for

1) Poor Law Union Papers for Stockton 1843/7, M.H.12/3241.

2) "

an increase of £10 on top of his current £30 per annum. His case rested on the increased amount of work among paupers since his appointment. This meant an increase since 1847. Richardson gave some brief figures, and made some general statements. He stated that his predecessor had an average number of sick pauper cases of 56 per year in the mid 1840's. This contrasted with Richardson's own experience of 126 cases in 1847 and 225 in 1848. Even allowing for an increasing population, these figures indicate that pauperism was on the increase in the later 1840's. In fact Richardson stated quite explicitly that there are 'more sick paupers in the district (generally) and the certainty of an increase in this town (Middlesbrough specifically), where the population, amounting to 8000 or upwards, consists principally of mechanics who when attacked by sickness have not the means to procure either food or medical aid'[1].

These cases can be fitted into the more general framework of annual costs of the Poor Law in the parish of Middlesbrough:

Yearly costs to the nearest £ — Table 2

1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1854/6
73	130	146	-	184	320	590	599	418	351	261(yearly average)

Even allowing for population increase, these costs show a very sharp rise throughout the 1840's. Taking the population of the parish of Middlesbrough from 1841 to 1851 we know that the total increased from 5,709 to 7,893: this represents an increase of 38%. Compared with this, the increase in costs from 1842 to 1851 was 381%; and this final figure is well below the peak cost year of 1849. Thus without doubt, not only was there poverty in the town during these years, but that poverty increased throughout the 1840's and then decreased into the 1850's.

1) Poor Law Union Papers for Stockton 1843/7, M.H.12/3241.

2) " 1843/57, M.H.12/3241/4.

Finally I will turn to the questions of attitudes and standards, and I will use common examples to illustrate both these aspects. These illustrations will incorporate both personnel, institutions, and the social composition of the Guardians.

In 1847 there was an interesting exchange of correspondence between Stockton Union and the Commissioners in regard to the appointment of Richardson, whom I referred to on the previous page. It was proposed that he be appointed Medical Officer for the Middlesbrough district of the Stockton Union. This was to fill the vacancy left by the previous Officer, Mr. Charles Slee, whose qualifications were given as 'a doctor of medicine of a foreign university, and a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in London'; he had also practised for 15 years. By comparison, Mr. Richardson's qualifications simply stated that he was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Commissioners raised doubts as to his competence.

Charles Best, Clerk to the Board of Guardians, defended the proposed appointment by writing that 'there were 3 other practitioners in Middlesbrough, but I know nothing of their qualifications, excepting I am pretty sure none of them are members of the Royal College of Surgeons'.[1] This was in response to the Commissioners' letter saying that 'Mr. Richardson was not fully qualified' and they therefore required more particulars as to his abilities. Nevertheless Best's letter seems to have satisfied the Commissioners, for Richardson was duly appointed.[2] Thus while the Guardians' choice obviously fell below normal national standards in this particular medical appointment, the Commissioners in London had to accept that the appointee represented

1) Stockton Papers, 1847.

2) Probably Richardson made up for lack of formal qualifications with some kind of personal dynamism. For example he became one of the town's earliest Councillors in 1854, and became its Mayor in 1858.

the best of a bad lot.

In regards to the local attitudes towards Poor Law institutions, some of the reports of H.J.Hawley, Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, are interesting. In the year that Richardson was appointed, for example, Hawley brought to light the fact that Stockton had three months previously converted its workhouse into a fever hospital, where there had already been two fatalities, including a nurse, out of 30 cases. The conversion was in May, and Hawley's report was in September; and, in December, the Commissioners requested that Stockton build a proper fever hospital out of Union, as opposed to district, funds. The outcome was that Stockton answered that 'the fever has now abated' and therefore they were determined to avoid the cost of the Commissioners' request.[1] This kind of local economy can also be seen in regard to the general condition of the Stockton workhouse, quite apart from temporary conversions of this nature.

In March 1847 Hawley presented his written answers on the annual return into the state of the Stockton workhouse. His general summary was that the workhouse was quite inadequate, and in particular he listed the fact that the workhouse contained no separate sick ward or receiving wards, no school, no workroom stocks, and no supervision; not surprisingly also, he noted that the records of the Master was not up-to-date. This report set into motion a struggle between the Guardians and the Commissioners which resulted in a new workhouse in 1851; but only after a great deal of pressure from London, and a great deal of procrastination on the part of the Guardians.

Even at the stage when the plans for the new purpose built workhouse were submitted, there was still plenty of evidence of penny-pinching on the part of the Guardians. Not only was the basic aim of separation

1) Stockton Papers, 1847.

not catered for, but the house was also quite inadequate for any kind of classification, by age, health, or likely length of stay. Furthermore the sanitary arrangements were quite defective. Inevitably this led to a drawn out compromise between the parties concerned.[1]

A look at the sort of people who were Guardians for the Middlesbrough district shows them to be the same kind of people who were Improvement Commissioners, and eventually Councillors and Aldermen. There is an impression that the personnel were a cross-section of the small Middlesbrough middle class of the time. As examples, we can look at the Guardians for 1845 when Middlesbrough elected three members; those for 1848 when the number rose to five; and finally for 1851 when the number rose to seven:

Table 3

1845	
Wm. Fallows	Ship owner
Hy. Whittell	Grocer
Isaac Wilson	Earthenware Manufacturer

1848	
Hy. Whittell	Grocer
Rbt. Elliott	Painter
John Unthank	Accountant
Sam Hawman	Brewer
Thos. Newsam	Gent

1851	
Hy. Bolckow	Iron manufacturer
Rbt. Elliott	Painter
Isaac Wilson	Iron Manufacturer
Rhd. Brown	Shipowner
Thos. Newsam	Solicitor
Wm. Fallows	Ship broker
Thos. Stevenson.	Butcher

1) Stockton Paper, 1847/51.

Thus these lists illustrate the changing nature of the town at this time. The three men who held office in 1845 are very much of the original Pease town: the coal port with some slight domestic and industrial trimmings. By 1848, the Board's composition reveals the appearance of some professionalism among the residents, e.g. the accountant and the gent(later described as a solicitor). Finally by 1851 the emergence of the coal town is evidence with two iron manufacturers on the Board. However this inclusion of Bolckow and Wilson (now having moved from pottery to iron) is still a far cry from the domination of the iron masters a generation later, when the tensions between local economy and local municipal enterprise became apparent.

Even with the rather sparse material that I have had to use, there can be no doubt that poverty existed in the town during these middle years: certainly a different story from the image attempted by Pease in his evidence in 1856. That evidence was couched in terms of the 'frontier' town, where poverty hardly existed; almost an equivalent to the frontier freedom of F.J.Turner where 'the artisan of the Old World (entered) into the midst of resources that demanded manly exertion and that gave in return the chance for indefinite ascent in the scale of social advance'.[1] For even in so young a town as Middlesbrough, opportunities were not unlimited, and the rewards available went to the 'man whose eye was the quickest and whose grasp was the strongest', in spite of the long-term vision of the 'lofty buildings and the jostling multitudes of a mighty city'.[2] Thus the town showed the dark side of the 'frontier' picture, as painted

1) F.J.Turner - Contributions to American Democracy (Atlantic Monthly 1903), p. 261.

2) " The Middle West (International Monthly, December 1901), pp. 153-4

by both the founder of Middlesbrough, Joseph Pease, and the originator of the 'frontier' concept in American history, Frederick Jackson Turner. Even so, the penny-pinching that seemed to be an integral part of the operation of the Poor Law in the town, allowed an element of humanity, albeit obliquely, to soften the harsh logic of the new law.

Yet this same penny-pinching left the town almost defenceless against cholera visitations. Thus whilst the more unfortunate inhabitants might escape the rigours of the new poor law, their escape from the cholera scourge was less certain.

3) The Quality of Life

b) Cholera

I have already referred to cholera in remarks in Chapter 2 on the flaws in the work of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, and in remarks in this chapter on housing under the Middlesbrough Improvement Commissioners. Now I will deal more specifically with the disease.

There seems to have been three attacks of cholera in Middlesbrough during the latter period of the Improvement Commissioners and the early years of the Borough Corporation. A number of references to outbreaks in 1849, 1852/3, and 1854/5 are made, but without actual statistics. The outbreak of 1849 is said to be the first attack in Middlesbrough, unlike many other parts of the north-east which suffered badly in the early 1830's. The cause of Middlesbrough's escape at this time is probably the very small population compared with say Stockton. Furthermore the attack of 1849 does not seem to have been a serious one. Nor do the attacks of 1852/3. It was to these attacks that the Sanitary Committee referred during the visit by Mr. Ranger. This inspector also referred to the attack of 1854 towards the end of his report, and some writers have made general reference to the attack in 1855: there seems to be general agreement that this was a very severe attack. The problem is to give precise numbers, and thus to be able to make meaningful comparisons with other places.

During the Ranger inspection of the town, the surgeon and Poor Law Union medical officer, John Richardson, said that 'during the last few years they (the people of Middlesbrough) had certainly suffered from epidemics, but in a less degree than their neighbours'.[1] In

1) Board of Health Report on Middlesbrough (1854) p 25.

the same report, Richardson also refers to the first outbreak of cholera in the town by noting that 'during the prevalence of cholera in 1849, Garbutt St and several houses in parts of East, Dacre and North-streets had suffered severely' noting also that 'the yards attached to the houses were generally in a bad state, and there was a great want of privy accommodation. The sewerage also was in a very unsatisfactory state'.[1]

If we make a comparison with Stockton, and accept that this would be one of the neighbours to which Richardson made reference, then we see that a recent study has given the death toll as 20.[2] This was out of 170 cases treated for cholera/diarrhoea by the Stockton dispensary between June and November 1849.[3] By making a comparison between the known rate of mortality through cholera for Stockton (population of 10,172 in 1851) and making an approximation for Middlesbrough (population 7631 in 1851) then the death toll in Middlesbrough must have been less than 15. If we can take Richardson's account of the prevalence of the disease in certain overcrowded and insanitary areas of the town (Garbutt St etc.), this compares with the experience of Stockton, where there was a high intensity of cases in Castle St, Brunswick St, and Clarence St.[4] Both towns fit in with Petermann's statistical notes[5] when he said that 'a comparison of his population maps

1) Board of Health Report op cit p 25.

2) R.P.Hastings - Cholera in Nineteenth Century Stockton (Durham Local History Society, 16th June 1973).

3) Yet differs widely from Creighton's figure of 248: ref next p.

4) Hastings - op cit p 16.

5) The German geographer who pioneered cholera maps in mid-nineteenth century Britain.

with his cholera map showed "that the more densely peopled districts were proportionately the most severely attacked".[1] Possibly the phrase 'prevalence' used by Richardson referred to the large number of cases, rather than the mortality, and of this large number many cases could have been English cholera. Hastings suggests that Stockton's relative good fortune in the small death rate was 'due at least in part to the presence and prompt action of a Dispensary whose opium and chalk-based medicines did much to keep the diarrhoea of its patients at the premonitory stage in contrast to the wild and unrealistic treatments practised elsewhere'.[2]

The comparative figures of Charles Creighton[3] are very different regarding the 1849 cholera in Stockton, and also the same figures suggest that Middlesbrough escaped very lightly throughout the nineteenth century.[4] There is expectedly no mention of Middlesbrough in the 1831/2 outbreaks, although Stockton had a death toll of 126[5] and was listed among the places with the highest mortality in Durham. The only North Riding town listed was Whitby, with a mortality of 27.

The table for 1849 gives Stockton a mortality of 248, and far from suggesting that she was more favoured than her neighbours, shows the town only just behind Gateshead with 257, although both lagged

1) Quoted in E.W.Gilbert - Pioneer Maps of Health and Disease in England (The Geographical Journal, vol 124, 1958), p 179.

2) Hastings op cit p 17.

3) Charles Creighton - A History of Epidemics in Britain, vol 2, 1894, rep 1965), p 844.

4) Creighton does however show the prominence of Middlesbrough towards the end of the century with the typhus outbreak of the 1870's, and of the 1880's. Shortly after Creighton had written his book there was also a very bad smallpox attack in the 1890's.

5) Creighton op cit p 822.

far behind Sunderland with 563.[1] Again only Whitby appears for the North Riding, although with the reduced death toll of 10. For 1854 Stockton again appears as a principal centre of cholera mortality, but no figure is given, whilst Whitby again appears for the North Riding with 33, although joined by Guisboro' with 30.[2] Middlesbrough appears in none of these lists.

It seems certain that the Middlesbrough experience of 1852/3 was not serious. The Light, Watching and Police Committee of the Improvement Commissioners noted in 1852 that 'in consequence of the great prevalence of Bowel Complaints and other similar disorders - as well as the possible coming of the Cholera, this Committee considers it essential that the town should be carefully examined by the Surveyor and the Police who are desired to bring to an adjournment of this Committee a detailed list of all nuisance throughout the town and of all back premises which are not in a clean and wholesome state'.[4] Nevertheless the next two meetings of this committee (both undated) deal with other matters - mainly the misconduct of the police, who had been recruiting for the militia rather than following up the directives of the committee.

In the Ranger Report there is a table of mortality figures for Middlesbrough caused by zymotic disease.[5] Here the deaths

1) The Creighton figures for Stockton for this outbreak agree with those of Underwood, when in a comparative table for 1848 and 1849, the Stockton death toll is given as 249, between 7th July 1848 and 16th November 1849: in E.A.Underwood - The History of Cholera in Great Britain (Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine, vol XLI, 1948).

2) Creighton op cit p 844.

3) Creighton op cit pp 852 - 3.

4) Light, Watching & Police Committee Minutes for 30th August 1852.

5) These figures were given by Mr. Best, the Superintendent-registrar.

from cholera are given as 2 in 1852,and 1 in 1853. Not only are these figures low comparatively, but they are low in relation to other forms of disease. Taking the two years together, only the disease, erysipelas had as low a mortality, whilst all the other eight diseases in the list had higher figures: for example typhus had 30 deaths, and measles 17. However for diarrhoea the figures were 14 for 1852, and 23 for 1853,[1] so if there was some confusion in diagnosis, or a preference to keep the term cholera to a minimum, then the situation regarding real cholera could have been worse than the total of 3 suggests.

Qualitative judgments suggest that the year 1855 was Middlesbrough's worst for Asian cholera: regarding 1854, Dunning speaks of the attack as being 'severe', and Ranger speaks of the attack of the autumn 1854 as appearing 'with great virulence'. Yet in the minutes for both the years 1854 and 1855 for the Middlesbrough Council and Local Board of Health there is no mention of cholera; nor is there any mention in the minutes of the Burial Board apart from mentioning that the first people buried at the new cemetery opened in Linthorpe Rd in the summer of 1854, were cholera victims.[2]

1) Ranger Report op cit p 8.

2) The Council minutes do however often refer to the monthly report by the Sanitary Committee, but only to accept the report: no details are even given. Possibly the minute books of this sub-committee may some day turn up, but at the moment they seem no longer to exist. Not only is there the possibility that they have been destroyed at some time in the past, but fairly recent hazards may have led to their disappearance. When Middlesbrough became part of Teesside C.B. in April 1968, a lot of Council minute books were sent to Stockton for storage, but just what went was not recorded. There is no unanimous agreement on where in Stockton the material was stored, but certainly a lot came back to Middlesbrough in 1973, when the emergence of Cleveland County became certain in the 1974 local government reorganisation. This returned material was stored at Newport Road Library, which was subsequently flooded.

If we turn to official records however, we can find some information on the health of the town during the cholera years, but our quantitative search remains unfulfilled. Both the quarterly reports of the Registrar General, and the special report by his office on cholera in 1848/9, tend to give their statistics for the Stockton District, but sometimes there is a breakdown as far as the Yarm sub-district, and occasionally there is specific reference to Middlesbrough.

Taking the three outbreaks in turn, we note that in 1849 the Stockton district had cholera deaths of 2 in every 10,000 and deaths from diarrhoea at the rate of 22 in every 10,000.[1] Yet when we turn to the more detailed breakdown, it is cholera which is the more deadly: absolute deaths are given as 248 from this disease, whilst diarrhoea shows 62 deaths.

Within these district figures, some details of the sub-districts are given. Of these Yarm (which of course included Middlesbrough) is recorded as having 87 deaths from cholera and 17 from diarrhoea. Also noted is the comment that these illnesses were 'intensive in Yarm (the market town) and Middlesbrough', and that in Middlesbrough there were 'many deaths in Garbutt, Dacre and North Streets, and Market Place'.[2] The specific cholera deaths for the town of Stockton are 21, which confirms the Hastings findings, and the worst area in the Stockton district is shown to be Hartlepool with a death toll from cholera of 138. This also confirms the relative success of Stockton on coping with the outbreak, but throws some doubts on the statement concerning

1) Registrar General's Report of Cholera in England 1848/9 (1852).

2) " " " " " p 291.

Middlesbrough and her neighbours, already mentioned. If Richardson had referred specifically to Hartlepool in his comparison, then some credibility could be extended to his comment; but as Stockton was a nearer neighbour then doubts must be entertained.

In regard to the outbreak in the early 1850's, the official comments support the idea of those who denied the seriousness of the outbreaks in the years 1851/2. For 1851 there is no special comment on the Yarm sub district. In the following year however, there is a note, following the tabulated information, to the effect that, in this sub district, there had been 3 cases of death from cholera and diarrhoea. This referred to the quarter ended September 1852. For the last quarter of this same year, there is no comment on cholera for Middlesbrough or its larger area, but there is comment to the effect that 'typhus has prevailed to some extent in Middlesbrough'.[1] The outcome was a total of 5 deaths.

Regarding the third and last outbreaks, the official information supports the view that this was the most serious outbreak as far as Middlesbrough was concerned, but it places the emphasis on 1854 rather than 1855. The Return for the quarter ended September 1854 contained a cholera supplement, and gave the following figures for the Stockton district:

Table 4

	July	Aug	Sept 1/16	Sept 17/23	Sept 24/30	total
Deaths from cholera.	17	99	71	24	6	217
" " diarrhoea.	4	29	25	4	3	65

1) These figures and comments taken from:

Registrar General's Quarterly Return, Sept. 1851, p 48.
" " " " Sept. 1852, p 47.
" " " " Dec. 1852, p 46.

Yet even with these relatively high fatalities from cholera there is no specific mention of Middlesbrough. What mention there is comes in the next Quarterly Return when, for the Yarm sub district, there is the comment that 'measles, scarlatina and typhus have been very prevalent and fatal in Middlesbrough'.[1]

In the Returns for 1855 there is no mention of cholera deaths in the area, apart from a reference to Hartlepool sub district which notes that deaths were below the average and that 'the sub district is in a healthy state'.[2]

This shift in emphasis from 1855 to 1854 can also be seen from a table of total deaths for the Stockton district in the earlier 1850's:[3]

Table 5

Year	Total deaths
1851	311
1852	316
1853	354
1854	642
1855	332

Here 1854 is clearly seen as the 'unusual' year in respect to the number of deaths. Separate information for Middlesbrough is not given, but by this time, with its growing industrial population, there is no reason to doubt that Middlesbrough's experience of disease was in any large measure different from the area as a whole.

1) Registrar General's Quarterly Return, Dec. 1854, p 43.

2) " " " " Sept. 1855, p 16.

3) These figures taken from the Returns for Sept. 1854 and Sept. 1855.

Thus the material from the Registrar General's Returns has confirmed the lack of seriousness in the cholera attacks of the early 1850's, but has thrown some doubts on the generalisation relating to the earlier attack of 1849, and on the dating of the most serious attack in the mid 1850's. Actual figures for Middlesbrough however have often not been available. The greatest lack here is undoubtedly the absence of a local newspaper: a situation which changed only after the last cholera outbreak. However some information can be squeezed from nearby newspapers, but there are gaps in the runs, and usually Middlesbrough is only peripheral to the main interests of the paper.

Generally speaking, the newspaper accounts of cholera in Middlesbrough tend to support local attitudes and accounts of the first two outbreaks, and to support the Registrar General in respect of the 1854/5 visitation: to which most of the available information relates. The Darlington and Stockton Times notes that in 1849 Middlesbrough still continued in a healthy condition, and that its 'partial exemption from the prevailing epidemic is mainly due to the excellent plan on which the town was laid out and the labours of the sanitary committees, during the last two years.'[1] The "more favoured than ones neighbour" comment also appears, where the comparison is not Stockton but, 'Hartlepools which is dying in her filth'.

I have already commented upon the work of the sanitary committees in these years, and I have thrown some doubts upon the usefulness of comparison with neighbouring towns in this particular instance. If one is making comparison with (say) Stockton, which was justly proud of

1) Darlington and Stockton Times, 23rd October 1849.

its efforts regarding the containment of cholera in 1849, then the comparison tells us something of the quality of Middlesbrough's public health attitudes and behaviour of the time; but if the comparison is with Hartlepool, which has a deplorable record at this time, then the comparison hides more than it reveals.

There are no press comments on the visitations of the early 1850's, which lack accords with both local attitudes and the official statistics, but there is a wealth of comment for the mid 1850's.

The Sunderland News and North of England Advertiser took a very critical view of the situation in Middlesbrough in 1854. This newspaper was published in an area that had had unique direct experience of cholera in 1831, and, for whatever motives, could speak with some authority when commenting on the dangers in other parts of the country. Comment in this instance was centred on three things: bureaucratic inaction, conspiracies of silence, and resulting popular irresponsibility.

The paper noted that there had been two important visits to Middlesbrough prior to the outbreak of cholera in August 1854: those of Inspector Ranger and Dr. Lewis. It commented on the delay between Ranger's visit and his report to the Board of Health, and asked the question 'are enquiries and reports all that has to be done?'[1]

Ostensibly in order to allay public panic, the paper published some figures for the disease to date. If nothing else, these figures were expected to emphasise that cholera cases led often to cholera deaths: by comparison the figures for diarrhoea deaths are much less to be feared:

1) Sunderland News and North of England Advertiser, 19th August 1854.

Table 6

	Cholera		Diarrhoea	
	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
17th August.	10	10	97	-
18th August.	-	7	-	-
19th August.	5	-	70	-
20th August.	1	-	92	-
21st August.	3	2	91	-
22nd August.	6	-	119	1
23rd August.	3	4	106	-
24th August.	5	3	81	-
25th August.	6	4	96	-
26th August.	3	-	98	5
27th August.	4	-	71	-
28th August.	-	3	74	-
29th August.	3	1	66	-
30th August.	-	7	-	-
	49	41	1,061	6

1

In view of such fatalities over so short a time, the paper showed that the situation could have been avoided or at lease eased if the advice of Dr. Lewis had been heeded. His comments, as reported in The Times, showed that, when he inspected the town, there was an 'unusually large proportion of the dwellings in a state unfit for human habitation'. The blame was laid at the door of the building speculators, who 'buy a small quantity of land to erect thereon the largest possible number of dwellings'. Dr. Lewis did not excuse the founding fathers, in the way

1) Sunderland News and North of England Advertiser, 2nd September 1854.

that Dunning was to do in the Select Committee evidence three years' hence, but he stated critically that there was no one in Middlesbrough 'to check the building speculators'. He saw, as the not result of all this, the ludicrous situation whereby 'numbers of houses built almost yesterday ought to be closed'.[1]

The newspaper, having thus given its warning, hoped that the publication of the true situation in the town would do something to dispel the state of affairs whereby 'the people in their fear have very much given themselves up to drunkenness, which has resulted in several most disgraceful scenes,'[2]

Similar reporting came from The Yorkshireman, although the stress here was on the positive efforts taken in Middlesbrough to contain the wrath of the cholera. It instanced cases of cart loads of lime having beenpoured down in the Market Place for gratuitous use, the whitening of alleys and yards, and the practice of putting chloride of lime down grates and sewers. Similarly the paper noted that there was provision for 'attendance at the town hall from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. for medical attention and medicine free from the druggists'.[3]

However, at the stage when the death rate from cholera was beginning to fall, the paper had to report that the disease had nevertheless become 'more widespread in the town'; and in the final report of late September, when only two deaths had occurred in the week, one of the main points made by the Sunderland newspaper was once more echoed. Regarding the social results of the disease, the Yorkshireman commented that 'a great number of persons have left the town', but trusted that they would return when things got back to normal.[4]

1) The Times, 10th October 1853.

2) Sunderland News and North of England Advertiser, 9th September 1854.

3) The Yorkshireman, 2nd September 1854.

4) The Yorkshireman, 23rd September 1854.

The fullest accounts of the cholera in the town in 1854 come however from the Darlington and Stockton Times. Although this paper is generally less critical than the Sunderland paper on this issue, and less quantitative than the York paper, it does cover very similar points in more detail. Not only are causes and results touched upon, but there is more detail in regard to both location, and the longer term aftermath.

Referring to the initial impact of the disease, this newspaper noted that hitherto (from 11th to 26th August) the cholera had 'been in great measure, confined to the close unhealthy parts adjoining the stell'.[1] In noting that 'the cases have not been of the most severe character', the paper added that of those who died 'a large proportion were young persons'. Local doctors and helpers from Newcastle were undergoing a house to house inspection of the town in order to confine the disease within a small area.

In looking at the locational origins of the disease, the newspaper noted that 'it broke out in houses in Stockton Street, which houses resemble in many features, those of Victoria St, Gateshead, where the epidemic of 1853 found its first victim'. These features were described as houses that 'have cellar dwellings, are occupied as tenaments, are dangerously overcrowded. In many, if not in most, cases, the family occupy only one room'.[2] This same theme of locational origin came to the forefront in reports of an enquiry by magistrates at Stokesley towards the end of the 1854 epidemic. This enquiry centred on the dangers of the Stockton St. stell, and what remedies could be taken towards mitigating the nuisance.[3]

1) The Darlington and Stockton Times, 26th August 1854.

2) " " " " " 2nd September 1854.

3) I have mentioned this case in my comments on the evidence given before the Commons Select Committee in 1856; see p 206.

The stell was described as 'the place where the cholera originated and most prevailed'[1]; and the newspaper then goes on to show that the arguments in this connection were not medical but commercial. The summons was taken out by John Peacock on behalf of the committee of Guardians, and he was supported by evidence from John Richardson, medical officer to the Poor Law Union, John Dunning, agent for the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate, and Mr. Hutchinson, also supporting the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate. Opposition came from Mr. Dodds, on behalf of Thomas Hustler, part of whose land formed the west bank of the stell.

Dodds did not contend that the stell was a dangerous nuisance, but he tried to show that attempts in the last five years to remedy the danger had been less than honest on the part of the authorities of Middlesbrough, in that the commercial interests of the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate had been the main considerations. As he remarked in this context, 'the town of Middlesbrough and the Middlesbrough Owners were so identical that it was difficult to separate the parties'.

Briefly the commercial aspects amounted to how much had been offered by the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate to Hustler for his land adjoining the stell, and how much in fact this land was potentially worth. Dunning acknowledged that £200 an acre had been offered for the land, but Dodds commented that 'this was so small they could not entertain it'. This comment brought up the question of how much the land could be sold for once urban development was undertaken.

Dunning suggested that '5/0d a yard' (which would work out at £1,200 an acre) was 'a price for building land when the streets were

1) Darlington and Stockton Times, 23rd September 1854.

made and sewered'. He denied however that the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate would re-sell the land for '7/0d or 8/0d a yard', and he emphatically denied that any 'land had been sold for 14/0d or 15/0d a yard'. Dodds simply responded with the argument that I have referred to earlier, whereby the basic health problems were created by the enterprise of Joseph Pease and his immediate partners. In making comparison with the area in the late 1820's and the early 1850's, Dodds noted that 'the Owners of the Middlesbrough Estate have created the problem. There was no nuisance in agricultural times. They have built close upon its banks in a most reckless and improper manner'.[1]

Finally this newspaper illustrated the sort of panic that cholera could give rise to. Whereas the Sunderland paper stressed the irresponsible behaviour of the citizens during the visitation, the Darlington paper stressed the phenomenon of sudden emigration from the town. Particularly it noted that 'panic has been caused among the Irish labourers, about 200 of whom left the employment of Bolckow and Vaughan on Saturday last, and have ... betaken themselves of harvesting'.[2]

Although the paper gives no global figures for cholera deaths, it is possible to get some feel of the visitation from sporadic figures given during the epidemic. These are:

Table 7

Date	Deaths in Middlesbrough during the 1854 epidemic.
11th - 24th August.	37
31st Aug. to 6th Sept.	37
16th - 23rd September.	2
24th - 30th September.	2
1st - 7th October.	4
8th - 14th October.	6
	88

1) Darlington and Stockton Times, 23rd September 1854. 2) Darlington and Stockton 26th August 1854.

From this table it is possible to begin to make a reasonable estimate of the total deaths from cholera in Middlesbrough in 1854. One has to make allowance for the days missing, and for the fact that some of these deaths were not from cholera. By using information from the other two newspapers already quoted in this section, it is possible to say that the death toll in question was very near 84.[1]

We can thus construct a small table for cholera deaths in Middlesbrough in the nineteenth century, as the three main sources of information allow:

Table 8

Source	Cholera deaths in the various outbreaks		
	1849	1852/3	1854/5
Local comment	Under 15	3	Not stated
Registrar General	Not stated	Not stated	"
Nearby Press	"	"	About 84 (all in 1854)

This table allows us to say just when the cholera visited the town, how bad it was in each visit, and within the last visit, how bad it was in 1854 compared with the following year. Similarly there is no doubt left that the epidemic in the middle 1850's was by far the worst visitation. None of these aspects has, up to now, been clear. We can also judge more clearly the various statements made about cholera by authoritative people in the town, both medical and municipal, now that we have the chronology of cholera deaths. Without any doubt, this table highlights the complacency expressed in the town in the 1849 epidemic when looking at the relatively low incidence of deaths and the absence of a visitation in 1831; and it also shows how the even lower death incidences in the early 1850's tended to reinforce these

1) See appendices for the working out of this estimate.

earlier attitudes. The shock of 1854 made the town face, for the first time, the reality of the health risks that it was running. From then on one can see real attempts at containing the disease, but also attempts at clouding the past, and pushing the blame for what had happened on to others.

3) The Quality of Life

c) Attitudes, Order & Leisure

This final part of my section on the quality of life in early Middlesbrough is based on three main elements. First there is a consideration of the way newcomers were treated by the infant town: essentially a place where everyone was more or less a newcomer. Then there is an assessment of the state of order in the town. Finally there is a look at the pattern of leisure during this initial phase of urban development.

In dealing with the attitude of the town towards newcomers, a number of factors have to be considered. First is the sheer newness of the town itself, but this itself made for a means of firm identification with the place on the part of many people of only a few years residence. After all, by 1841, it would be possible for a resident from 1830 to say that he knew the town almost before any houses were built, and this after only ten years or so in the place. People soon assumed a proprietory interest, not only in the town as it was, but also the town as it was about to develop. This meant quite strong attitudes towards newcomers to the town, and the attitude varied according to both the particular newcomer and the particular stage of economic and urban development that the town was then passing through.

Tweddell talks of locals begging newcomers to settle in the town[1] during the period that 'Fallows did not unfortunately write about', but Tweddell does not say who exactly the locals and newcomers were in this case. If the locals were members of the land owning

1) Tweddell op cit p 56.

group, and the newcomers were property developers, it was a very special case; if on the other hand it was a member of the labouring classes asking one of his own peer group to stay on, then this would tell us a lot more about the attractions of the town.

Looking from the beginning of the town to the end of its initial development, the Empsall material shows that some employers had no reservations about welcoming newcomers as workmen for their factories and works. Writing as registrar of the Woolcombers Aid Committee, Thomas Empsall informed Bolckow and Vaughan that 'In Bradford through the rapid spread of Machinery a vast number of young men are thrown out of employment'.[1] Explaining that his committee had been formed with the express purpose of finding these men work, Empsall, 'having heard that a number of labourers are wanted amongst the Iron Founders of Middlesbrough', asked for work for a 'few strong active young men of good character.' He also informed Bolckow's that these men 'will require only small wages at first but will try earnestly to meet your approbation'. Newcomers such as these were indeed welcome. The reply was that 'employment (could be found) for a dozen good steady labourers - and our regular wages for good men is from 14/0d to 16/0d per week, and men who have been some time in our employ, 18/0d often more if active and strong'.[2]

As for the men from Bradford themselves, they sometimes disliked having to work a week in hand as well as the shortage of reasonable

1) Undated letter from Thos. Empsall to Messrs. Bolckow's.

2) Letter from Bolckow & Vaughan to Thos. Empsall, dated 23rd June 1854. The wage quoted here of 18/0d and more for experienced workmen accords with Wilson's average of £1 for 1858 (see p 120) and is less than 50% of the Pease figures of £2 for 1856 (see p 174).

accommodation, but in other ways they took to the town. In a desperate plea for credit to cover the week in hand one migrant wrote on behalf of himself and nine others that unless a loan was sent by return of post, they 'would be compelled to draw (their) wages, a step which the men would very much regret'. It seemed that they 'all like very well indeed the work (which) is not labourious, and both masters bear a very good name and all the workmen are very civil to us'.[1] Another migrant from Bradford complained of the housing situation but noted that 'I like the place very well, and as for the work, I like it very well'.[2]

It has been shown that 'most of those who went to Middlesbrough (from Bradford) seem to have been more fortunate than many of their brethren'.[3] Those who went to Liverpool for example found the work heavy and dangerous. Workmen from Bradford went also to Bristol, Leeds and Manchester under this same patronage. However for some, the welcome to Middlesbrough was not so obvious.

Taylor has related that 'at the time of making the Docks' (30th March 1840) 'there was a riot amongst the men employed in excavating'.[4] The contractor for the job, a Mr. Briggs, had engaged a number of Irishmen but 'the men employed, principally Lancashire men, were determined not to let them work'. Although Taylor does not mention it, the regular navvies wanted more wages, and the Irish were brought in to break the deadlock, and work at rates considered unsatisfactory by their predecessors. When the Irishmen arrived 'conducted by several of the Railway Co's police'

1) Letter from Griffith Higgins to Empsall, 27th June 1854.

2) Letter from George Hopton to Empsall, 23rd July 1854.

3) E.M.Sigsworth - Black Dyke Mills (1958) p 43.

4) Wm. Taylor op cit p 50.

they were followed to the dock by a 'crowd of about 400 who hooted and pelted them'. The result was that one of the Lancashire men was arrested, but was released from prison by his friends and not recaptured. A similar reception greeted the newcomers the next day. The police had to escort them to work because of the angry local crowd. Yet once the police had retired, the crowd attacked the Irishmen and they had 'to flee for their lives'.[1]

Taylor remembers that twelve of the Irishmen took shelter in the Grange where John Parrington had moved to, and the contractor, Briggs, took refuge in Taylor's office at the Tees Coal Co. The result was that constables arrived from Stockton and Stokesley, an emergency meeting of magistrates took place at the Exchange Hotel, and eventually there were several arrests, and all but one of the arrested received prison sentences. These ranged from 4 months to 1 year.[3]

It would be easy to dismiss such a disturbance as the behaviour of jealous Englishmen and drunken Irishmen, but this was not the case. The cause was economic, but the pattern of such disturbance had a history before the beginning of Middlesbrough: often the rivalry for work or better rates would lead to disturbance that expressed themselves in nationalist ways. Coleman has shown that the character of the navvy can often be misunderstood: and this was the sort of man who formed an important element in the start of Middlesbrough. The navvy in the opinion of Coleman 'was not a mere labourer, though a labourer might become a navvy'.[2] In comparison with the common labourer, the navvy was a better worker,

1) Wm. Taylor op cit p 51.

2) T.Coleman - The Railway Navvies (rev e 1968), p 25.

3) See appendices for details of sentences.

drinker, rioter, and despised the mere labourer. Many of these first railway navvies (the Middlesbrough Dock was built by the Stockton and Darlington Railway Co), came from 'Scotland and Ireland, and the dales of Yorkshire and Lancashire', and Coleman notes that 'the Irish were not nearly so wild as their reputation'. On this he quotes an eye-witness account of the navvies by Thomas Carlyle in 1846, who said that 'the Yorkshire and Lancashire men, I hear, are reckoned the worst; and not without glad surprise I find the Irish are the best in point of behaviour'. It seems to be not so much the man as the situation, for the navvy proved himself to be something beyond the ordinary unskilled manual worker: and it was this reputation that helped to frame this early attitude towards one group of newcomers on the part of some of the early citizens of Middlesbrough.[1]

Of course there was also drunken disturbances in the style of Coleman's 'riots and randies'. Hard drinking was part of the navvy's tradition and thus became a part of the Middlesbrough tradition in spite of its Quaker founders. Perkin has given a similar example in his remarks on Glossop. Here was a new industrial town on the virgin site that was the 'creation of a number of industrialists',[2] and here in 1815 the local magnate 'laid out the streets, built the town hall' etc. Between the period 1839 and 1852 there was much railway construction in the area, and consequently 'Glossop' became a centre of excitement and riot on the navvies' pay-days'. Many of the early circumstances of Glossop resembled those of Middlesbrough, but in the case of Middlesbrough, the general conditions would give rise to much anti-Irish prejudice that otherwise

1) T.Coleman op cit p 25.

2) H.Perkin - The Age of the Railway (1970), p 126.

could have been dissipated in general rowdiness or rejection, of a more amorphous kind, had the Irish element in the population been smaller, or had the Irish not been seen as an alien element even in this 'melting pot' community.[1]

Such a general attitude towards newcomers was shown in the deliberations of the Improvement Commissioners following the inspection of lodging houses in 1851. The fault was with the state of the lodging houses, yet the Commissioners feared the newcomer in that they regarded Middlesbrough as a 'complete thoroughfare for vagrants of every class, travelling between the towns of York and Newcastle'.[2] They accepted that 'small-pox, and fevers, and other contagious and infectious complaints are in the majority of instances introduced into towns by vagrants'. At this point the state of the lodging houses came into consideration in that 'cases (of diseases etc.) are multiplied and become more or less fatal in proportion as bedrooms are overcrowded and ill ventilated'.[3] The recommendation was therefore that the houses be placed 'under the care of the surveyor and police' in accordance with the Lodging House Act.

Yet all too often the anti-Irish element emerges. An interesting aspect of this comes out in the Empsall collection. One of the English workmen, sent by Empsall from Bradford to Middlesbrough, wrote that he would like to impress on Empsall's mind that 'with regard to sending men here, there are more Irish than English, and the Master says he is determined to be shot of them, so it is no use sending any here for

1) In my own experience of being brought up in the Leeds working-class district of Burmantofts, where inhabitants were mostly of English, Irish and Italian origin, I found that there was no nationalist agitation and little religious prejudice, apart from one Ulsterman, a Mr. Diamond, who violently objected to Catholic parades in the streets. However there was a very strong anti-semetic verbal tradition in the area, so this may have smoothed over other likely prejudices.
2) Police Committee Minutes, 3rd October 1851.
3) This seems to be an implied distinction between English and Asian cholera

the Master will not have them'.[1] Not only did the writer tell Empsall of what he saw as the situation, but warned him that 'if you send them here in large numbers, and the Masters begin to turn the Irish off, it will very likely lead to a disturbance. This must be avoided. You must have an understanding with the Masters on this subject before you send any more because the Irish are so much on the alert that they would pick it out in a moment'. Finally the writer offered to act as some kind of anti-Irish recruitment agent for Empsall, for 'if you think to place me in the position to arrange the Business, I have no doubt but I could, to your entire satisfaction'.

No letter exists from Empsall to the Ironmasters on the subject of the Irish, and some doubt must be shed on the accuracy of the letter from Higgins to Empsall, for two weeks later we find that Empsall is still sending Irishmen to Middlesbrough, and the employers are finding work for them. Writing to Empsall on the day following his arrival in Bradford, an Irishman informed him that they 'have canvassed the town for employment' but could not get any because 'they had no letter' of character from Empsall. As they had gone to Middlesbrough on Empsall's advice, the writer asked for such a reference to be sent on for himself and his companion.[2] The letters of testimony must have been sent very quickly, for only two days later, Mahony wrote again to Empsall informing him that 'Timothy Leary (his companion) was sent for as he was preparing to go to bed last night (to be told that) he had employment at 3/0d per night'; and as for the writer, he noted that 'I expect work

1) Letter from Griffith Higgins to Empsall, 3rd July 1854.

2) Letter from John Mahony to Empsall, 19th July 1854.

tomorrow night or at 6 o'clock on Monday morning'.[1] Three weeks after this, Wm. Evans, the head manager of Bolckow & Vaughan, wrote to Empsall informing him that there were then 15 men from Bradford in their works, and that 'I have no reason to complain of any of them, indeed they have done better than I expected taking all things into consideration'.[2] The main problem in making this switch from textiles to ironmaking he saw as being 'hard work and the weather here has been so very warm'. However he considered that nevertheless, 'they will get on better when the weather gets a little colder'. Not surprisingly men such as these are welcomed to the town by employers, and so, with some caution in the circumstances, he advised Empsall that 'I can do with a dozen more. Please send them one or two at a time so that they may not draw others attention'.

It is interesting that no letter from Empsall regarding the Irish exists. If such a letter was sent, it was later lost; but it is far more likely that such a letter was never sent. He continued to send Irishmen to Middlesbrough and they continued to get employment. This last quoted letter could be interpreted to mean that Empsall had to send men in dribs and drabs in order not to excite Irish feeling in the way that Higgins warned; but conversely there is a very useful list of the fifteen men employed by Bolckow and Vaughan, as an appendix to Evans' letter, and out of this list, apart from the obvious Irish name of O'Connor, there is also listed Timothy Leary, the companion of Mahony, and two other men also called Leary; also there is listed John Mahony himself, and one other with the same surname. Thus obviously Bolckow and Vaughan

1) Letter from John Mahony to Empsall, 21st July 1854.
2) Letter from Wm. Evans to Empsall, 8th September 1854.

accepted the Irish without the reservations alleged by Higgins only a few weeks earlier; and not only this, but out of a group of fifteen men, six are obviously Irishmen, if not more: yet at the same time this is far removed from Higgins' allegation of there being more Irish than English. It seems in these circumstances that the caution advised by Evans of Empsall was to avoid trouble with Englishmen who were jealous of the Irish, rather than any means of keeping a situation secret from the Irish in the town. Yet if this suspicious attitude towards the Irish can be located initially at the door of certain English workmen only, rather than their employers, it eventually became accepted also by the media in the town.

In the year before the above incidents, Middlesbrough got its first newspaper.[1] This monthly publication became a weekly one in 1855 under a Liberal ownership, yet the general impression that one gets of the Irish in the columns of this publication is hardly a welcoming one. For example, a story appeared under the headline, 'An Unwelcome Visitor', whereby a heifer had run amok in the town, frightening one resident, and eventually taking refuge in the upstairs part of a house in Henry St. The report had it that 'the first floor was occupied by a gem from the Emerald Isle, who, hearing the commotion, and perceiving the approach of his unwelcome visitor, instantly barricaded the door, exclaiming, "Or, ye baste, if ye come through I'll stab ye; we shall all be murthered and kilt".' In the event a brave, no doubt English,

1) This was the Middlesbrough Chronicle, started in 1853 by Joseph Richardson as a monthly publication. This became the Middlesbrough Weekly News and Cleveland Advertiser in 1855. The political outlook was Liberal until 1865 when its purchase by Wilkinson & Burnett transformed its policies to Conservative. It once more became Liberal in 1876.

butcher manipulated the animal and saved the situation.[1] The bias of this report makes it hard to decide who the unwelcome visitor is, the heifer or the Irishman.

When we turn to the general question of law and order in the town there are differences of opinion. The general view is that there was too much disorder, but there are those who think otherwise. In his evidence to the Commons Select Committee in 1856 Joseph Pease maintained that an extension of the Middlesbrough boundary would bring useful police protection to the property taken in, even if this were agricultural as opposed to urban development land. I have already dealt with the basic reason why Pease wanted such an extension, but he had to appear altruistic. The cross examining counsel did not however accept Pease' reasons at their face value. He took up this point of the protection by the police of Middlesbrough by remarking 'I think that I heard you say that it would derive considerable advantage from the Police in an agricultural point of view'.[2] When Pease agreed, counsel came back sarcastically with the comment 'Do they frighten the crows off'. This referance was to earlier remarks that on the land surrounding the town, a large amount of turnips and beans were grown, and as such were vulnerable to raiders from the town. Counsel's remarks were not only a comment on the disingenuousness of the evidence of Pease, but also on the quality of law and order in the town itself.[3]

The majority of evidence on this state of affairs tends to

1) Middlesbrough Weekly News and Cleveland Advertiser, 28th May 1859.

2) Commons Evidence op cit, pp 233 - 4 for 16th April 1856.

3) See also pp 245-7.

support the counsel rather than Pease. Even the Temperance Movement lent weight, although obliquely, to the impression of lack of law and order. Claiming that their movement in Middlesbrough was 'nearly as old as the Town'[1], the Movement stressed that its initial primary aim was not total abstinence, but rather the 'reclamation of drunkards' by stressing moderation. They encouraged the drinking of liquors and wines in moderation, rather than 'ardent spirits, such as rum, gin, brandy, whisky, and the like'. This suggests either an unusual tolerance on the part of the temperance people, or a problem so great that only a moderate solution could be attempted. This policy led to disruptions within the temperance movement itself quite apart from any 'normal' rowdiness of the town.

The occasion for this split within the temperance ranks came in the mid-1830's following the teetotal movement established in Preston in 1832, and the Buckingham Parliamentary Committee in 1834.[2] The Temperance Movement claim that a petition in favour of the Buckingham Committee was sent from Middlesbrough to Parliament with over a thousand signatures on it. The local outcome was that the prevailing attitude of moderation was now challenged by teetotalism. The respective leaderships were ministers of religion for the former and radical working men for the latter.

In that 'James Maw, an old Chartist, and with the hearty support of the Primitive Methodist Society made their stand for Total

1) Middlesbrough Temperance Society - Centenary Souvenir (1936), p 9.
2) It was at this time that the utopian ideas of Buckingham were in ferment, see p 72 of this writing. Buckingham entered parliament as member for Sheffield in 1832, at the same time as Joseph Pease was elected for South Durham. The Parliamentary Committee under Buckingham was appointed to examine the extent, causes, and consequences of drunkenness, and Pease was one of the members of the committee. He thus was in contact with Buckingham on this particular subject of reform, so must also have known some of Buckingham's ideas on urban planning, and most likely must have

Abstinence'[1], the town was then presented with the choice between two pledges. So earnest were the advocates of either side to harness support for their particular cause that 'a pitched battle was fought on a plot of ground now forming part of the Market place'. In the end Maw was the victor, and 'with his spring rattle he marched through the streets announcing that he and others would reply to the clerical statements against the temperance cause'[2].

From this time till the later 1840's total abstinence is said to have become an important element in Middlesbrough life. Yearly festivals were held to celebrate the defeat of moderation, and these were claimed to constitute 'the chief social function of the year for two decades'[3]. This success was further strengthened by the arrival in the town in 1840 of Joseph Bormon, a provisions dealer, and already a well known temperance advocate in Northumberland. Yet at the same time, two elements emerge that throw some doubt on the degree of success of temperance, at least in its relation to law and order in the town.

Concurrent with Bormon's arrival was the excavation of the dock; and, under the influence of Bormon and his co-workers, the Society claimed that 'the first dock at Middlesbrough was cut by teetotal navvies who signed the pledge'. Yet one of the results of this extreme abstinence may have been the riot of March that same year, and in any case, the Society admits that 'this period of enthusiasm

discussed Middlesbrough with Buckingham, from many points of view. Yet the effect of this on Middlesbrough's development was nil: whatever Pease gathered, he kept to himself.

1) Middlesbrough Temperance Society op cit p, 10.

2) In reference to the vanquished leaders, it is noted that one of these (both were ministers of religion) in later years became a drunkard, and, after being expelled from the church, committed suicide

3) Middlesbrough Temperance Society op cit p 11.

4) See pp 235-6 of this writing, and the appendix.

and activity lasted for several years, but ... there was ... an evident slackening after a time'[1], and about 1847 the Society talks of 'a determined effort for revival'[2].

During this 'slack' time regarding teetotalism, there were times when the local authority had trouble not only with certain of the ordinary citizenry but also with its own police. In the year 1850 alone, there was trouble with at least three of the town's policemen. We find that the Watch committee 'having investigated as far as possible the conduct of sub constable Brown, this Committee have ascertained that he returned from Stokesley on the 18th ultimo in a state of intoxication'[3]. Not only once, but 'it would appear also that on Sunday the 9th Decr during the hours of church service, and in company with James Watton and James Carling, he partook of drink at the Rising Sun and it would seem that he did not call there in the exercise of his duty, but had met Carling there by appointment'. The meeting of the full body, following the sub committee meeting, simply recorded that 'This officer having disobeyed the orders of his superior officer and partaken of liquor at a Public House on a Sunday and otherwise misconducting himself, several complaints for misconduct having been made against this officer, the Commissioners considering the same well founded, and he having also refused to obey the orders of the Superintendent, ordered that he be dismissed forthwith'[4].

1) Middlesbrough Temperance Society op cit p 12.

2) In fact a revival was claimed by the 1860's when a Temperance Hall was built, mainly through the 'push and energy' of the then President of the Society, the (ubiquitous) John Dunning.

3) Middlesbrough Light, Watching & Police Committee, minutes for 21st February 1850.

4) Draft Minutes of the Improvement Commissioners, 1st March 1850.

In the following autumn we find Brown's replacement in trouble. The Watch Committee resolved to bring up at the next General Meeting the case of police constable Amos regarding two letters of complaint received about him.[1] At the General Meeting[2] there appeared a minute that has been interestingly altered by the minute clerk. Whereas the original read that 'It having been represented to the meeting that James Amos the Police Officer having been guilty of neglecting his duty ...', this was crossed out and amended to 'James Amos the Police Officer having been guilty of great negligence in the exercising of his duty, Resolved that he be dismissed from his office ...'[2] At no point is there any indication of an investigation into the complaints against Amos, or even a real description of what he had allegedly done. Yet later in that same meeting it was resolved that in future two policemen be appointed, a senior one at '£50 per annum, together with the privilege of occupying the house and of receiving $\frac{2}{3}$ of the perquisites attaching to the office'; the junior officer to receive '£40 per annum together with $\frac{1}{3}$ of the said Perquisites'.

These actions provoked a meeting of the ratepayers, calling on the Commissioners to 'revoke a certain resolution of the Commissioners .. relative to the dismissal of Police Officer James Amos and the appointment of two fresh officers'.[3] Although it seems on the surface

1) Watch Committee Minutes, 13th September 1850.

2) Draft Minutes op cit, 4th October 1850.

3) This resolution read out by the Clerk at a special meeting of the Improvement Commissioners, 29th October 1850.

that this attempt to change the policy of the Commissioners was simply an economy measure on the part of the rate-payers, it nevertheless seems more likely that it was primarily an attempt to prevent the dismissal of Amos. Rough notes made by the Clerk at the bottom of the page immediately prior to the recording of the rate-payers request, strongly suggest this.[1] In the event however, the Commissioners chose to disregard this request by 5 votes to 4: as there were 10 Commissioners present there was presumably 1 abstention, although this is not mentioned; and shortly afterwards the two appointments were made, so that from late October 1850 Middlesbrough had not only a doubled police force, but also a pair of constables to keep an eye on each other.

Thereafter a relatively peaceful time succeeded for the Commissioners in relation to their police. At the end of 1850 the senior constable was promoted to become the Superintendent for the North and East Riding Lock-up, and the junior constable, Kilvington moved up into the senior position. Even with such a threadbare constabularly as this, the Commissioners imposed a kind of grandeur on the situation, although not always in a consistent way. When Ord, the senior constable prior to Kilvington left, he was described by the General Meeting as the 'Chief Police Officer'[2], and by the Watch Committee as 'Inspector of Police'[3]. Yet in spite of a relatively peaceful year for the Commissioners, they had to dismiss the new junior constable after complaints by his senior colleague of 'misconduct'[4]. However when Kilvington brought an even

1) Draft Minutes op cit, see rough notes at the bottom of the page on which is recorded the minutes for the meeting of 26th October 1850.

2) Draft Minutes op cit, 27th December 1850.

3) Watch Committee Minutes, 23rd December 1850.

4) Watch Committee Minutes, 5th February 1851.

more specific complaint against the new junior constable, Stainsby, 'charging him with refusing to pay him his share of the fees'[1], the wheel had once more turned full circle; and we find that after two months of deliberation and incident, the Watch Committee 'in consequence of many facts which have come before them since last meeting recommend to the General Board that he (Kilvington) be dismissed at as short a notice as possible'[2]. The General Meeting accepted this recommendation.

To turn finally from the arm of the law to the rowdy elements in the population, there are periodically incidents noted in the Commissioners' minutes that suggest there were some consistently unruly elements, although not necessarily criminal ones, in this early Middlesbrough population. For example, towards the end of the tenure of the Improvement Commissioners, the Watch Committee minuted that 'Complaints having been made of the continual annoyance caused by the footpaths being blocked up by groups of lads, the police are desired to give this subject their special attention and it is desired to issue a Hand bill calling public attention to the nuisance'[3].

For a more general allegation of disorder we can look once more at the evidence of Dunning before the Commons Select Committee in 1856. Here again, there is a strong feeling that the disorderly element is played up for a specific effect. Twice Dunning brought out the disorderly element in Middlesbrough life, although circuitously. In order to stress the value to property owners of

1) Watch Committee Minutes, 7th January 1853.

2) " " " 7th January 1853.

3) " " " 19th November 1852.

land brought within the jurisdiction of the Middlesbrough police and magistrates, he had also to stress the unlawful element in Middlesbrough life. In pointing out that Middlesbrough no longer had to depend on Stokesley for its magistrates, he mentioned the large amount of trespass that some Middlesbrough people got up to, and therefore the usefulness of having magistrates on the spot. The basic cause of trespass itself he put down to the 'peculiar quality of the local population', and chose to stress the large number of public houses and the many sailors in the place.[1] Yet somewhat later, when brought back to this aspect of local life, Dunning had to agree that no known cases of trespass on adjoining land could be recalled; yet nevertheless he stuck to the statement that in Middlesbrough the 'population is a very lawless one'.[2] So counsel was able to show that for this reason extra expense was needed in helping to police the town, but for reasons other than trespass. To emphasise his argument, the counsel pointed out that Middlesbrough had not in fact had a trespasser nor had there been a case of trespass in Stokesley for 25 years. Counsel did not deny the rowdy character of the town but did deny that this rowdiness caused trouble for his client and other nearby land owners and farmers.

It seems fairly clear that Middlesbrough at this time could not be classed as a peaceful town. Given the fact of a melting-pot community, and the hard, and sometimes uncertain work, a settled, traditional cultural outlook was out of the question. Yet at the same time, Middlesbrough was not the wild frontier town that is

1) Commons Evidence op cit pp 59 - 60 for 15th April 1856.

2) Commons Evidence op cit pp 112 - 3 for 15th April 1856.

sometimes depicted by both insiders and outsiders for their own ends. The lack of order came as much from an inadequate system of local government as from inhabitants wishing to live without the law. Whilst most critics of disorderliness could point to drink as the main perversion of the citizens and the main cause of law breaking, it has been shown that the very institution that attempted to deal with this problem caused unrest within the town through its own internal conflict, and even when it was successful, this did not necessarily mean a law abiding population.

Turning to social pursuits other than law-breaking, it is possible to discuss the leisure life of the town in a number of ways. I want to look at leisure spent as a physical escape from the town, or at least as a complementary activity to working in the town. In this way I will look at some physical features of the area; features that in fact are part of urban landscape in the very broad sense. The two features that I want to stress most are the river, that runs along the northern edge of the town, and the Cleveland Hills, that rise only 8 miles south of the town, beyond the Tees plain.

Some uses of leisure are well documented. Florence Bell, in her Edwardian social survey of Middlesbrough[1] spends a lot of time expressing the horror she felt at the way many working class people indulged themselves in drink and gambling. What she wrote in 1907 has been judged by many historians to be also true of the town in Victorian times. Her last chapter was devoted exclusively to 'Drink, Betting, and Gambling', and in this she tried to show the

1) F.Bell - At the Works (1907).

source, extent and consequences of these 'evils'. For her 'the most pernicious drinking' was not in the pub, but 'that which goes on constantly in the home'.[1] It provided the short-run escape, whereby a man who 'did not care for it' nevertheless 'liked forgetting about things'.[2] Even in commercial life she saw danger in that 'the disastrous habit in the district of ratifying a bargain by drinking may start those on the downward path who never drank before'.[3] Similarly with the habit of gambling: neither home nor work was a safeguard. Noting that the most prevalent form 'it takes is betting on horse-racing', she also saw that gambling did not stop there; the men also 'bet on billiard matches, on cards, on dominoes, on football matches'. She makes their lust seem insatiable, in that 'bookmakers ... go from door to door and call at the houses, either when the men are at home or when they are not, and in the latter case they are quite as likely to gain an entrance as in the former'.[4] She even made the whole basis of one of her plays, the near downfall of a Middlesbrough family through betting on the horses.[5] Not of course that these social problems or means of spending leisure time were exclusive to this town. Robert Roberts has shown that in Salford at the same time, 'drunkenness was ... the major social problem', which he illustrated with the caption, under the photograph of a small group of men entering a public house, 'The shortest way out of Manchester'.[6]

1) F.Bell op cit p 246.

2) " p 248.

3) " p 250.

4) " p 254.

5) The Way the Money Goes, produced in London in 1910.

6) Robert Roberts - The Classic Slum (1971) p 122, & illustration 10.

Linked by Lady Bell to both drinking and gambling was football. In many popular versions of the working class culture of Middlesbrough, it is football along with drinking that give the town its mark of distinction. At the start of this century, Naomi Jacob noted that 'the football team was Middlesbrough's pride'. After noting many of the famous players in her time, she had to admit that Middlesbrough 'never actually won the Cup or headed the list for the First Division, but they were a good team and loyally supported'.[1] As with other aspects of local life, great stress is laid on recapturing the heroic spirit of the past; but in the process the past is distorted to pretend to heights never actually reached.

Alongside these leisure activities performed within the town, there were the individual efforts at self-improvement. These were linked to the temperance movement in some cases,[2] and sometimes also to the involvement in the Machanics Institute.[3] Here, under the approving eyes of some of the town's leading citizens, ambitious working men could replace soccer by cricket, and drinking and gambling by reading and lectures. My concern here is with neither these virtues nor these vices. It is with the physical reality of the town and its immediate surroundings, and how people made use of the possibilities thereby in leisure activities.

This physical setting made for a great contrast between town and countryside, for whereas the town never became beautiful, the surrounding countryside is in many respects unrivalled. A remark

1) N.Jacob op cit p 13.

2) See pp 243 - 5 of this writing.

3) See also pp 458 - 9 of this thesis.

by Tom Parrington, in reference to the township before the Pease venture, illustrates the somewhat raw rustic nature of the area: a nature that by no means left the area with the coming of industry. Parrington recounted that 'about 500 yards from the house (the Middlesbrough Farm) and adjoining the road was a sand-pit with fox and rabbit earths, and a breed or two of foxes occupied the main earths almost every year'.[1] Given this animal life in human surroundings, Parrington could add that 'The Cleveland Hounds often opened their season by their first meet at Middlesbrough and I remember in the Autumn of 1825 they killed three foxes out of our turnips'.

This local association with hunting continued into the time that Middlesbrough became industrialised; and although the association shifted in its location some way from the town, a number of its prominent citizens continued to be associated with this rural sport. Writing in the later nineteenth century, A.E.Pease, the grandson of Joseph Pease, reproduced a M.S. facsimile[2] of the rules of the Cleveland Hunt of 1817, and among the members was the name Richard Otley. This was the Darlington surveyor, who not only had drawn up the first plan of Middlesbrough for Joseph Pease, but also had bought twelve of the sites sold in the 1831 document.[3] Pease' accounts of the life of Tom Parrington, and of the Cleveland Hunt illustrate, although not intentionally, that not only was there this blood sport association with the early town, but also that the sport itself could become crude even by its own standards.

1) A.E.Pease - Thos. Parrington (1923) p 3.

2) This list was in fact the record of subscriptions paid. The annual amount was fixed at £1.11.6., and the list shows that Otley, along with about half the rest, had paid 11/6d to date.

3) See earlier writing p 48.

Quoting from Harkaway's[1] Journal for the season 1840 - 41, (the year that the Improvement Commissioners came into being), Pease notes that a fox got into the flues of a farmer, Jackson, who happened to be away at the time, so the 'Fox was then got out without any material damage to the wall, and taken to Middlesbrough Grange'.[2] Subsequently the farmer, Jackson, 'insisted on having the Fox' and after some argument, the animal was handed over to him. Parrington then noted that 'Mr. J. murdered the Poor Fox by Strangulation, one of his sons and a man assisting in the horrid operation'; and Parrington's comment was that 'such a proceeding cannot be toomuch deprecated from any human Being, from the Peer to the Peasant'.[3]

One can assume from Parrington's attitude that such events were not common, but from Pease' own evaluation of the event, and from some of Parrington's own subsequent behaviour, one gets the strong impression that such occurrences happened with more regularity than the hunters cared to admit. For example thirteen years after this event, Parrington himself left the hunt in disgust at some of the current practice.

It seems, in Parrington's words, that a fox was run to ground, and in spite of Parrington's persuasion otherwise, the hunters dug for it. Parrington notes that 'They presently dug up to the vixen which was very heavy in cub'. This Parrington took away and released, requesting that 'the dog (be given) a fair chance for his life'.

1) The nom de plume of Parrington.

2) A.E.Pease - The Cleveland Hounds as a Trencher-Fed Pack (1887), pp 89-90.

3) Pease himself commented in a footnote that he could understand Jackson's annoyance at having his garden-wall broken into, to bag one of his foxes; and whilst not excusing 'vulpicide' points out that Jackson's descendants were 'true sportsmen'.

Instead of which 'they scented him with oil of aniseed and consequently he had no chance of escape'.[1] As a consequence both Parrington and his brother Leonard severed their association with the Hunt. Pease recounted this story in order to illustrate the character of the Parringtons,[2] but it can also be used to illustrate the character of some of the other prominent people associated with early Middlesbrough, as well as giving some idea of one prominent aspect of the rural-leisure ambience of the town's early days: an aspect so far entirely overlooked. The Middlesbrough of the coal port aspiration was as much a part of this sporting scene as it was a lead-up to the iron city. In the sense that Dyos & Wolff have suggested, that in order to read the city and not be content with simply an evocation of the urban landscape, we must not only 'lift off the encrustations of the motor age but re-invest with their own coarse original grain the places which we have veneered over',[3] Middlesbrough was at this time as much a part of raw rusticity as of the urbanisation of the Industrial Revolution.

Of course not all its early citizens followed the hunt. Yet this feature of life and leisure existed in the surrounding area, and the ordinary citizens had a response at least to the physical features that lay behind this rural leisure. In this sense I will look firat at the river, and then at the Cleveland Hills.

Wm. Taylor has referred 'pleasant walks around Middlesbrough, mostly along the Tees'[4] in the 1840's; and Heavisides has described trips on the river as late as Edwardian times, as well as using

1) A.E.Pease - Thos. Parrington (1923) pp 8 - 9.

2) Parrington's indignation did not last too long. By November 1855, eighteen months after the incident, he had rejoined the Hunt; and within three weeks of his death in 1915 was following the hounds, although on wheels as opposed to horseback.

3) H.J.Dyos & M.Wolff - The Way We Live Now (1973), p 900.

material from the writing of his father to show how the river had changed during the nineteenth century.[1] Whilst Heavisides' own book was based on a tour of the Tees by land and boat in 1905, he recalled similar excursions forty or fifty years earlier. Thus in reference to about the mid-1850's, he has noted that 'picnics by water to Ingleby, Barwick Quarry, Preston, and Yarm were of frequent occurrence during the summer months'. Although he is making specific reference here to Stockton, there is no reason to suppose that similar trips from Middlesbrough did not also take place.

Heavisides recalled how 'the gay and happy spirits, clad in light summer attire, assembled at the boat landing, and who enjoyed the row up the river, amid merry banter and sparkling wit, until their destination ... was reached.' Thereafter the party prepared their picnic by 'the gentlemen (going) into the woods in search of dry sticks for the gipsy fire, while the other brought water from the neighbouring spring; (whilst) the ladies were busy spreading lilywhite cloths on the grass, and bringing out provisions etc. from sundry hampers'. After the meal and dancing and the 'never-failing pairing off', the party returned home by the river, singing 'perhaps a Canadian boat song' until the old town lights came into sight, and then 'in the semi-darkness ... amid shaking of hands and good-byes, the gentlemen escorted the ladies to their respective homes'.[2]

The writer saw this example of simple pleasure as an antidote to the extravagant pleasures of Edwardian times. In order to further stress the changes that had taken place, he quoted from the

1) M.Heavisides - Rambles by the River Tees (1905).

2) " " pp 101 - 2.

work of his father, published in 1865, which referred to the mid-19th century.[1] Heavisides senior remembered 'droves of seals (which) frequented the broad sands of the estuary of the river Tees, whereby they used to lay basking in the sun'. In the ecological cycle the 'seals ... were so destructive to salmon that the fishermen employed in the river occasionally, every season, set a day or two apart for catching them with strong nets'. Thus he could recall that 'many a time I have seen them land nine or ten of those amphibious creatures, at the Custom House Quay, where they lay for the inspection of the public'. Although this kind of scene was still visible at the birth of Middlesbrough, it was during the first generation of Middlesbrough that the river lost both its seals and salmon as it became industrial and dead. Yet to the people of infant Middlesbrough, the river was more than a mere waterway; it was a living entity. Writing only four years after Heavisides junior, the town clerk of Middlesbrough could admit that the Tees was industrial, having for example, 'no less than 24 miles of training walls composed of slag from the local blast furnaces'. Compensating for this loss of scenery, he describes the coastline from Redcar southwards as 'a beautiful expanse of sands, without doubt the finest around the coast of Great Britain'.[2] Yet it is to the south of the town that the most interesting and consistent example of the urban and rural contrast is obtained.

In relation to the use of leisure in a narrow sense, it would

1) M.Heavisides op cit pp 108 - 10.

2) A.Sockett op cit p 346.

be possible simply to give examples of the value of the Cleveland Hills as the main 'lung' of Middlesbrough, as they are frequently described, but important aspects would thereby be missed. It was not simply that the Clevelands provided an escape from urban ugliness and pollution, but the fact of the nearby Clevelands, especially the small peak Roseberry Topping, gave the people of the town a view of their area and an idea of their area that was quite outside the narrowly recreational.

Referring to the year 1858, White has described how some people from the town passed a Sunday afternoon on the nearby peak, Roseberry Topping. He described how after climbing to the summit himself, he was joined later by 'two families from Middlesbrough, husbands, wives, boys and girls and a baby', having with them 'plenty to eat and drink in their baskets'.[1] They had come 'from the murky town to pass the Sunday on the breezy hill-top', finding 'room for a camp-meeting on a summit which, from their homes, looked as if it were only a blunt point'.

White was informed by these people that 'a trip to Rosebury[2] Topping was an especial recreation for the people of Middlesbrough'. To emphasise this, and in obvious reference to the recent cholera and the new cemetery at Linthorpe[3], one of the women added that 'Tis frightful to see how fast the graves do grow up in the new cemetery. It can't be a healthy place to bring up a family in. That's where we live, is it - down there, under all that smoke? Ah, if we could only come up here every day'. This particular episode illustrates

1) Walter White - A Month in Yorkshire (1858). This author is not to be confused with William White, a contemporary writer, see p 181, f 1.

2) The modern spelling is 'Roseberry'. White's version of the name's origin is 'Ross' (a moor), 'Burg' (a fortress), and 'Toppen' (apex), words of Danish origin.

3) See also early writing, p 220.

three aspects of Roseberry Topping which cover the wide approach to the relation between the town and the Clevelands, that I have outlined: the escape, the view of the Hills, and the view of Middlesbrough from the Hills.

It was not just that single families and small groups went from the town to the Hills, but there were also organised trips from Middlesbrough. The transport concern of Dunkerley's provided regular excursions to Roseberry Topping: accounts of the popularity of such visits are available in the local press from the late 1850's onwards.[1] Such trips illustrate the comment of E.M.Jones[2] when he noted that 'the well established custom of the picnic gave additional value to the goal beauty spot. These areas surrounding a town became part of the local experience'.

In the broader sense also, such trips illustrate the same writer's views on the failure of many urban historians to appreciate that 'when it is borne in mind that in a quarter of an hour an adult can walk a mile it will be found that even by 1914 there were few towns in the United Kingdom that could not be walked out of in this extremely moderate time'. People were thus not permanently condemned to a 'prison-like existence in a jail of bricks'.[3] The same point is confirmed by Miss Jacob's recollections of Edwardian Middlesbrough when she points out that 'When I first knew the town, Linthorpe was regarded as almost "country"; now there are houses to Acklam and beyond'. Yet she notes that 'Marton was a favourite place for a walk - though why it should have been

1) E.g. the Middlesbrough Weekly News and Cleveland Advertiser for 16th June and 23rd June 1859.

2) E.M.Jones - The Aesthetics of the Nineteenth Century Industrial Town, in The Study of Urban History (1966).

3) Jones ibid p 175.

I cannot imagine, for the road was straight, and - to me - always seemed very long, dull and uninteresting. Now the houses stretch beyond Marton'.[1] Yet for the more adventurous she notes that 'Middlesbrough stands ... on the edge of beautiful Cleveland, near those wonderful moors which stretch away to Castleton and Whitby'.

Fletcher visited the area just after the time that Miss Jacob was concerned with. He was duly impressed by the hills, and although he wrote of 'the charm of the Hambledons', he conceded that 'they must yield place to the Cleveland Hills'.[2] As he showed, it was not so much the scale of these hills that are impressive, for their highest summit, 'Burton Head is only 1400 feet above sea-level, and the famous Roseberry Topping only a little over 1000 feet': their qualities are those of 'picturesqueness and variety'. He also gave a general impression of the Clevelands in relation to Middlesbrough, when he pointed out that although this corner of the Clevelands 'is now transformed into a region of smoke and flame, ... one gets into fairyland long before Middlesbrough is out of sight'. In the same year, Sockett in his booster article, was naturally more kind to Middlesbrough, but captured more of the local flavour in his reference to the Hills when he noted that 'Middlesbrough makes an excellent centre for tourists ... The Cleveland Hills, with Roseberry Topping ... standing out as the highest prominence, present scenery which has been admirably described as rivalling that of Switzerland'.[3] And although subject to some exaggeration, Roseberry Topping in particular has a certain resemblance to the Alpine shape, with its near-conical summit.

1) N.Jacob op cit p 13.

2) J.S.Fletcher (1908) op cit p 50,

3) A.Sockett op cit p 346.

Looking back to the early twentieth century, G.N.Wright, a local authority on the area, showed what the Hills meant to him from childhood, when he recalled that 'As a youngster born and brought up on Tees-side ... Roseberry Topping was my own Matterhorn'.[1] He pointed out that 'seen from north or south Roseberry Topping resembles a single wave of the sea whose western crest has crashed over. I was always told that this collapse was caused by quarrying and ironstone-mining, but ... no matter how it occurred, it was responsible for the Topping's distinctive shape which, seen from the west, gives it all the steeply conical look of a miniature alp, and hence, on its summit, a great sensation of height'.[2] It seems very likely that iron-stone mining in the second half of the nineteenth century caused the partial collapse of the conical summit of Roseberry Topping, for early prints of the Hills in this area show a perfect cone, and it was this view, with the Alpine association, that was seen from Middlesbrough in its first years of industrialisation.

Writing just before the second world war, A.J.Brown reminisced about the Clevelands, particularly Roseberry Topping.[3] He shows how he had to cross fields to reach the moor, as 'Roseberry is a mountain apart, standing isolated and aloof from the Cleveland chain'. Again the unique trick that its shape plays on the observer is noted in that 'Small as it is ... it looks like a real mountain; a kind of miniature Alp'. Somewhat more accurately than Wright, he noted that 'From certain angles it has the appearance of a perfect cone or pie, though it has

1) G.N.Wright - Exploring the Cleveland Hills (Country Life, 29th April 1971).

2) " " p 992.

3) A.J.Brown - Tramping in Yorkshire (1938).

lost some of its original glory owing to the intensive mining to which it used to be subjected'[1]. Brown also showed how the illusion of height was sustained even from the hill in that 'on three sides there are smooth grassy slopes, but on the other side is one sheer slab of rock, giving the impression of immense height. Indeed once you are on the tip of the cone, you have all the thrills of standing on the summit of a peak in Darien'.

Thus from the town Roseberry Topping presents the illusion of a far off mountain, yet easily attainable: the shape of the moor gives the impression of height and distance. It has served the double function since 1830 of a permanent levening to the ugly industrialisation that occurred in the town; and it has presented the nearby means of escape, albeit for only a short time, from the industrial oppression that became more and more intense as the town expanded. Not only was there the pureness of the air on the moor, but also the scenic beauty in an almost Alpine sense. Even the ironworkings of the Pease family around Guisborough could not destroy the illusion created by Roseberry's conical summit, although subsidence caused by those working did reduce fractionally the dramatic effect of the shape.

Finally there is the view of Middlesbrough from the Cleveland Hills. This view changed with growing industrialisation, and although never a pretty sight, it has been exalted by some writers who have seen the drama of industry in the sheer unrelieved purpose that the view presents. When White visited Roseberry Topping the industrial appearance of Middlesbrough was still burgeoning.

1) A.J.Brown (1938) op cit pp 294 - 5.

He noted that an earlier traveller had described the view from Roseberry Topping as being 'a most goodly prospecte from the toppe of thys hyll ... There you may see a vewe the like whereof I never saw, or thinke that any traveller hath seen any comparable unto yt, albeit I have shewed yt to divers that have paste through a greate part of the worlde, both by sea and land'.[1] White noted that all this was still true in his day, but that the big difference was that 'Middlesbrough ... spread a smoky veil here and there across the landscape, which when our narrator (the earlier traveller) looked down upon it, lay everywhere clear and bright in the sunshine'.[2] The contrast brought out by White has been verified by later writers in regard to both the changing landscape, and the increasing contrast between town and country.[3]

Writing much later, Brown noted that from the top of Roseberry

1) Walter White op cit pp 153 - 4.

2) " p 153.

3) Turner (1890) has noted that in regard to White's account, he 'traversed his ground within these two years and ... put his statements everywhere to test, and (has) much pleasure in bearing testimony to their accuracy'. See p 185, f 1 of this writing for ref to Turner. Writing 10 years before White, G.M.Tweddell, from rural Stokesley, put into verse the same point that White was later to make:
Not among smoke of busy, crowded town,
Where manufactures for the world are made,
And man's best nature seems all trodden down,
To suit the vile necessities of trade,
Has my life's spring been past ... Turner op cit p 13.

Topping 'on a clear day you could easily see the ships on the sea and a great stretch of coastline'.[1] However on the day of his ascent of Roseberry 'there was a sea-haze, and all I could see in that direction was a cloud of smoke that spelt Middlesbrough unmistakably'. On his return to the area fourteen years later this impression was much stronger.

Brown said clearly that on approaching the coast from the Clevelands, his 'own instinct ... is, I fear, to by-pass Middlesbrough altogether when I see the smokestacks and blast-furnaces in the distance: for this is the only part of the North Riding which bears any resemblance to the industrial West Riding'.[2] In this way Brown high-lighted the problem faced by all those who wish to extol the beauty of the North Riding, especially that of the Cleveland Hills: what to do about Middlesbrough? This is a part f the Pease inheritance. If the place had simply stayed small, like for example Skinningrove, it could have been ignored, but it grew to hold half the population of the North Riding. It had thus to be taken into account, and if it was to represent more than an ugly industrial contrast to the rest of the County, an image had to be found. This image was the one of heroic industrialisation, whereby the ugliness could become a kind of an impressive virtue simply because there was so much of it.

Brown's version of this theme was to state his preference for approaching Tees-side 'along the Whitby-Guisborough road' where 'on a clear night' one can 'pick out ... the fiery glow of Middlesbrough'. From this initial cue, 'gradually the whole

1) A.J.Brown (1938) op cit p 295.

2) " (1952) op cit p 180.

panorama of the great steel country around Middlesbrough is revealed - a thrilling sight'.[1] This 'night-lights' image has continued to grow down to the present day.

We can see that in spite of the oppressively ugly industrialisation that quickly became apparent as the town grew, there was a means of escape, and the more enterprising citizens took advantage of this means. Sometimes on individual walks, sometimes in small picnic groups, and sometimes as part of a commercially operated excursion. The change in atmosphere was undeniable, and added to this was the scenic illusion of near-Continental grandeur. The shape of Roseberry Topping gave the appearance of Alpine dimensions rather than the moderately sized moors that really constitute the Cleveland Hills. This image was ever visible from Middlesbrough - at least south of the riverline smoke-belt.[2] Even this awful industrial reality itself became a scenic virtue so that ones life within it, took on a new aspect, but this virtue was no more real than the Roseberry Topping illusion. It was at its best at night-time, when darkness hid the oppressive industrial architecture and its surrounding pollution, yet allowed the flames of the iron industry to light up the area in an almost Wagnerian way. It was a sight that dwarfed Blackpool Illuminations, and was at the same time more vital in that what one saw was part of a crucial economic necessity, and was also freely available every night of the year. In all these respects a certain kind of leisure view developed in the town that was literally larger than life.

1) A.J.Brown (1952) op cit p 180.

2) See plate 29 for a mid 1920's photograph of Roseberry Topping taken from the direction of Middlesbrough.