Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in

Nineteenth Century Sheffield

by

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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University of Sheffield
June 1976

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the librarians and archivists of the
Local History Department of Sheffield City Libraries for their unceasing
courtesy and helpfulness to a very troublesome reader.   I have also
been well served by the libraries at Sheffield University, at the
British Museum, and at Livesey-Clegg House, Sheffield.   My supervisor,
Professor Sidney Pollard, Professor Gordon Roderick, Dr. John Woodward,
Dr. Clyde Binfield and Dr. Brian Harrison have given encouragement and
guidance, while the responsibility for the finished work is entirely my own.
Friends and Colleagues have indulged my preoccupation with middle class
values and working class culture during a long gestation.   And finally,
my students in W.E.A. classes in Sheffield over the years have listened
to me with tolerance and patience, and have contributed to the development
of my ideas in countless ways.

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A List of Abbreviations Used in Footnotes

B.C.S.	Boys' Charity School
B.L.S.	Boys' Lancasterian School
B.T.A.	British Temperance Advocate
G.C.S.	Girls' Charity School
G.L.S.	Girls' Lancasterian School
M.I.	Mechanics' Institute
M.L.	Mechanics' Library
N.T.A.	National Temperance Advocate
P.C.	People's College
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers
P.T.A.	Preston Temperance Advocate
R.C.	Royal Commission
S.B.C.P.	Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor
S.C.	Select Committee
S.C.L.	Sheffield City Libraries
S.D.T.	Sheffield Daily Telegraph
S.I.	Sheffield Iris
S. Ind.	Sheffield Independent
S.L.R.	Sheffield Local Register
S.P.U.K.	Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge
S.R.	Sheffield Register
S.R.I.	Sheffield and Rotherham Independent
S.S.I.	Surrey St. Institute
S.S.U.	Sunday School Union
S.T.	Sheffield Times
S.W.N.	Sheffield Weekly News
T.H.A.S.	Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society
W.M.S.S.U.	Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union

Contents

Introduction

1. Perspectives

This thesis will examine one aspect of social change in an industrial community during the nineteenth century. The imposition of 'middle class' values upon working class culture, the ethic of respectability, is a central concept. In brief, the argument is that industrialisation and urbanisationinvolved the community in traumatic change. Emerging out of this came a class society: a middle class, and a working class consisting of a labour aristocracy and proletarian groupings. In the interests of capitalism, the new social and economic relationships had to be regulated. In a highly dynamic situation, the middle classes and the working classes were under stress; this was created by anxieties about status, by environmental conditions, and by changing cultural patterns.

Sections of the community responded to this in different ways. Class conflict was at its most overt between 1790's and the 1840's. Another process at work was the steady assimilation by deferential elements within the working class to the norms and values prescribed for them by the middle class. The ethic of respectability was the servant of capitalism, by uniting together the 'respectable' artisans, tradesmen and employers, vis-a-vis the 'rough'. The values which respectability took and refined for its own ends were essentially those which worked best in the service of capitalism, in the pursuit of profit and the maintenance of social order. Paradoxically, some of its values also served the emerging working class consciousness.

Respectability also developed its own institutions. Voluntary societies with their range of activities sought to replace the old culture with new and distinctively urban values and relationships. Church and chapel, temperance societies, Sunday schools, day schools, adult institutes, cooperatives, friendly societies and building societies provided the institutional context for the working-out of the new values and the acquisition of new habits. In varying degrees, the involved the cooperation of employers, small tradesmen and artisans, bound together by

a common social ideology, and by the belief in their identity of interests.

The achievement of the ethic of respectability was complex. There is no doubt that generations of working men learned to cooperate with the employer in the creation of shared institutions and values. Arguably, this process also implied the depoliticisation of the English working class, diverted from a radical critique of capitalism. However, by the end of the century, moral imperatives were increasingly less relevant to the problems of the city. A new urban working class culture was forming, which was neither 'rough' nor 'respectable'. Nevertheless, popular culture had changed immeasurably, and the working class had been conditioned to perceive their identity of interest with capitalism.

This process will be examined in relation to the city of Sheffield, between 1780 and 1900. A local study can show in greater depth how the ethic of respectability was moulded by the needs of various sections of the community. The social and economic structure of Sheffield makes it especially rewarding for such a study. Like other industrial cities, it was a community undergoing stress through rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, although the timing of this change was rather later than elsewhere. The persistence of the workshop economy, the apparent blurring of class lines, and the opportunities for upward social mobility gave the ethic of respectability real relevance for deferential elements within the working class. Other studies have concentrated upon respectability in the period of mid-Victorian prosperity, in the context of artisan culture.[1] However, this study takes a wider perspective: respectability symbolised

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1. T.R. Tholfsen, 'The Artisan and the Culture of Early Victorian Birmingham', University of Birmingham Historical Journal, IV, 1953-1954, pp.146-166; Geoffrey Crossick, 'Social Structure and Working Class Behaviour - Kentish London 1840-1880', unpublished Ph.D., University of London, 1976, and 'Dimensions of Artisan Ideology in mid-Victorian Kentish London', unpublished paper to the Urban History Conference, University of Leicester, 1973.

stock attitudes and values which developed out of the eighteenth century and survived into the twentieth, and this study will explore the strength and social function of the ethic during the changing economic and social circumstances of the nineteenth century. It is difficult to subject a study of culture and values to the dictates of periodisation: however, the years 1780 and 1900 have been selected as the natural boundaries of the period, although reference is occasionally made to events or processes which fall outside these limits. The study is concerned not only with the relationship of respectability with artisan culture: its function for the middle classes, its role in their ideology, and indeed its contribution to the whole texture of urban culture have also been discussed.

The thesis begins with an introductory analysis of social and economic change, class and culture in nineteenth century Sheffield. The perspective is thematic, rather than chronological. The intention of this study has been to investigate key components of middle class ideology, and its relationship with the working class. The areas of religion, education, temperance and thrift were selected for close attention, because they represented the most crucial and formative aspects of this process. Each section examines the 'deficiencies' of popular culture. This is followed by a brief institutional account, indicating the social bases of support. 'middle class' ideology is examined in detail. Each section contains an analysis of how respectability was achieved, through devices such as propaganda and counter-attraction. The areas of religion, education, temperance and thrift represent perhaps the clearest statements of the ideology of respect ability, and the way in which middle and working classes learned to cooperate in an institutional structure. Considerations of space have led to the exclusion of other areas which also involved the transmission of values. There has been no attempt to discuss labour discipline, recreation, or policies towards the poor as separate topics, although clearly, these offer alternative and valid approaches to the problems of middle class values and their relationship with working class culture.

2.   Sheffield 1780-1900 : The Making of a Community

The twin processes of industrialisation and urbanisation transformed Sheffield from a backward market town of cutlers and tool makers, to the fifth largest city in England, and a centre of the steel industry by the end of the nineteenth century. This chapter will review in brief the economic expansion of Sheffield from the late eighteenth century, the growth of population, the urbanisation which created the modern city, and the emergence of a 'class society'.

The economic expansions of Sheffield in the first half of the nineteenth century developed out of the staple metal trades and represented the development of a long tradition. Tools and cutlery had been crafted in the villages of South Yorkshire since medieval times. [1]   By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the manufacture of table and spring knives, scissors, shears, razors, forks, files and other edge tools, scythes, sickles and some surgical instruments was already firmly established in the town. [2] During the course of the eighteenth century, Sheffield's growing prosperity was based upon several main industries: cutlery, silverware and plate, steel and hardware manufacture and coal mining. The second half of the eighteenth century had seen important new developments in the Sheffield trades. Saw manufacture began in the mid years of the century, and the first scissors were made from cast steel in the 1760's. Crucible steel, invented by a local watchmaker Benjamin Huntsman in 1740, was harder, and of better quality than the existing blister steel. Tilting mills developed about 1750 and rolling mills, used in the 1760's for the production of sheet metal, allowed an expansion in production. The development of puddled iron and the use of coke for smelting, helped this trend. [3]

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1.   G.I.H.Lloyd, The Cutlery Trades - An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small-scale Production, London, 1913, pp. 64-70, 78-96.
2.   Peter C.Garlick, 'The Sheffield Cutlery and Allied Trades and Their Markets in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Sheffield, 1951, p.1.
3.   Lloyd, op. cit., pp.76-79; Garlick, op.cit., pp.3-4; Alfred Gatty,Sheffield Past and Present,Sheffield,1873 pp 133-150; David L.Linton,Sheffield and Its Region - A Scientific and Historical Survey, Sheffield, 1956,pp 155-160.

The application of steam to grinding also helped to speed up the production of tools and cutlery, although the Sheffield trades remained dependent on water power until the middle of the nineteenth century. [1] Cutlery was still the most important local trade and by 1800, Sheffield challenged London and Birmingham for pre-eminence in this. [2] The luxury silver plate trade developed in the 1760's, following the discovery by Thomas Bolsover. Silver refining and the manufacture of Britannia metal both began in this decade. The national market for silver plated ware made this trade profitable and some cutlers took up silver plating as a sideline. [3]

Despite improvements in technology and the development of new products, the organisation of the Sheffield trades changed little during the eighteenth century. The variety of articles produced led to a high degree of specialisation. The making of shears, sickles and scythes, scissors, knives, razors and files constituted distinct trades by the seventeenth century. The tool and cutlery villages in the vicinity of Sheffield reflected this: Forks were made in Grimesthorp, Grenoside and Shire Green and Stannington had a community of pocket knife cutlers, razor makers and scissor makers. [4] Individual trades were subdivided further by the number of processes involved in the manufacture of a single commodity. Cutlery was divided into the three processes of forging, grinding and hafting, and there were equivalent divisions in the manufacture of saws, scythes, files and other tools. The production of a single pocket knife could involve 42 distinct processes. These increased with the elaboration of the finished product: a fine four bladed knife could involve as many as 150 different operations.

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1. Lloyd, op. cit., pp.157, 179-180; In 1865, 32 of Sheffield's 164 wheels were still powered by water. See J.C.Hall, The Trades of Sheffield as Influencing Life and Health, London, 1865, p.11; Sidney Pollard, History of Labour in Sheffield, Liverpool, 1954, pp.53-54, 79.
2. Lloyd, op. cit., p.98; Garlick, op.cit., pp.12-13.
3. Lloyd, op. cit., p.343; Garlick, op.cit., pp.5,7; Pollard, op.cit., pp.52-3.
4. John Robinson, A Directory of Sheffield, Including the Manufactures of the Adjacent Village, Sheffield 1797.

Another characteristic of the Sheffield trades was the pre-eminence
of handicraft skills. Entrants to the trades passed through lengthy
apprenticeships, before establishing themselves as journeymen, and ultimately
masters. The integrity of the local cutlery trade was protected by the Cutlers'
Company, which sought to regulate the conduct of the trade until the loss of
most of its powers by Act of Parliament in 1814. [1.]   Manual dexterity and
a trained eye were essential for the production of finely wrought cutlery
and in processes such as file cutting. The products of the Sheffield trades were
not easily standardised. Mechanical aids were slow to be adopted; despite the
gradual adoption of machinery in the second half of the nineteenth century,
manual skill remained the main factor in production. [2.]

The typical unit of production was the workshop. The division of labour
and the importance of craft skills militated against the large scale development
of factories, although an increase in the scale of production can be observed
from the 1820's. The prevalence of the workshop led to a distinctive form of
economic organisation, which in turn conditioned the nature of social relationships
in the town. The tool and cutlery trades were traditionally small scale
enterprises, dominated by the small master. Some small masters were akin to
small entrepreneurs or factors, renting a small office or warehouse and
depending on the labour of outworkers. The master supplied forgers, grinders
and cutlers with the raw material, or with the unfinished goods at the requisite
stage in the process, and sold the finished goods themselves. The term 'small
master' was also applied to working grinders or cutlers, employing up to six men
and renting a workshop or space at a grinding wheel. His work would be commissioned
from other small masters and factors; therefore , such men were both employers
and employees, dependent upon the goodwill of the factor, but also training up their
own apprentices, in addition to hired adult journeymen. Merchants and the
larger factors supplied capital where required, but a characteristic of the
trade was the lack of money needed to set up in trade, or to expand,

1.   See below, pp. 8,57.
2.   Lloyd, op. cit., pp 185-187; Pollard, op. cit., pp.126-129.

Workshop Rents, the cost of tools and materials and the ability to meet extra
wages were all that were involved in setting up a firm, or the expansion of
an existing one. Factories in which a number of processes were gathered
together under one roof, were established in the 1820's and the 1830's.
Messrs. Greaves Sheaf Works, built in 1823 adjacent to the canal, was the first
to be opened. Nevertheless, the workshop organisation permeated the factory:
workspace and equipment was rented out to masters and journeymen who were often
semi-independent, and the manufacturer still relied upon out-workers to fulfill
a proportion of his work.[1]

The economic expansion of the Sheffield trades is well documented from the
1770's. The local directories, beginning in 1774, show the number of firms
operating in the different divisions of the trades. The expansion of all the
trades is clear from this evidence.[2]

Number of firms.

	1774	1787	1797	1821	1828
Cutlery Trades	302	334	398	530	670
Silver and Plated Trades	16	17	22	35	41
Steel, Miscellaneous Hardware	40	38	53	107	200

Clearly, the individual units of production were proliferating in these years,
although these figures give no indication of whether firms were getting larger,
as well as more numerous. The first detailed estimate of the numbers employed
in the cutlery and edge tool trades was made in 1824.[3]

1. Lloyd, op. cit., pp.191-208, 214-226; Garlick, op.cit., pp.14-22; Pollard
   op.cit., pp.54-59, 129-134; Gatty, op.cit., pp.212-213; S.C. on the
   Sweating System(Parliamentry Papers, 1889, XIII), Q. 24710-24910, 24914-
   25005; Pawson and Brailsford, Illustrated Guide to Sheffield and Neighbourhood,
   Sheffield, 1862, pp.134-158.
2. Sketchley's Sheffield Directory, Bristol, 1774; Gales and Martin Directory of
   Sheffield 1787, Sheffield 1787; Robinson, op.cit.; R.Gell and R. Bennett,
   Sheffield General and Commercial Directory Sheffield 1821; John Blackwell,
   The Sheffield Directory and Guide Sheffield 1828.
3. Sheffield Local Register 1 May, 1824; William White, History and General
   Directory of the Borough of Sheffield, Sheffield 1833, p.44.

A total of 8549 were employed in these trades: 2240 in the manufacture of table knives, 2190 (spring knives), 1284 (files), 806 (scissors), 541(Edge tools), 480 (forks) and 478 (razors).

This economic expansion was aided by other developments. The cutlery trades had been organised under the corporate control of the Cutlers' Company since the 1624, with powers to regulate apprenticeship abd entrance into the local trades. By the end of the eighteenth century however, its restrictive powers were increasingly unacceptable to a new generation of masters and the authority of the Company was substantially reduced by Act of Parliament in 1814.[1] From this time the cutlery trades were able to expand without internal restriction.

The process of enclosure swept away other old restrictions, ill-suited to a developing industrial community. There were no commons or open fields left in Sheffield township by the late eighteenth century, but the four townships of Ecclesall, Brightside, Hallam and Attercliffe were enclosed between 1779 and 1819. The question of redistribution of land and rights through enclosure is complex: however, it seems to be the case that existing major landlords such as the Duke of Norfolk and James Wilkinson, Vicar of Sheffield, were the chief beneficiaries. Enclosure could have benefitted the economic development of Sheffield by helping to generate capital, although it is not clear if profits from enclosure were being reinvested locally in the early nineteenth century. However, the loss of the commons could have encouraged many on the margins of subsistence to leave the land and find work in the town. Much of the newly enclosed land to the west of the town was divided into building plots. This contributed to a buoyant property market in the 1820's and made possible the rapid physical exapansion of the town.[2]

1.   Lloyd op,cit., pp.110-147; Pollard, op, cit., pp.65-67; R.E.Leader, History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire, 2 vols., Sheffield, 1905-6.
2.   For enclosure, see A.H. John,'Agricultural Productivity and Economic Growth in England 1700-1760', Journal of Economic History, XXV, 1965, pp.20-34; E.L.Jones, 'Agriculture and Economic Growth in England 1660-1750: Agricultural Movements in England 1700-1830', Explorations in Entrepreneurial History, VI, pp.176-186; Barbara Hammond, 'Two Towns''Enclosures', Economic History, II 1931, pp.258-266; Carolus Paulus, Some Forgotten Fads in the History of Sheffield and District, Sheffield 1907, and unpublished pages Relating to the Manor and Parish of Ecclesall, Sheffield 1927.

The expansion of industry was also accompanied by the emergence of a

financial superstructure, better suited to the needs of local entrepreneurs.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Sheffield cutlery trades

had been dominated by London merchants, who supplied capital, and supervised

the finishing processes and disposed of the completed goods. The second

half of the century saw the beginning of the independence of Sheffield in

banking. Benjamin Roebuck, merchant and hardware manufacture, established

the first Sheffield bank in 1770 and a rival bank was set up by Thomas

Broadbent in 1774. Roebuck capital was invested in steel, in the enterprises

of the Walkers of Masborough and John Booth of Brushes. Broadbent financed

the iron trade, principally Wortley Forge. However, within eight years of

their establishment, both banks had ceased to trade. A third bank, set up in

1774 with the capital of the Shore family survived. The Walker family themselves

started the Sheffield and Rotherham Bank in 1792. The growth of joint stock banking

placed the local enterprises on a more secure footing. By 1840, there were

three joint stock banks, as well as the private banks of the Walkers and the

Shores: the spectacular failure of Parker, Shore and Company in 1843 led to

the cpmplete adoption of the joint stock system. [1]

Communications were also radically improved by the 1820's. The economic

development of Sheffield was potentially impeded by the isolation of the

town from the main routes of communication. There were substantial physical

barriers to the west of the city, and Sheffield lay some twenty miles west

of the main north-south routes. The increasing reliance on imported Swedish

iron ore and the development of a national and continental market for Sheffield's

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1. R.E.Leader, The Early Sheffield Banks, London 1917, also The Early
    Sheffield Bankers, London, 1917; William Deacons Bank 1771-1970,
    Manchester, 1971, pp.43-53; Mary Walton, Sheffield, It's Story and Its
    Achievements, 4th edition, Sheffield, 1968, pp.126-127; Linton op, cit.,
    pp.168-171.

goods by the end of the eighteenth century increased the need for radical improvement in communications.

Between 1750 and 1840, the communications which served Sheffield were improved out of all recognition. [1.] Ten major roads were turnpiked between 1759 and 1821, including the main roads to Wakefield and Derby. Regular stage coaches to London, Leeds, Wakefield, Chesterfield, Nottingham and Mansfield began in 1760. By 1787, the journey to London was reduced from three days to 26 hours. In 1838, there were 13 coaches leaving the Tontine Inn daily. [2.] Until the advent of the railway, however, water transport was of great importance to the Sheffield trades. A much used water route for the export of lead, wrought iron and edge tools, was the Don as far as Tinsley, by packhorse to the inland port of Bawtry and thence to the east coast on the River Idle. [3.] The Don became increasingly unnavigable however, due to the shallowness of the water below Doncaster and the diversion of the river to power water-wheels. In 1721, the Cutlers' Company took the initiative in petitioning for improvements to the navigation of the Don and an Act enabling this to be done was passed in 1726. Despite some opposition from local landowners, the passage of the Don was substantially improved. Nevertheless, a better solution was the construction of a canal, from Tinsley to the centre of Sheffield, thus avoiding many of the dams and sluices. This was mooted

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1. Linton, op, cit., pp.161-167.
2. Walton, op, cit., pp.128-130; A.W.Goodfellow, 'Sheffield Turnpikes in the Eighteenth Century', Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society, V, 1942, pp.71-90; G.G.Hopkinson, Road Development in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, 1700-1850. ibid., x 1971.
3. Derek Holland, Bawtry and the Idle River, Trade, Doncaster 1976.

in the second half of the eighteenth century. An Act to enable the construction of a canal was finally passed in 1815, again following the initiatives on the part of the Cutlers' Company and the Sheffield canal was opened in 1819. The canal carried the bulk of Sheffield's exports during its first twenty years, but the eleven locks between Tinsley and Sheffield were an impediment to traffic and transportation was both slow and expensive. [1.]

The coming of the railway meant the beginnings of an efficient transportation system. The Sheffield to Rotherham railway, opened in 1838, gave the town a link with the north-south trunk route. The Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire railway was opened to traffic between Sheffield and Manchester in 1845, giving Sheffield improved access to Liverpool and the important American markets. Finally in 1871, Sheffield gained a direct southern link when the Midland line reached Sheffield from Derby. [2.]
The implications of railway transport for Sheffield were enormous - rail was cheap and efficient, ideally suited to the transportation of bulk goods and stimulated the exploitation of coal, iron and steel industries in South Yorkshire on a dramatically increased scale. Through the nineteenth century, Sheffield maihtained her pre-eminence in cutlery, edge tools and silver plate. Only Birmingham was a serious rival, in the production of hardware and luxury metal goods. However in the second half of the century, there were additions to the staple trades of Sheffield, which fundamentally changed the economic relationships with the community. Steel had been made in small ways in

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1. Alan W.Goodfellow, 'Sheffield Waterway to the Sea', T.H.A.S, V, 1942 pp. 246-253; C.M.Butterworth, The Sheffield Canal, Sheffield 1970; G.G.Hopkinson, 'The Development of Inland Navigation in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, 1697-'1850', T.H.A.S., VII, 1950.
2. Pollard op, cit., P4; G.G.Hopkinson, 'Railway Projection and Construction' in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, 1830-1850', T.H.A.S., IX, 1971. p.p. 8-26, Pawson & Brailsford op, cit., p.96, Richard v Proctor,A Railway Chronology of the Sheffield Area S.C.L. 1975.

the eighteenth century, but expansion was delayed after 1815. Many of the early steel makers were cutlers or tool makers and carried into steel the traditions of the family firm. Small enterprises in the centre of the town were the antecedents of large firms such as Firth's, Cammells' and Brown's. The expanding demand for steel in the 1830's and 1840's led to an increase in scale, but the industry remained in its central location. In 1850, the distinction between 'heavy' steel industry and the 'light' cutlery trades was not yet pronounced, and they remained comparable in size, capital investment and organisation. Thus in 1851, there were 21,350 employed in cutlery, tools and silver plate trades, as opposed to 5,200 in engineering, iron founding and steel making. [1]

The expansion of the steel industry was achieved through new technology and through changes in location, financing and organisation. Nasmyth's steam hammer, used by Firth's in 1849 and the development of the Bessemer process enabled the industry to achieve a dramatic increase in the scale of production. The building of the Sheffield and Rotherham railway running through the plain of the Don Valley to the east of the town provided an ideal location for the heavy steel industry and by the 1860's, steel works were established in Attercliffe, Brightside and Rotherham. The growth of the steel industry during these years was spectacular. Between 1851 and 1891, the numbers employed in the heavy trades increased by 300%, compared with a growth of 50% in the light trades. In 1891, the cutlery, tool and silver plate trades still employed more than heavy industry, with a total of 32,100. However, the gap was narrowing fast. Iron and steel manufacture and engineering of all types employed 21,284 in 1891. By 1911, the heavy trades had overtaken the cutlery and tools and employed 38,379 as opposed to 34,800 in the light trades in that year. [2]

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1. Walton op. cit., pp.114, 121-123, 178-182; Pollard op.cit., pp.78-82,331-332.
2. Pollard, op. cit., pp.332-334;

The discovery of the technology of large scale steel production enabled Sheffield industry to meet the needs of many new and profitable markets. Railways, shipbuilding, engineering, machine tools and armaments were all supplied from the Sheffield steel works. The development of the Bessemer convertor and the Siemens-Martin open hearth furnace made possible revolutionary increase in the scale of production. For the first time, the factory became a significant form of industrial organisation. The heavy industry demanded unprecedented levels of capital investment and the employment of a huge labour force. Thus John Brown employed 200 in 1856, 2,500 in 1863 and 5,000 in 1872. Firms such as Firth's, Cammell's, Vickers' and Hadfields' employed comparable numbers in the last quarter of the century. [1] Although at first the traditions of sub-contracting and team work persisted, by the last decades of the century, a substantial labour force accustomed to factory production had emerged, under the control of a managerial and supervisory sector.

The staple trades of Sheffield, characterised by their own distinct economic relationships and marked off by the sense of craft solidarity, have been the natural focus of historians. However, as with every other industrial city, the growth of the town was sustained by theproliferation of miscellaneous retailing and service enterprises. These employed substantial numbers: out of a population of 135,310 in 1851, 44,846 males and 10,581 females (omitting domestic servants) were employed in gainful occupations. Of these, 23,141 males and 1, 781 females were in the staple trades. Thus nearly half the men and five sixths of the women in employment in 1851 made their living in other occupations. [2]

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1.   ibid., pp. 159-164; Pawson and Brailsford, op.cit., pp.114-134.
2.   Pollard, History, etc., P.6.

The expansion of the retail and service sector is apparent by 1830.
In 1833, the life of the community was supported by 326 hotels, inns and
taverns, 235 beershops and 318 flour, grocery, tea and general provision
dealers. There were 38 booksellers, binders and printers, 109 milliners and
dressmakers, 51 straw hat makers, 39 housepainters, 16 fishmongers, 31 bakers
and 13 brewers, providing food, clothing and services for an expanding population.
Accountants, collectors and agents constituted a growing white collar sector. [1]
Below these, and as yet unnumbered, were the servants, apprentices and clerks
who performed the chores of domestic and commercial life.

These groups all proliferated with the expansion of the city in the
mid-Victorian period. In Darnall in 1871, in the middle of the steel boom,
there were a total of 586 employed in the growth areas of steel and engineering,
mining and in cutlery trades and tools. Nevertheless even in amworking class
community, there were still 70 in domestic service, and 317 in a wide range
of retail and service trades. These included 18 dressmakers, 13 carpenters
6 innkeepers, 9 shoemakers and a host of other miscellaneous vital to the
smooth running of a small community, such as the people employed as chair
bottomers. [2]

Thus, during the nineteenth century, a petit bourgeois class of small
entrepreneurs, tradesmen, shopkeepers, publicans, all thrived. In Sheffield,
the economic relationships which characterised this class were important,
because they reinforced those already prevalent in the light trades. Thus,
in some ways, the workshop unit of masters, journeymen and apprentices, small
in size, operating on limited capital and often a family concern, was replicated
in many small shops and businesses. The strength of this class of small
capitalists, existing often on the margin of survival and attempting to

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1. Figures from White, op. cit.
2. Based on the work of a W.E.A. class, Darnall, 1976; a microfilm
   of 1871 Census Returns for Sheffield is in S.C.L.

manipulate economic relationships for their own ends, had important implications for social attitudes in Sheffield.

As in every other city in the nineteenth century, economic growth was accompanied by population expansion. The beginning of Sheffield's population increase was apparent in the eighteenth century. In 1736, there was an estimated population of 9,695. [1.] In 1776, there were thought to be 17,000 in the town and a further 30,000 in the parish. [2.] From 1801 however, the census figures give precise evidence of the expansion in population. The population for the parish of Sheffield from 1801 to 1901 is as follows:

	Population	% rate of increase
1801	45,755	-
1811	53,231	16.34
1821	65,375	22.63
1831	91,692	40.47
1841	110,891	21.16
1851	135,310	21.80
1861	185,172	36.85
1871	239,946	29.58
1881	284,408	18.60
1891	324,291	14.02

In 1901, after the extension of the city boundaries to include Norton and Ecclesfield, the population was 409,070. The following decade, Sheffield for the first time outstripped Leeds, with a population of 454,632: [3.]

Between 1811 and 1871, Sheffield's population increased by at least 20% in each decade. However, the two decades which saw the most rapid increase were the years between 1821 and 1831 and 1851 and 1861, which registered decennial increases of 40.47% and 36.85% respectively. In the first half of the hineteenth century, Sheffield grew at a slower rate than Liverpool or Manchester: for example, the population of Manchester increased 45% between 1821 and 1831 and Liverpool increased 45.82% in the same decade.

1. R.Gosling, <u>A Plan of Sheffield from an Actual Survey</u>, Sheffield, 1736.
2. Sheffield City Libraries, <u>Population in Sheffield 1086-1968</u>, Sheffield
3. <u>ibid</u>., p.5; R.Price Williams, 'On the Increase of Population in England and Wales', <u>Journal of Statistical Society</u>, XLIII, 1880, pp.468-469.

However, Sheffield gained an extra 49,862 souls between 1851 and 1861 and the rate of increase for this decade was unmatched by any other English city. [1]

The classic mechanism of an increasing birth rate, in conjunction with a declining death rate, was responsible for much of this increase in population. [2] For example, the crude death rate per 1,000 of the population fell steadily from 27.4 in 1861-65 to 20.6 in 1896-1900, although the general mortality rate was consistently higher than that of England and Wales during the nineteenth century.[3] Immigration also swelled the population, as well as ensuring that the age structure was weighted towards younger people. In the eighteenth century, it was commonplace for apprentices in the cutlery trades to have been drawn from the villages of Yorkshire and Derbyshire. [4] This trend continued in the nineteenth century. Between 1841 and 1851, Sheffield gained an extra nine thousand people through immigration. In 1851, 36% of the population and 49% of those over twenty years of age had been born outside the town.[5] Yorkshire and Derbyshire still supplied the bulk of migrants: others were drawn from Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Nottinghamshire. In the second half of the century, the decades from 1851 to 1871 saw the greatest amount of immigration: the increase by migration was over 26,000 in each decade. [6] Most were still drawn from the surrounding countryside and the adjacent counties, although the proportion from the iron-working districts of the Midlands increased, accounting for 4.1 of the population in 1891.

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1. Williams, loc. cit.
2. See inter alia M.W. Flinn, British Population Growth 1700-1850, London 1970 E.A.Wrigley, Population and History, London, 1969; Michael Drake, Population in Industrialisation, London 1969.
3. Pollard, op. cit., pp.98-9, 193-4
4. E.J.Buckatzsch, 'Places of Origin of a Group of Immigrants in Sheffield 1624-1799', Economic History Review, II, 1950, pp.303-306.
5. Pollard, op.cit., pp.6-7; A.K.Cairncross,'Internal Migration in Victorian England; Manchester School, 1949, p.86, Linton op, cit., p.178.
6. Pollard op. cit., pp.90-91.

However periods of depression also encouraged emigration and there was some outward movement of Sheffield craftsmen, particularly to the United States, in the second half of the century.[1]

The most obvious result of the increasing concentration of population in Sheffield was the changing physical nature of the city. At the end of the eighteenth century, the town was still small and squalid. Some modest speculative building in Paradise Square, Bank Street and on the Duke of Norfolk's land south east of the town centre was evidence of growing prosperity.[2] Nevertheless, most of the population lived and worked in the crowded narrow streets of the medieval town. From the 1770's some of the prosperous merchants built private residences in the country, but with easy access to the town centre. Among the earliest examples were Page Hall, built by Thomas Broadbent in 1773 and Meersbrook, built by Benjamin Roebuck about the same time.[3]

By the 1820's, the centre of Sheffield was rapidly becoming unpleasant to live in, as dwelling houses were being converted to industrial use, and workshops erected in the gardens and orchards. Those who could afford it preferred to live a distance from their work: the ultimate result of this tendency was the single class suburb of Victorian city.[4] From the 1820's, the higher westward slopes of Sheffield were laid out in superior terraced housing. Glossop Road, Broomhall Place and Western Bank were completed by 1840.[5]

1.   ibid. pp.92-93.
2.   Nikolaus Pevsner, The Buildings of England -Yorkshire: the West Riding, 2nd. edition, London, 1967, pp.447, 455-456; Donald Olsen, 'House Upon House: Estate Development in London and Sheffield', in ed., H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, The Victorian City - Images and Realities, London 1973, pp.333-357.
3.   Pevsner, op.cit., pp.470,474.
4,   H.J. Dyos, Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell, Leicester, 1961, pp.20-25; W. Ashworth, The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning, London, 1954, pp.18-19, 147-164.
5.   Pevsner, op.cit., pp.472-473.

The bulk of Sheffield's stock of superior nineteenth century houses were planned after 1850 however, as the new wealth deriving from steel began to make itself felt. The earliest interest in terraces was abandoned and the typical manufacturer's houses in the second half of the century was a stone built villa in its own grounds. Houses of the type were built in Broomhall, after 1850 and in districts such as Endcliffe, Ranmoor, Tapton, Fulwood on the west of the town, from the 1860's. By the end of the century, substantial detatched houses for the middle class were constructed in areas such as Ecclesall, Dore and Abbeydale. [1] Contemporary maps of Sheffield during the nineteenth century reveal the striking difference between the spaciousness of these middle class residential areas and the crowded streets of central Sheffield. [2] Many aspiring small employers and tradesmen were also aware of the difference. The development of public transport enabled men of more modest means to find a place in the suburbs. Horse buses were run by private firms to the Botanical Gardens and Broomhill in 1852 and municipal horse drawn trams began in 1873. In 1899, the first electric trams were run to Nether Edge by the newly formed Corporation Tramways Committee. [3] The emergence of cheap public transport freed the white collar worker and the artisan from the need to live within walking distance of his work. In the 1850's and 1860's was seen the colonisation of Walkley and Parkwood Springs by freehold land and building societies. [4]

1. For the growth of Sheffield's suburbs, see especially, J.H.Stainton, The Making of Sheffield, Sheffield 1924, pp.80-97, A.Clegg, 'The Residential Areas of Sheffield – An Analysis of their Historical Development and Current Characteristics', M.A. Sheffield 1970, unpublished thesis.
2. Among the best examples are W.&.J.Fairbank, A Map of the Town and Environs of Sheffield Sheffield 1808; J.Taylor, A Map of the Town and Environs of Sheffield, Sheffield 1832; W.White, Plan of Sheffield from the Ordnance Survey, Sheffield 1855 and later editions.
3. J.E.Vickers From Horses to Antlanteans, Sheffield 1972; Sheffield Transport Department, The Tramway Era in Sheffield, Sheffield,1960; Pollard op.cit., pp.90,185.
4. Stainton, op. cit., pp.180-197; Charles Hobson, 'Walkley – A Fifty Year Old Workingmen's Garden Suburb', Town Planning Review, II 1912, pp.39-45; S.M.Gaskell, 'Yorkshire Estate Development and the Freehold Land Societies in the Nineteenth Century', Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, XLIV, 1971. pp.158-165.

The building boom of the 1890's had dramatic effects upon the physical
Environment of Sheffield. By 1900, the suburbs of Meersbrook, Millhouses,
Sharrow, Walkley, Crookes and Firvale had been completed. Some of the
better off artisans were able to afford houses in these areas, some of which
were on the edge of prosperous middle class areas. For others, distinctive
working class communities sprang up on the eastern side of the town, in
proximity to the steel works and collieries, in response to the changing
location of industry away from the centre of the town. Brightside, Grimesthorpe,
Attercliffe, Darnall and Heeley developed as purpose built terraced houses. [1]

The rapid physical expansion of the town brought with it attendent problems.
A concentrated and expanding population made demands upon housing and sanitation
which could not easily be met. Local government was unable to respond
adequately to the challenge of urbanisation: in the middle of the century,
responsibility for the sanitary condition of the town was divided between the
Improvement Commissioners, the Town Trustees, the Poor Law Authorities and the
Cutlers's Company, as well as the local magistrates and vestries. Physical
improvements to the town cost money, and became political issues, delayed or
abandoned altbgether because of the controversies which they provided. [2]

Nevertheless, during the first half of the nineteenth century, Sheffield
was growing less fast than other towns, and the quality of the urban
environment was consequently better than elsewhere. In physical terms,
Sheffield had many natural advantages. The hills surrounding the town on three
sides yielded an abundent water supply and the steep gradients allowed the
streets to be flushed with water at regular intervals. [3] Thus the streets
were better ventilated and cleansed than those of most other towns. The local
industries did not create any polluting debris. In the 1840's, the small
number of widely dispersed steam engines meant that nuisance from smoke was not

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1. Clegg, op. cit., passim.
2. Pollard, op.cit., pp.8-13; Walton, op. cit.,pp.167-169.
3. Leader, Eighteenth Century etc., pp.156-157. G.G.Holland, The Vital
   Statistics of Sheffield, London 1843, p.74.

widely felt. For these reasons, the Royal Commissioner observed in 1845 that Sheffield had

> 'an air of cleanliness which is very agreeable and so [1.] far it may be called a clean town'.

The standard of housing was also generally superior in the first half of the century. The area to the west of the town centre, between West Street and Division Street, developed after 1820, consisted of soundly constructed houses, with paved and well-ventilated streets. [2.] In 1845, it was observed that many of the cottages recently built for the working classes were of excellent construction, built back-to-back, but apparently with good ventilation. James Smith found these newly built courts to be paved and well kept and the dung-steads and privies were more tidily kept than those in other towns which he had visited. [3.] In Sheffield the abundent supply of cheap land had allowed the construction of large numbers of working class houses away from the centre of the town. It was not uncommon to find families with lodgers, as the 1851 Census shows, but in general, most artisan families lived in separate houses. The number of persons per house was lower than in other large towns. There were no cellar dwellings of the type which blighted Liverpool and Manchester. [4.]

In many respects, therefore, the urban environment in Sheffield, in the first half of the century was superior to that of comparable industrial towns. This in no way minimises the fact that poor health and housing were a reality for many working class families. Furthermore, as Sheffield developed at a

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1. Commission on the State of Large Towns, Second Report, (Parliamentary Papers 1845, XVIII), pp.316-317.
2. Pollard, op.cit., p.17.
3. R.C.on Large Towns, Second Report, (P.P.1845, XVIII), p.317.
4. S.C. on Public Walks, (P.P.1833,XV) 899; J.C.Hall , On the Prevention and Treatment of the Sheffield Grinder's Disease, London 1857,p.9; Pollard op.cit., p.17 The proportion of people to houses was 7:1 in Manchester, 6:1 in Liverpool and 5:1 in Sheffield in the early 1840's. Holland thought pressure upon housing had eased in the 1830's, due to speculative building, Holland, op.cit., pp.69-72

slower rate than other towns, in the 1850's and 1860's living conditions

got very much worse, as the rapid increase in population brought a drastic

reduction in the quality of life. Enivronmental factors were a source of

stress in many increasing ways in the nineteenth century: these will be discussed

in detail below.

Culture and society in Sheffield during the eighteenth century were a

reflection of the backward and parochial nature of the community. The lines

of social division were less marked than in the nineteenth century:

> 'If there were many poor, there were few really 1.
> wealthy. A very modest competance enabled a
> man to pass for rich in those days'.

A handful of leading families set the social tone in the town. Decendants of

yeoman families, their wealth had accrued not only from land, but from

industrial ventures such as iron-smelting. Among these were the Rawsons of

Wardsend, the Staniforths of Darnall, the Fells of New Hall and the Parkers of

Woodthorpe. [2] By the second half of the century, however, many of these

families had retreated from participating in the social life of the town.

Sheffield also failed to attract individuals of exceptional literary or scientific

ability during most of the eighteenth century. The town was therefore dominated

by masters and craftsmen and their journeymen and apprentices, who created

their own culture out of sport and drinking.

The typical Sheffield cutler and grinder in the eighteenth century has

been described as

> 'a rough and uncouth artificer, whose hard
> daily toil brought with it few of those
> alleviations which he should regard as the
> essentials of a civilised existence'. [3]

Grinders had by no means ' a monopoly of barbarous manners or rough horseplay'.

1. R.E.Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century, Sheffield, 1901,p.6
2. ibid., p.6; for the industrial and commercial activities of this group
    see B.A.Holderness; Elizabeth Parkin and her Investments, 1733-1766 -
    Aspects of the Sheffield Money Market in the Eighteenth Century;
    T.H.A.S. X. 1973, pp.81-87.
3. Lloyd, op. cit., p.160.

unfortunately we have to rely almost exclusively upon the writings of Victorian antiquarians such as R.E.Leader [1] for descriptions of eighteenth century culture in Sheffield, although contemporary vernacular songs also give their own testimony. [2] The exuberance of the Sheffield workmen arguably derives from their freedon from control, especially in the rural grinding wheels on the outskirts of the town. Men dependent upon the irregularities of water power and working away from the oversight of master or manufacturer, evolved their own natural rhythms of work and leisure. [3] Periods of strenuous physical activity alternated with relaxation. The grinders loved sport and a pack of hounds was kept by operatives as late as the 1840's.[4] Implicit in their way of life was a taste for heavy drinking and also for cruelty, although significantly, evidence of this comes from middle class sources. Samuel Roberts' <u>Tom and Charles</u>, a moral story of two grinders involving cruelty to an apprentice and brutality to a cat, was alledgedly drawn from a real incident. [5] Drink was a natural accompaniment to heavy physical labour and the role of drink in popular culture will be discussed in detail below. [6]

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1. <u>R.E.Leader</u> (1839-1922) was the son of Robert Leader, proprietor of the <u>Sheffield Independent</u> and assisted his father in the running of the paper. A prominent congregationalist, he married into the Pye-Smith family, who were also leading non-conformists. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the Liberals in the parliamentary elections of 1892 and 1895 but is best known for his work as a journalist, local historian and antiquarian, Odom, <u>Hallamshire Worthies</u>, etc., pp.17-18.
2. For example, the songs of <u>Joseph Mather</u> (1737-1811), file cutter, radical and member of the Constitutional Society. See John Wilson, <u>The Songs of Joseph Mather</u>, Sheffield, 1862, for these and other anonymous songs and W.H.G.Armytage, 'Joseph Mather - Poet of the Filesmith's, <u>Notes and Queries</u>, July 1950.
3. Leader, <u>Eighteenth Century</u>, etc., p.39.
4. R.C. on the State of Large Towns, etc., (PP.1845, XVIII), p.317.
5. Samuel Roberts, <u>Tom and Charles, or The Two Grinders</u>, second edition Sheffield 1835.
6. See Chapter 18.

These were also found in the workshops in the town: the new industry of silver

plate dependent upon immigrant labour in the late eighteenth century. These

men commanded high wages due to the nature of their skills, but manufacturers

such as Samuel Roberts found their behaviour to be wholly unacceptable: the

journeymen platers were

> ' the most unsteady, depraved and idle of all other
> workmen. They were not only depraved themselves
> but the source of depravity in others....... The
> masters suffered too much all kinds of drinking,
> rudeness and profane swearing in the workshops'. 1.

Conduct such as this was common with workers who were new to Sheffield

and who brought with them into the workshops the freer and more relaxed

rythms of rural industry. The new class of employers were anxious to promote

work discipline and thus ultimately profit. Nevertheless, the old traditions

remained extremely resilient. Arguably, the change from nrural water powered

industry to the new steam wheels in town, with all this implied, encouraged

the survival of the old habits in the workshops, as a defence against

the new ways. The habit of St.Monday, or even Natty Tuesday, whereby the

worker spent the earnings of four days in three days of recreation, is one of

the best known aspects of the Sheffield trades. [2]

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1. Samuel Roberts, Autobiography and Select Remains of the late Samuel Roberts,
   London 18,49, p.38, Samuel Roberts (1743-1818) was a prominent silver
   plate manufacturer and Overseer of the Poor in 1804. Anglican in
   religion, he was a close friend of non-conformist philanthropists such
   as James Montgomery and George Bennett. He was active in support
   of the Boy's Charity School and the Aged Female Society and a Tireless
   campaigner against slavery, the use of climbing boys in chimneys
   and the new Poor Law. He published numerous tracts on these and
   other subjects. He also supported temperence, abolished the annual
   feast in his workshops, segregated male and female workers and put
   a stop to all drinking parties. See Autobiography, etc., passim;
   Odâm, Hallamshire Worthies etc., pp.99-101.
2. See below, Chapter 18.

Reinforced by the independence of the artisan and his ability to earn

a good wage from a short, strenuous week, it survived atleast until the

second half of the nineteenth century. The resilience of the tradition of

St.Monday was revealed by the secretary of the Scissor Grinders' union in 1876:

> 'If I said that half the men in Sheffield keep
> St.Monday by their own folly, I should go almost
> beyond the mark rather than under'.

The propensity to spend St.Monday in drinking had been undermined by

the emergence of other forms of recreation: there was 'a great deal of tripping

in Sheffield and Sheffielders were noted for going to other places on Mondays. [1]

However, in 1877 Police Officer, John Jackson stated to a Parliamentary Committee

that Sheffield differed from some towns, 'in as much as a large proportion

of the working class do not work upon Monday', and there was a great deal of

drinking in the town on that day.[2] The Sheffield workmen pursued their rough

and robust culture outside the work situation. The violence of the crowd

against Methodist preachers in the second half of the century has been well

recorded. [3]   Workmen occasionally bought and sold their wives on the streets:

while not a common, occurrence, this still happened as late as 1822. [4]

Feasts and fairs gave regular opportunities for unrestrained enjoyment. These

were another way in which the conviviality of village life could be reinvoked

in the urban context. Middle class commentators recoiled at the cruelty to

animals which these almost invariably involved. On the day of the Statute

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1. S.C. on the Factory and Workshops Acts, Report, (PP.1876,XXX), part 2, AA
   12, 144-146, 12081; see also D.A. Reid 'The Decline of St.Monday -
   Working Class Leisure in Birmingham 1760-1875, unpublished paper to the
   society for the Study of Labour History, University of Sussex, 1975

2. S.C. on the Prevalence of Habits of Intemperance, 1st report (PP.1877,XI)
   AA.1171, 2939-40.
3. See below, chapter 6.
4. Leader, Eighteenth Century, etc., p.42,

Hiring, it was the custom to whip all dogs found loose on the streets and

> ' armed with heavy whips, the populace hunted the luckless
> curs with unsparing cruelty, chivvying them from street
> to street, and beating them at times even to death'.[1]

The rhythm of feasts and fairs shows the extent to which Sheffield was still sensitive to the rural way of life during the eighteenth century. Most were held in the summer months, between seed time and harvest and again after the completion of the harvest, when the pace of work in the agricultural communities was more relaxed and allowed opportunities for visiting and celebrations before the austerity and hardship of the winter.[2] Fairs were held at Attercliffe and Darnall on the nearest Sunday to St.Swithin's Day, in Crookes on May 1st., in Sheffield itself on Trinity Sunday in Broad Lane andScotland Street, on May 29th, in Fulwood on Whitsunday, at the Wicker on the second Sunday in July, in Ecclesall and Gleadless on the second Sunday in August and in Little Sheffield on 29th September. The Sheffield Statute Fair was customarily the last Tuesday in November.[3] Food, drink, music and sport were the ingredients of such feasts, Leader thought that these

> ' amid much rough kindliness and neighbourly feeling,
> were made opportunities for unbridled orgies'. [4]

Foot races were usual, and also ass races. Bull-baiting, cock fighting, dog-fighting and prize fights and events such as grinning matches and mountebanks provided simple if crude entertainment. The rural traditions were still a ritual part of the urban fairs, almost in an uncomprehended way. During the night before the Scotland Street Fair, the inhabitants brought birch trees from the woods outside the town. These were planted along the street and the doors

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1. ibid., p.43, Roberts, Autobiography, etc., pp.18-19
2. Robert W. Malcomson, Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850, Cambridge, 1973, pp.24-25.
3. Newspaper cuttings Relating to Sheffield, S.C.L. vol. 41, pp.300-301.
4. Leader, Eighteenth Century, etc., p.42.

and windows of the houses decorated with branches. By dawn, the whole street appeared like a grove of trees, the branches decorated with trinkets and ribbons. The largest tree was planted before the Royal Oak public house, with an effigy of Charles II in its branches. [1.] The purpose of this celebration was supposedly to celebrate the escape of the king from captivity, but in some ways illustrates the intimate relationship of town and country during a crucial period of transition. Events such as these survived into the 1820's and emasculated remnants of the old festivities were still held in Attercliffe and Darnall as late as the 1870's. [2.]

Nevertheless, even in the second half of the eighteenth century, the acceptability of the old sports and pastimes was lessening. In 1756, the Town Trustees sponsored a Cricket Match, in order to distract the townspeople from the joys of cock-fighting and the same body also supported a race course, which survived until the enclosure of Crookesmoor in 1791. [3.] In May 1824, the last 'bear-ward' in Sheffield was killed by his own bear, as he led it unmuzzled through the Park and it was observed that

> ' the brutal amusement of which this man was so
> long the "grand master" is not now tolerated
> in this neighbourhood'. 4.

The development of 'polite society' in Sheffield and the Evangelical Revival which helped to sustain it, made the old ways increasingly unacceptable by the turn of the century.

The emergence of a 'class society' in Sheffield may be placed comfortably in the years 1780-1830.

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1. Local Notes and Queries, vol.II, p.15, Roberts, Autobiography etc., p.20.
2. See below, p.298.
3. Leader, Eighteenth Century, etc., p. 45.
4. White, op.cit., p.77.

During this period, this rough and robust culture of masters and men, which characterised Sheffield during the eighteenth century, began to separate out into a class of merchants and manufacturers and a working class consisting of skilled and proletarian groupings. This process was dramatically accelerated by the expansion of the capital and labour intensive steel industry in the 1860's and in the new social and economic relationships which this implied.

The economic basis of the middle class was in existence, however, by the late eighteenth century: it sprang out of small groups of merchant factors and producers who were beginning to strengthen their hold over the local craft-based industry. The emergence of a group of merchant bankers in Sheffield in the 1770's has already been referred to. [1] The directories are other evidence of the growth of this class: in 1774, there were 12 merchants and factors listed. [2] In 1797, the number had increased to 52. [3] Most of the merchants had little connection with the productive process, except as capitalists and financiers: this is true of such men as Benjamin Roebuck and the firm of Broadbent and Gehrwin. Some manufacturers were becoming merchants in their own right, such as William Blonk, scissor maker and factor of Change Alley, and Sheffield, Parkin and Hague, merchants and cutlers in Sycamore Street. by 1833, this group of merchants and manufacturers number 128. [4]

Parallel with the growth of a merchant class was the increase in the size of the unit of production and the transformation of some small masters into manufacturers. The scale of production in cutlery tools and such was small in most cases but the new firms engaged in the mnaufacture of silver plate

1. See above, p. 9.
2. Sketchley, op.cit.,
3. Robinson, op.cit.,
4. White, op.cit.,

were more capital and labour intensive. However, as has been observed,

the application of factory methods of productions to the staple trades was a

slow process, still incomplete by the end of the nineteenth century. [1.]

In many ways, the manufacturer relied as heavily upon the workshop as did the

small master. Both were employers and entrepreneurs and it is not easy

in the absence of widespread factory development to trace the development

of substantial manufacturers out of the general class of small producers.

Nevertheless, out of the economic expansion of the Sheffield trades

emerged a class of employers who soon came to regard themselves as 'middle

class'. The development of superior manufacturers' houses and the movement

of some middle class families out of the town centre from the 1820's have already

been observed. This new class worked hard at developing the apparatus of middle

class culture: 'attempts were made to emulate the polished manners typical

of the Beau monde of London and other provincial centres where manual toil

was not the sole preoccupation'. [2.] An interest in music was one basis for this

new culture. Assemblies were held from 1733, in imitation of those held at

places such as Bath and Norwich. The clientele who frequented the the

assemblies also supported public performances of music. These were greatly

facilitated by the opening of two fashionable Anglican churches, St.Paul's

in 1740 and St.James's in 1789, which became the venues for organ recitals,

oratorios and other performances of sacred music. A theatre and Assembly Rooms

were opened in Norfolk Street in 1762 and subscription concerts held from about

1770 onwards. Musical festivals were often held for charitable purposes in

the 1780's and 1790's and provided a social milieu for the new elite. [3.]

Literary interests were not neglected. By 1810, Sheffield could boast a

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1. See above, pp.6-7.
2. E.D.Mackerness, _Somewhere Further North - A History of Music in Sheffield_, Sheffield, 1974, p.11.
3. _ibid_., pp.11-33.

Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, a Book Club and a Subscription

Library. The intellectual leadership in such ventures came from wealthy

Unitarian families. [1.] A Shakespeare Club, much given to toasts and dinners,

began in 1818, partly to defend the interests of the theatre against the

evangelical attacks.[2.] A Literary and Philosophic Society was begun in 1822.[3.]

Evangelical religion, education, charity and other philanthropic

activities all made their mark upon Sheffield from the late eighteenth century. [4.]

Participation in these activities was the hall-mark of the new middle class;

it also revealed some of their anxieties. The middle class also learned

how to act together politcally. The Sheffield manufacturers, unrepresented

at Westminster, felt their economic interest were being threatened by

government policies, especially during the Napoleonic Wars. Associations

such as the Friends of Reform, formed in 1810, were dominated by merchants

and larger employers such as Thomas Asline Ward, Samuel Shore and Thomas Rawson. [5.]

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1. Sarah E.Joynes, 'The Sheffield Library 1771-1907', Library History II,
    1971, pp.91-166; Sheffield Book Society Minute Book 1806-1944, S.C.L.,
    MD.2221; Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge Minute Book, S.C.L.
    SLPS 216; W.S.Porter, Sheffield Literary and Philosophic Society - A
    → Centenary Retrospect 1822-1922, p.4-6.
2. A Member of the Club, Proceedings of the Sheffield Shakespear Club
    from its commencement in 1819 to January 1829, Sheffield 1829.
3. Porter, op.cit., passim.
4. See below, chapters 6-10.
5. Thomas Asline Ward (1781-1871) was a prosperous cutlery merchant and
    manufacturer, and Master Cutler in 1816. He edited the Sheffield Independent
    1824-1829 and in 1830 was president of the Political Union. He was
    interested in education and was active in the Literary and Philosophic
    Society, of which he was President and the Mechanic's Institute. See
    G.D.Jennet, 'Thomas Asline Ward - His Life and Achievements', unpublished
    M.A. University of Sheffield 1954; A.B.Bell, Peeps into the past -
    Extracts from the Diary of Thomas Asline Ward,Sheffield, 1909. His diaries
    are in S.C.L.
    Samuel Shore (1738-1828) was a merchant, a member of an old Unitarian
    family with interests in land and in banking. He was a Town Trustee and
    and a liberal philanthropist. See Biographical Notice of the Late Samuel
    Shore Esq. Sheffield 1828.
    Thomas Rawson (1748-1826) was a member of a long established Anglican landed
    family, He founded the Pond Street brewery in 1781 and became a
    proprietor of the Sheffield Lead Works. He was also commander of the
    Ecclesfield Volunteers. See Rev.J.Eastwood, History of the Parish of
    Ecclesfield London 1862.

Although there were differencesover how far reform should go, the group

believed that political reform was the remedy for economic grievances,

attacked the restrictive policies of the government, such as the Orders

in Council and sent petitions to Westminster in 1810 and 1817. [1]

Radical manufacturers such as Ward were also to the forefront in the campaign

for the representation of Sheffield in the eqrly 1830's. There was a

unanimity about the necessity for reform, supported even by men sprung

from old landed families, such as John Parker and the middle classes in Sheffield

were almost entirely Whig or Radical in this decade.

The employing classes also co-operated in activities which helped them to

recognise their sense of identity vis-à-vis the workforce. An Association

for the Prosecution of Felons and Receivers of Stolen Goods was begun in 1804. [2]

This was followed in 1810 by an Association for the Protection of Trade and

Property. [3] The concern to prevent attacks on warehouses and fraud in

commercial dealings scarcely masked a deeper anxiety about conspiracy, crime

and attacks upon property. Associations of this nature confirmed that the

economic interests and actions of the workforce were indisputably at odds

with those of the employing class. Thus by 1830, the economic power of the

manufacturer and the ability of wealth to purchase a distinctive life style

were felt as never before. The increase in wealth of Sheffield in the first

forty years of the century was said to

> 'Indicate an amount of progress, perfectly startling
> to the sober calculations of men, strangers to the
> productive powers of commerce'. 4.

1.   D.E.Fletcher, 'Aspects of Liberalism in Sheffield 1849-1886', unpublished
      Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 1972, pp.4-5; H.N. Crawshaw, 'Movements
      for Social and Political Reform in Sheffield 1792-1832', M.A.,
      University of Sheffield, 1954,pp. 59-77.
2.   S.L.R. 29 February, 1804; S.I. 9 February 1808} ibid., 14 February 1809;
3.   S.I. 13 February 1810; ibid., 16 April, 1811.
4.   Holland, Vital Statistics, etc., P.26

The emergence of a middle class society, firmly rooted in the economic expansion of the late eighteenth century, counter-balances the image of uniformly rough, riotous and drunken culture. Nevertheless, in comparison to other towns, the wealth of Sheffield was still limited. G.C.Holland observed in 1843.

> 'the merchants and manufacturers among us are not men of large capital,exercising immense influence. They are very far from treading on the heels of the aristocracy.' 1.

Holland went on to say that the wealth of Sheffield could not be compared with that of Manchester, Leeds or even Birmingham, 'nor does the trade carried on admit of the creation of splendid fortunes'. [2] Although the Duke of Norfolk was a major landowner, there was no resident atistocracy to set the social tone. Landed families such as the Devonshires at Chatsworth and the Rockinghams and Fitzwilliams in the West Riding were too preoccupied with the running of their estates and the affairs of the nation to concern themselves much with Sheffield. Some artisans and manufacturers were interested in science at the end of the eighteenth century but Sheffield consistently failed to attract literary,artistic,or professional men in sufficient numbers to create an intellectual culture. [3]

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1. ibid.,p.10.; George Calvert Holland (1801-1865), the son of a barber, studied medicine at Edinburgh University. He was physician to the Infirmary between 1832 and 1843. He had a wide interest in educational and scientific matters and was president of the Literary and Philosophic Society in 1835 and active in the Mechanic's Institute and Mechanic's Library. His involvment with railway speculation in the 1840's led to bankruptcy, but he later practised homeopathy in Sheffield, and was elected to the Town Council. Odom, Hallamshire Worthies , etc., pp.121-122.
2. ibid.,pp.26-27; see also Frank H.Hill, An Account of Some Trade Combinations in Sheffield, London 1860, pp.534-535.
3. For the scientific community, see Ian Inkster, 'Scientific Instruction for Youth in the Industrial Revolution - the Informal Network in Sheffield', The Vocational Aspect of Education, XXV, 1973, pp.91-98; Inkster, 'The Development of a Scientific Community in Sheffield 1790-1850', T.H.A.S., X, 1973, pp.99-131; Inkster, 'Science and the Mechanics' Institutes 1820-1850 - the Case of Sheffield', Annals of Science, XXXII, 1975, pp.431-474.

The life of the town was therefore dominated by the manufacturer, provincial and parochial in outlook, often sprung from the indigenous class of artisans and journeymen. The ferment of ideas which characterised the provincial towns such as Manchester, Birmingham and Newcastle in the late eighteenth century failed to find similar expression in Sheffield. Institutions which could have contributed to this ambience developed later than elsewhere. For example, Sheffield's Literary and Philosophic Society was one of the last to be established: earlier examples had been founded in Manchester as early as 1781, Newcastle (1793), Birmingham (1800), Liverpool (1812) and Leeds (1818).[1]

In domestic and civic buildings and in town planning, Sheffield was generally characterised by a meanness and a lack of imagination. The late Victorian mansions of the steel manufacturers, while grand for Sheffield, do not compare with districts such as Edgbaston in Birmingham, and in any case were built several decades later.[2] Proper accommodation for the city's libraries, art gallery and museums, and for events of a cultural nature was inadequate until the twentieth century. Magnificent Victorian town halls were erected in Leeds (1858), Bradford (1873) and Manchester (1877), and in many smaller textile towns, jealous of their prestige. These had no equivalent

1. Donald Read, The English Provinces 1760-1960 – A Study in Influence, London, 1964, pp.21-22; for general comparisons in cultural development, see John Waddington-Feather, Leeds – The Heart of Yorkshire: A History and Guide to the City and Its Surroundings, Leeds, 1967; Leo S. Marshall, 'The Emergence of the First Industrial City – Manchester 1780-1850', in ed. Caroline F. Ware, The Cultural Approach to History, New York, 1940, pp.140-161; Ralph Turner, 'The Cultural Significance of the Early English Industrial Town', in ed. Cornelius W. de Kiewiet, Studies in British History, University of Iowa Studies in the Social Sciences, XI, 1941, pp.32-77; W.H. Thompson, History of Manchester to 1852, Altrincham, 1966; Helen E. Meller, 'The Organised Provision for Cultural Activities and Their Impact on the Community 1870-1910, with special reference to the City of Bristol', unpublished Ph.D., University of Bristol, 1968; George Chandler, Liverpool, London, 1957.
2. Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, paperback edition, London, 1968, p.36; G.C. Holland, The Vital Statistics of Sheffield, London, 1843, pp. 26-27.

in Sheffield until 1897: throughout most of the second half of the century the town council met in rented rooms. The growth of the heavy steel industry at last provided Sheffield with wealthy men who might have provided civic leadership. This was not to be the case, however: local Liberal M.P. A.J.Mundella wrote of Sheffield in 1871

> 'Everything is mean, petty and narrow in the extreme.
> What a contrast to Leeds! Sheffield would do well
> to spend half a million pounds in improvements. A
> better town hall might be followed by better Town
> Councillors and a more public spirit... I wish you
> would preach the duty of the wealthy intellects of
> Sheffield taking their share in the elevation of the
> town'. 1.

Parallel to the growth of the middle class was the emergence of the working class. The tumultuous years between 1790 and 1820 saw the making of the working class in Sheffield, the political consciousness of its leadership and some of its rank and file forged through economic disclocation, radicalism and religious revivalism. From the earliest years, the working class in Sheffield fall into two broad groups: the labour aristocracy and the proletarian and unskilled working class, shading down into to the 'indiscriminate poor'.[2] The history of the poor in the Victorian city has been imperfectly documented; only recently has this important class begun to be rescued from oblivion.[3] However, the dissemination of the middle class values was scarcely relevant to the submerged urban populations of the nineteenth century and the poor as a social category are largely peripheral to this study. The labour aristocracy were numerically strong in Sheffield and of the greatest importance in the political and social maturation of the community. The classical model of the labour aristocrat involves a consideration of several distinct criteria: in the broadest sense, the labour aristocrat has

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1. Letter from A.J.Mundella to Robert Leader, 15th October, 1871, S.C.L. Mundella mss., quoted in Fletcher, op. cit.,
2. This phrase is used by E.R.Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial city, paperback edition, London 1969, p.142.
3. See for example, Gareth Stedman Jones, Outcast London – A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society, Oxford, 1971.

been characterised by high, regular wages, a superior standard of living and levels of literacy and the protection of the strong trades unions and friendly societies. Generally, pauperism and the proportion of women and children and unskilled and depressed workers in his trade was small. A clear separation forms the ranks of unskilled labour and opportunities for upward social mobility have also been identified as characteristics of the labour aristrocrat. [1].

It was the labour aristocrat who was traditionally in a position to benefit from opportunities for 'embourgeoisment', and therefore was of the greatest importance in the political stability of the community. [2] Conversely, the labour aristocrat could also provide the leadership and political direction for assertive working class groups, operating as a critique of capitalism, or trying to manipulate its rewards for its own ends. In Sheffield, the natural power base of the labour aristrocrat was in the traditional tool and cutlery trades. Men of this type were also found in the heavy steel industry. The labour aristrocracy were found in every trade requiring manual dexterity of a craftsman, but arguably, they were concentrated in the greatest numbers in the forging and grinding branches of the tool and cutlery trades. Of the 21,350 employed in the light trades in 1851, 4,500 were forgers and strikers and a further 4,400 were grinders. The remainder were the lower paid hafters and cutlers, in warehouse work and handle making. [3]

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1. For a discussion of the labour aristocracy, ee E.J.Hobsbawm, 'The Labour Aristocracy in the Nineteenth Century', in Labouring Men - Studies in the History of Labour, London, 1964, pp.272-315.
2. For an analysis of twentieth century embougeoisement, see John Goldthorpe, David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer and Jennifer Platt, The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, Cambridge 1969; David Lockwood, The Blackcoated Worker - A Study in Class Consciousness, London 1958.
3. Pollard, op.cit., p.331.

Thus, 41.6% of men employed in the light trades in 1851 could in theory

have been labour aristocrats. Using the same criteria, in 1891 there were

6,100 forgers and strikers and 5,750 grinders, comprising 36.9% out of a

total workforce of 32,100. [1] The expansion of the warehouse work in the

second half of the century is one factor appearing to undermine the numerical

supremacy of the labour aristocrat. Highly skilled men were also found

in the heavy steel industry, although their numbers are less easy to measure.

First hand melters, responsible for the supervision of some of the most

delicate and crucial processes in steel production, wire drawers and engineers

all come into this category.

Nevertheless, despite their numerical strength, the nature of the

labour aristocracy in Sheffield was modified in several fundamental ways.

Many of the criteria of the classical aristocrat were only partially fulfilled

in Sheffield. Wages paid to craftsmen in the tool, cutlery and silver plate

industry were neither uniformly high nor regular. The prevalence of piece work

and the ajustment of price lists during the poor trade, sub-contracting and

the regular deductions for rents mean that firm statements about weekly wages

are impossible to make. It seems to be the case that in some trades, very high

earnings could occasionally be reached. For example, top saw, sickle and razor

grinders might have expected to earn in excess of 40 shillings a week in

1851. Some of the men who forged table knives and files might also have come

into this category. However, 'the majority of workmen in most trades were

near the lower limits... working on common quality goods. Only a small minority

could ever reach the higher levels'. [2] In addition to this, wages were

traditionally irregular in the light trades, due to the inclination of the

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1. _ibid._, p.332.
2. For wage levels in the light trades see Pollard, _op. cit._, pp.59 - 61,
   129-132; Lloyd, _op.cit._,

craftsmen to work the hours and at the pace which he chose, the dependence on water power and the frequent depressions in trade. Over production undermined the whole strength of the craft industry, as masters undercut each other, often losing their independence and becoming day labourers. Some trades, such as fork grinders, pen blade grinders and razor grinders. had large numbers of depressed craftsmen and a higher proportion of apprentices and akilled men. [1]

Therefore, in Sheffield, all was not well for the labour aristocrat during the nineteenth century: this will be enlarged upon below. Nevertheless, there is an abundant evidence that in times of prosperity, many skilled men were comfortably off. The whole question of the general standard of living is extraordinarily complex. Families with similar levels of income may have chosen to spend their money in entirely different ways. The income of the individual unit varied from week to work, depending on the amount of work available. The incidence of depression brought large groups of highly skilled craftsmen to the verges of poverty in the space of a few months. Nevertheless, contemporary evidence gives strong testimony to the superiority of the Sheffield artisans, especially in comparison with other industrial cities. Holland observed that

> 'The labouring class are higher in intelligence, morality
> and physical condition than where machinery is extensively
> used, as in Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham and Stockport'. [2]

Given the difficulties of constructing a meaningful cost of living index, it seems that real earnings in the Sheffield trades rose steadily in the second half of the nineteenth century, and that fluctuations were to some extent compensated for by downward movements in food prices. [3]

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1. Pollard, op.cit., pp.56-57, 126-129, 142-143; Lloyd, op.cit.,pp. 212-225. See below,pp.57-58.
2. Holland, Vital Statistics, etc., p.10.
3. Sidney Pollard, 'Wages and Earnings in the Sheffield Trades 1851-1914', Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, VI, 1954,pp.49-64; Pollard, 'Real Earnings in Sheffield 1851-1914', ibid., IX, 1957, pp.54-62.

The high wages which could be earned by grinders and forgers have already

been referred to. It has been suggested that a Sheffield workman in

regular employment in the middle of the nineteenth century had a basic stock of

furniture and moveable household goods and perhaps two sets of clothing.

In times of good trade, the workmen were well fed, although the heavy

reliance on meat and wheaten bread in the first half of the century meant

that diet was nutritionally unsound in many cases. Middle class commentators

were always aware of the ability of some artisans to buy the best quaility

food:

> 'in good times, the operatives insist on having the prime
> joints and always get them, because they will give
> higher prices than the professional men think they can
> afford to do'. 1.

This insistence upon the best was still found in the second half of the

century and was marvelled at by another observer:

> 'It is he (the brawny broad-shouldered man of the forge)
> who buys the early peas, the winter salads, the first
> asparagus... and it is the aristocrat of labour - the
> workman who earns his three or four guineas a week, and
> spends it all - that carries offthe fattest capon,
> the plumpest goose and the biggest turkey the market
> affords. 2.

Prosperity was reflected in other ways. The construction of back-to- back

houses was outlawed by the Town Council in 1864 and the availability 3.

of the land on the outskirts of the town was exploited by successive freehold

land and building societies. Thus in the second half of the century, many

of the élite of the artisans managed to buy their own homes in areas

such as Walkley, Parkwood Springs and Heeley. 4. Other forms of investment

and saving also flourished. Even in the trough of the depression in the early

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1. *Pall Mall Gazette*, quoted in Pollard, *History*, etc., p.25.
2. S.P.C.K., *Sheffield*, London, 1864, p.33; Pollard, *History*, etc., pp.107-108.
3. Pollard, *History* etc., p.100.
4. *ibid*., p.22-23; Stainton, *op.cit*., pp.80-97, Hobson, 'Walkley - a Fifty Year Old Working Men's Suburb',*op.,cit*.; Gaskell, 'Yorkshire Estate Development and the Freehold Land Societies in the Nineteenth Century', *op.cit.*

1840's, there were still 14,000 investors in the friendly societies. This
was equivalent to one seventh of the total population, or perhaps between
a third and a half of the adult male workforce.[1] The Sheffield Savings
Bank was patronised by artisans and domèstic servants.[2] Craft societies
and trade unions also flourished, a product of the working man's traditional
pride in his craft. Many unions were prosperous, ably led, and had a strong
sense of solidarity in the saw and edge tool trades.[3] Skilled artisans
also participated to the full in local government, in the affairs of the
chapels and in education. Literacy levels among the skilled workers were
high, escpecially among the silver plate workers and saw grinders.[4]
Poverty too was less noticeable than elsewhere, at least until the depressions
of the 1870's and 1880's created a wholesale dislocation of the Sheffield
trades. During the first half of the century, there were short periods
of severe depression, such as the early 1840's and poor law expenditure
rose rapidly from the 1790's. However, prevalence of poverty in Sheffield was
generally considered to be less serious than in other towns.[5] Despite the
economic crisis of the 1830's, the low poor rate was evidence of the exertions
made by the artisan to maintain his independence.[6]

Thus the culture of Sheffield was shaped and dominated by merchants and
manufacturers, parochial and provincial in outlook, sprung from the traditional

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1. Holland, _Vital Statistics_, etc., p.215, See below, chapters 22 and 25.
2. _ibid._, p.133-134, see below, chapter 22.
3. Pollard, _History_, etc., pp.65-77, 84-85, 134-152.
4. _ibid._, p.34; see below chapter 12.
5. See below, chapter 22.
6. ,Holland, _Vital Statistics_, etc., p.35.

staple trades and independent and articulate artisans, often enjoying good

living standards and fiercely proud of their craft. The relationship between

these classes was extraordinarily complex. The assumption has often been made

that at least until the 1870's, the relationship between masters and men was

intimate and interdependent. Comtemporaries produced strong testimony to

the homogeneity of Sheffield society. In 1824, it was said 'that intercourse

between the different orders of society is general and unreserved'. [1]. Six

years later, John Parker, soon to become one of Sheffield's first members of

parliament, commented :

> 'there is not the marked line of difference between
> the rich man and the poor man which is becoming
> annually more observable in other places. The middle
> ranks are nearer both to the upper and lower'. 2.

In 1843, Royal Commissioner, Jelinger Symonds wrote :

> 'It is scarcely possible to conceive a state in
> which the relations of industry to capital are more
> anomalous or disjointed... it is not easy to draw
> the line in Sheffield between men and masters'. 3.

In 1860, this point was again stressed by Frank Hill, in a history of trade

combinations in Sheffield:

> 'the line of demarcation separating the two classes
> from each other is easily overstepped and indeed
> can scarcely be accurately drawn. A journeyman
> one year may be a master another and a journeyman
> again the year after. Masters and men,in
> consequence, do not hold aloof from one another
> to the same extent as is the case in most places'. 4.

This image of society and culture in Sheffield has been perpetuated by

modern historians: the picture of a 'remarkably homogenous society'[5]. has been

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1. Thomas Ramsay, A Picture of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1824, p.83.
2. John Parker, A Statement of the Population etc., of the Town of Sheffield, Sheffield 1830, p.18. John Parker (1799-1881) was the son of Hugh Parker, landowner, banker and West Riding magistrate. John Parker was elected to parliament in 1832 and served the Whig interest as a junior minister until his defeat in 1852. Hallamshire Worthies etc., p.232.
3. Jelinger Symonds, Report on the Trades of Sheffield and the Moral and Physical conditions of the Young Persons Employed in Them, Sheffield 1842,p.3.
4. Hill, op.cit.,p.534.
5. Sidney Pollard, 'The Ethics of the Sheffield Outrages', T.H.A.S. VII 1951-1957, p.120.

tenacious. Thus Donald Read has described Sheffield as a 'city of
assimilation', in contrast to Manchester and Leeds, cities of conflict,
Sheffield was allegedly spared the class cleavages and tensions which
characterised the textile towns. In Sheffield, there was no wealthy
factory master group and no discontented body of factory operatives.
Sheffield was thus 'happier' than Manchester or Leeds. [1] Like Birmingham,

> 'The economic and social structure of... Sheffield
> was thus a unity, with few men much elevated and
> relatively few downtrodden'. 2.

However, this picture of a homogeneous and integrated society, spared
the cleavage of class war, has to be squared with the tensions and conflicts
which could take place within and between the classes. Arguably, the
apparent homogeneity of class interests in Sheffield masked the real social
conflicts, which were openly expressed, principally between 1790 and 1820
and again in the 1840's. Whilst Birmingham has earned itself the image of a
'gently graded class structure , to which the classic dichotomy of
bourgeoisie and proletariat was Unknown',[3] in Sheffield the hardening of
class lines by the third quarter of the century was apparent. Thus A.P.
Laurie repprted in 1895 that he knew of:

> 'no other manufaturing town where the contrast between
> the dwelling places of the rich and poor are so
> strongly marked, or the separation between them so
> complete'. 4.

Thus it is necessary to examine in depth the relationship of the social
classes in Sheffield. The interaction of middle and working classes was
determined by the economic structure of the community, the geographical and
social segregation which existed within the city, the level and quantity of
antagonisms which characterised politcal and economic relationships and the
extent to which the classes recogmised the need for and benefitted by political

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1. Donald Read, _Press and People_, London, 1961, pp.15-16.
2. Read, _Provinces_, etc., p.35.
3. Tholfsen, _op.cit._, p.146.
4. R.C. on Secondary Education (PP.1895, VIII), p.165.

co-operation.

The economic structure was of course dominated by the workshop system.
Despite the growth of larger units and the decline in the independence
of the skilled worker, the typical unit of production remained the workshop.
Even at the end of the nineteenth century, more men were employed in the
workshops than in the steel mills. The light trades were not outstripped
by heavy industry, in terms of numbers, until just before the first world war. [1]
The economic relationships in which the worker found himself was one of
the prime determinants of his political consciousness. The dominance of the
craft industry and the labour aristrocracy meant that proletarianisation of
the workforce was arrested. Thus the political experience of Sheffield was
not the same as that of Oldham, where 12,000 working class families sold their
labour to 70 capitalistsfamilies. [2] Within the workshop system, the typical
unit of production was small. A master w orked alongside a maximum of
perhaps six journeymen and apprentices. Some manufacturers controlled
increasing numbers of small masters and outworkers; however, these were
typically scattered all over the city and the individual unit was still small.
Most workers thus retained an important degree of independence, although
this was undermined during the course of the century. Many of the labour
aristocrats themselves were in effect employers as well as producers, due
to the prevalence of sub-contracting or 'co-exloitation': the artisan was'to
a certain extent a capitalist'. [3] For these structural reasons, the
distinction between the employer and employee was blurred at the point of
production. Although the loyalty of the individual worker to his craft was
usually strong, the division of labour and the small units of production
may have inhibited the growth of the proletarian class consciousness.

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1. Pollard,_History_, etc., pp.333-334: in 1911, there were 34,800 in the
   light trades and 38,379 in the heavy trades.
2. John Foster, 'Nineteenth Century Towns – A Class Dimension', in ed.
   H.J.Dyos, _The Study of Urban History_, London 1968,p.284, also see Foster,
   _Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution-Early Industrial
   Capitalism in Three English Towns_, London 1974.
3. Hill, _op.cit._, p.530.

Opportunities for social mobility within the workshops was another factor which influenced class relationships. The skilled workers customarily owned their own tools and equipment and could produce goods on their own account and with little difficulty. Expansion could be achieved by multiplying existing units of production and employing additional workers. Capital costs were always low, because a place at a grinding wheel or in a workshop could be rented. The transition from workman to master was thus rarely inhibited by lack of capital. [1] The ease and frequency with which this process occurred was documented by G.L.Saunders;

> ' That small makers can succeed in Sheffield is
> singularly proved by the fact that nearly all
> the manufacturers at present doing the largest
> amount of trade... commenced originally as small
> masters and have gradually, to their honour and
> credit, arisen to be merchant princes'. [2]

The transition from man to master involved no change in culture. Leader tells us that the "Little Mester" continued as before to labour with bare arms and in leather apron. [3] From men such as these, Master Cutlers and Town Trustees were chosen in the first half of the nineteenth century and these in turn were searcely distinguishable from small masters:

> 'They had the same homely habits, the same vernacular,
> the same difficulties with penmanship and spelling
> and grammer. They spent their days in aprons, with
> their sleeves tucked up'. [2]

Artisans could rise to be Master Cutler not by birth or inheritance by industry and skill. In turn, it was not unusual for former Master Cutlers to be in receipt of charity from the Corporation because of their poverty. [4] And if the masters were often modest in their wealth and their behaviour, some workingmen could exceed them in prosperity through careful saving. In 1843, a working grinder was able to lend his master £300, when

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1. Lloyd op.cit.,p.192-193; Pollard, History, etc., p.56
2. G.L.Saunders, Town and Country, Being a Brief Sanitary Investigation into Causes of the Difference of the Death Rate in Urban and Rural Districts Also an Inquiry into the Health of Sheffield, Sheffield 1860 p.25.
3. Leader, Eighteenth Century, etc., P.13.
4. ibid., p.14

the latter was on the verge of disaster, due to the collapse of Parker Shore's Bank.[1.]

The close relationships between master and men were not materially altered by the advent of factories. Ofcourse, factories did not at first involve factory methods of production. The first 'factories', such as the Sheaf Works of Messrs Greaves, the Ibbotsons' Globe Works, and the Washington Works of George Wolstenholm, were essentially concentrations or workshops, albeit under the direction of one manufacturer. As may as 800 found employment in the Washington works in times of good trade. However, work space was still rented and the workmen retained a degree of independence through controlling his own raw materials, and frequently producing goods for sale outside the factory. The worker could still have the status of the small capitalist and continue to employ his own journeymen and apprentices. At the same time, the manufacturer was free to commission outworkers to fulfill certain stages of the productive processes. [2.]

The growth of the heavy steel industry in the third quarter of the century saw the rapid increase in large capital and labour intensive units. The transition from the heavy workshop systems was gradual however. Most of the first generation of steel manufacturers were originally cutlers and tool makers, accustomed to the intimacy of the workshop and perpetuated the familiar relationships with their men.   These ways ended only with the deaths of men such as Mark Firth and John Brown in the 1880's and the increasing size and impersonality of industrial management in the last

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1.   Lloyd, op.cit., p.191
2.   Pollard, History etc., p.55; Lloyd, op.dit., p.182

quarter of the century.[1.] Other workshop traditions died hard. Gangs,
picework and sub-contracting still survived even in very large industrial
units at the end of the century.[2.] Nevertheless, despite the need for
skilled men, the steel industry heralded the gradual proletarianisation
of the workforce. The increasing scale of the work and the numbers employed
gave the workforce a sense of identity vis-à-vis the employer, which cut
across the time honoured distinctions between craftsmen and labourer.
There were changes in the status of the skilled men, which will be discussed
below.

The growth of the class divisions in economic relationships were
reflected in the changing physical relationships within the city.
The urban development of Sheffield in the nineteenth century has already been
discussed. In the first half of the century, men and masters tended on the
whole to live and work in close proximity. Although the westward migration
of wealthier families was beginning, their houses were modest in their
pretensions. The emergence of the single class suburb was hardly a
reality in 1850. By 1870 however, there was a clear sense of residential
division along the lines of social class. The changing location of heavy
industry meant that the dichotomy between the salubrious western suburbs
and the industrial sector to the east became more marked. Darnall, Heeley,
Attercliffe, Grimesthorpe and Brightside developed as single class suburbs
for steel workers and miners, while Ranmoor, Fulwood and Endcliffe provided
exclusive homes for the managerial and capitalist class.

The divisions of the city along the lines of social class and the
increasing proletarianisation of the workforce were evidence of the
economic separation of the classes in the second half of the century.
Nevertheless, class conflict had its roots in the late eighteenth century
in Sheffield: antagonism between manufacturers and artisans and also the

1. Walton, op.cit., pp.181,194, Mark Firth 'manly and massive, ate his
    meat pie lunch in the workshop, cooked daily for him by the wife
    of one of his workmen.

2. Pollard, History, etc., p.163

recognition of the need for mutual co-operation, were the paradoxical responses to the pace of economic change between 1790 and 1850.

The development of an independent radical tradition among the Sheffield artisans has been well documented.[1] 'Radical Leicester, Turbulent Nottingham and riotous Sheffield'[2] were the storm centres of the insurrectionary activity in the 1790's. The effects of high food prices and enclosures, the erosion of the older moral economy and popular rights, created tensions between 1790 and 1820. During this period, there were at least fifteen popular disturbances in Sheffield.[3] The years between 1791 and 1796 saw an intensification of political activity and the formation of the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information with wide local support.[4] The arrest of leader of the Constitutional Society and the prominent radical James Montgomery.[5] and the shooting

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1. See especially E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, paperback edition, London 1968, passim;
2. Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1820., London, 1969, p.180.
3. F.K. Donnelly, 'Popular Disturbances in Sheffield 1790-1820, unpublished M.A., University of Sheffield, 1970, passim.
4. G.P. Jones, 'The Political Reform Movement in Sheffield,' T.H.A.S. IV., 1937, pp.57-68; A.W.L. Seaman, 'Reform Politics in Sheffield 1791-1797', ibid., VII, 1956, pp. 215-228; Crawshaw, op.cit.; J.L. Baxter, 'The Methodist Experience in Sheffield 1780-1820'; A Study of popular Religion and Social Change', unpublished M.A., University of Sheffield, 1970, pp.25-33; Thompson, op.cit., pp.135, 121, 143-45.
5. James Montgomery (1771-1854) was arguably the most prominent man in Sheffield during the first half of the nineteenth century. Minor poet and editor of the Sheffield Iris, he acquired a reputation for radicalism in the early 1790's and was twice im prisoned by the authorities. By the early 1800's however, he had become politically moderate and earnestly devoted himself to humanitarian and philanthropic activities, See Harvey Beutner, 'With Fraternal Feeling Fired - The Life and Work of James Montgomery', unpublished ph.D., North Western University, 1957, for the most complete account of his life; odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc., pp. 22-26.

of rioters by the volunteers brought political feeling in the town
to fever pitch in these years.[1] The failure of revolutionary
aspirations after 1795 coincided with a period of revivalism among the
Methodists and political aspirations were diverted into millenarial
expectation. Economic dislocation, high food prices and unemployment
produced a re-emergence of political conflict in the years between
1810 and 1820, and there was evidence of a continuous revolutionary
tradition extending from the mid-1790's into the second decade of the
nineteenth century. Events in Sheffield 1816-1817 and in the 1820's
may be evidence of the synchronisation of local revolutionary feeling with
national attempts at general insurrection.[2]

The economic depression of the late 1830's and 1840's resulted in
a second period of concentrated radical activity, on the part of an
increasingly articulate and politically conscious section of leadership
of the working class, in alliance with the poor. During the 1830's,
there were two chief sources of grievance. The political aspirations of
many artisans had been negated by the limited franchise in 1832; during
the first elections, the popular candidate Thomas Asline Ward failed to
secure a seat and in the violence which followed six townspeople were
died at the hands of the troops.[3] The Poor Law Act caused bitter
feelings in Sheffield, due to the high levels of unemployment in the town
and the refusal of skilled men to be pauperised by the workhouse. Some
employers, notably Samuel Roberts, opposed the Poor Law, and there was

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1. S.L.R., 29th May 1794; also ibid., 15th October 1794, 15th December,
   1794, 22nd January 1795, 4th April 1795 and 21st January 1796.
2. Donnelly, op.cit., passim.
3. S.L.R. 12th December 1832; ibid., 14th December 1832, 18th December,
   1832, 31st December 1832; White, op.cit., pp.83-84.

considerable resistance in Sheffield to the new legislation.[1]

Events such as these in the 1830's helped to secure the sympathies of middle class radicals in Sheffield for the working class Sheffield Political Union and the Sheffield Workingmen's Association. Events after 1838 helped to crystallize political perspectives, however; the process of Chartism in Sheffield and its relationship to mass political consciousness is as yet imperfectly understood, but there is no doubt that there was a growing schism between the moderate suasionists and physical force Chartists. The abortive plan for an armed rebellion in Sheffield in 1840 alienated many.[2] Attempts to combine middle class radicals and moderate Chartists in a complete Suffrage Union, 1842, were wrecked by physical force elements. The Chartist movement wa s weakened further by the split between the followers of O'Connor and Harney in 1842.[3] The establishment of the new town council in 1846 gave a legitimate force for political activities and radical activity wasxless apparent in the mid-1840's. Although there was an upsurge in Chartist activities in 1848, accompanied by large mass meetings, there seems to be little doubt that Chartism as a popular movement had lost its appeal by the end of the decade.[4]

Popular opposition to middle class power was paralleled in industrial relations. Industrial conflicts show the extent to which the economic interests of men and master were in opposition during the century. This falls into two phases. The period between 1790 and the 1840's saw the

1. S.L.R. 14 June 1837; ibid., 21 June 1837; Roberts Autobiography, etc., pp.157-167; also see Roberts, A Solemn Appeal to the Ministers of the Gospel of Every Denomination on the Subject of the Poor Laws, Sheffield 1837, and Truth; or, the Fall of Babylon the Great, Sheffield 1845, and numerous other writings in S.C.L., Pollard, History etc., pp.39-40.
2. S.L.R. 11 January 1840, S.I. 14 January 1840, S.M. 25 January 1840; Pollard, History etc., p.47.
3. S.L.R. 25 July 1842; ibid., 20 December 1842.
4. Pollard, History, etc., pp.48-49.

development of trades unions, politically as well as economically opposed to the interests of the employers. [1] Some unions emerged out of the struggle against the masters within the Cutlers' Company between 1780 and 1814. Many of the functions of the company were adopted by the unions as of right and they sought to fix prices, maintain standards of workmanship and regulate apprentices. However, the Comination Acts, in force between 1799-1800 and the mid 1820's were a reflection of the hostility of government and employers to working class organisations. [2] During the early part of the century , the unions were thus forced underground and became part of the broader revolutionary tradition. Direct provocation was offered to the employers in 1810 and 1814, when the unions attempted to raise wage rates in line with war time prices. The attitude of the employers was occasionally punitive, as in 1815 when eight silver plate workers were convicted of forming a combination. [3] This period saw a hardening of the lines of industrial conflict, with the attempt by the employers to form their own protective associations. Unity of interest between employers was in practice difficult to achieve, due to the diversity of their operations; many masters were ex-members of unions, and sympathetic to the struggle of the artisans. Associations of employers were formed in 1814, 1817 and 1823 to combat specific threats. [4] However, these were weak and short-lived.

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1. For early trades unionism in Sheffield see Hill, op.cit.passim.
2. Pollard, History, etc., pp.65-66.
3. ibid., p.67; Donnelly, op.cit., p.78, S.L.R. 6 April, 1810, ibid., 28 May 1810.
4. Pollard, History, etc., p.68, S.L.R.23 March, 1814. ibid., 28 May 1814.

During the 1830's and 1840's, there were increasing frictions between employers and workmen, as depression in trade laid bare the irreconcileability of their economic interests. Delegate meetings of the major trades became more frequent. Co-operation was especially marked from 1838 and many of the unions met to discuss Chartism and the threat of government measures against the unions. Discussions on the Trade depression resulted in concrete schemes for union of all trades. The National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour was formed in 1845 to defend workers against prosecution by employers and to defend existing wage rates. [1] The employers were also attempting to organise and the Sheffield Manufacturer's and Tradesmen's Protection Society was formed in 1844. [2] This society was intended to combat 'rattening', the temporary removal of tools and equipment by which unions attempted to bring non-union men into line. Rattening was considered by manyunionists to be an unassailable moral right, with the failure of the government to protect the interests of the unions by legislation. [3] Employers interpreted rattening as an indefensible iterruption of the right to work and the Protection Society undertook the prosecution of John Drury, the secretary of the razor grinders' union, which had been involved in rattening. This brought to a head the conflict between unions and employers. Drury was acquitted on a technicality, but not before the N.A.U.T.P.L. had seriously exhausted its strength in his defence. [4] The constituent unions in the Association continued to pursue their own separate interests in the late 1840's.

The second half of the century saw the continued struggle of men against

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1. Pollard, <u>History</u> etc., pp.73-74.
2. <u>ibid.</u>, p.72.
3. <u>ibid.</u>, p.71; Pollard, <u>T.H.A.S.</u>, etc., <u>passim</u>; ed. Sidney Pollard, <u>Trades Union Commission: The Sheffield Outrages Inquiry</u>, reprinted 1971, pp. v-xvii.
4. Pollard, <u>History</u>, etc., pp.72- 74 -75. John Drury, <u>Reply of the Committee of the Central United Grinding Branches in Sheffield to Earl Fitzwilliam's Speech</u>, Sheffield, 1844.

masters. With the collapse of Chartism however, the trade unions retreated

from a political or revolutionary perspective and were content to negotiate

with the employers to consolidate or improve their position within the

workings of capitalism. The 1850's saw the beginnings of organised unions

in the heavy trades. [1] However, the progress of the unions in the light

trades almost up to the end of the century was erratic. Many unions

collapsed, unable to meet the financial demands of lengthy strikes or

unemployment. Employers' Associations developed from the 1860's but still

lacked cohesion. [2] The unions managed a continuous federation from 1858,

with the formation of the Sheffield Association of Organised Trades. In

1872, this was reorganised as the Federation of Organised Trades Societies,

later renamed the Sheffield Federated Trades Council. The Trades Council

rose to considerable importance in the late 1880's, aided the unionisation

of many unorganised branches of the Sheffield trades and achieved working

class representation on local councils and boards. By 1893, over 10,000

workers were represented by the Trades Council. [3] Except for the

engineering trades, the unionisation of the semi-skilled and unskilled

labourers in the steel works was delayed until the 1890's. [4]

Despite their progress in institutional terms during the second half

of the century, the trades unions in Sheffield were increasingly fighting

a rearguard battle against the employers. Easily the most continuous

issue from the 1860's was the introduction of machinery, which ultimately

dealt a death blow to the traditional supremacy of handicraft skills.

Mechanisation was fiercely resisted by the file cutters and resulted in

a 16 week strike in the file trade in 1866. The unions were defeated in this

strike and the principle of machine production in the file trades

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1. ibid.,p.84.
2. ibid.,p.134.
3. ibid.,pp.146-147; Sidney Pollard et.al., Sheffield Trades and Labour Council, 1858-1958, Sheffield, 1958.
4. Pollard, History, etc., p.170.

effectively established. [1] Attempts to maintain or improve price lists also resulted in strikes; the grinders managed to achieve a new list after a two week general strike in 1873. [2] Some trades also struck for the reduction of hours. In 1872, nine hour working was granted in the engineering works, together with additional pay for overtime and night work after a brief strike. [3] Several lengthy strikes in the 1890's achieved wage increases. Edge tool forgers won some wage increases after a four week strike in 1897. [4]

The conflict of employer and employee, expressed in political or economic terms, orchestrated the relationship between the classes in the nineteenth century Sheffield. During the first half of the century, many of the employers themselves wanted reform and sections of the working class adopted a perspective that sometimes verged upon the revolutionary. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1840's the Sheffield artisan had learned to accept his identity of interest with capital. The remainder of the century saw the working out of the process whereby the working class learned to accomodate themselves to the workings of capitalism. The extent to which this identity of interest was real or illusory is a political value judgement: there is a sense in which the co-operation of the worker with the employer was a product of his false consciousness. However, the 'deferential' as opposed to the 'proletarian' working class, responding to a 'hierarchial' rather than a 'dichotomous' model of society was more characteristic of Sheffield by the middle of the nineteenth century. [5]

The apparent integration of the artisan into the political structure

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1. ibid., pp.142-144.
2. ibid., p.142.
3. ibid., p.166.
4. ibid., p.221
5. D.Lockwood, 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society', Sociological Review, XIV, 1966, p.249.

in the mid-nineteenth century can clearly be demonstrated. Co-operation
between the classes in political matters was facilitated by the
persistent reformism of the manufacturing class in the city. The employing
class, anxious for political rights, appeared to have more in common with their
artisans, than with the landed interests who dominated national government.
The Constitutional Society of the 1790's drew some of its members from
the radical manufacturers.[1] In other major political campaigns, working
men were heavily involved in middle class movements. This is true in the
struggle for Catholic emancipation in the late 1820's and in humanitarian
issues, such as the anti-slavery campaign and the opposition to the
employment of boys in chimney-sweeping.[2] There was also co-operation
between the classes to secure the representation of Sheffield in the
Reform Act of 1832. Working men were sympathetic with the Friends of
Reform and with the Political Union.[3] The limited extension of the
franchise was a shock to the temporal aspirations of the bulk of the
working class but many small masters won the vote. Despite the antagonisms
felt by many working men during the 1830's and 1840's, there could still be
co-operation between the classes. Opposition to the Poor Law and the anti-
Corn Law agitation again united working man and employer, and artisans campaigned
against the corn laws from the early 1830's. A petition in 1842 bore
almost 16,000 Sheffield signatures and it has been suggested that the
strength of feeling over their abolition diverted some of the potential
working class support for Chartism.[4]

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1. Baxter, op.cit., p.29.
2. Pollard, History, etc., p.41; Crawshaw, op.cit., pp.80 ff.
3. Crawshaw op.cit., pp.98. ff; S.Ind. 23 July 1832; White, op. cit.,
   p.81; Fletcher, op.cit., p.4-8.
4. Pollard, History, etc., p.42; S.L.R. 15 February, 1842.

The incorporation of Sheffield and the election of the first town council

in 1843, coincided with a period of maximum political consciousness.

There were working men among the freeholders and burgesses who voted in

local government elections. Although in a minority, former Chartists

such as Isaac Ironside and Michael Beal,[1] were elected to the Town Council.

In 1849, Chartists filled eight of the fourteen vacant seats on the Council

and twenty two of the fifty six councillors were Chartists.[2]

Of course, during the 1840's there were crucial issues which exposed

the real conflict of interests between masters and men: 'The tactical

alliance of working class and middle class Radicals broke down...

whenever the interests (mainly economic) of masters and workmen were opposed'.[3]

The Town Council often acted as the forum for middle class interests, while

working men relied on the old popular device of the public meeting for the

expression of their political views. The Chartist caucus began to break

up in 1852, and during the 1850's and 1860's, local government in Sheffield

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1. __Isaac Ironside__ (1808-1870) was Sheffield's most prominent Owenite.
   His political radicalism emerged in the 1830's, with his support of
   the Sheffield Political Union and his interest in education led him into
   the Mechanics' Institute and the Mechanics's Library. He promoted an
   Owenite Hall of Science in the 1840's. He was elected on to the
   Town Council in 1846 and helped to procure the services of the
   advanced radical J.A. Roebuck, as M.P. for Sheffield in 1849. He also
   published the __Sheffield Free Press__. In later life, he was influenced
   by the ideas of Toumlin Smith and David Urquhart but lost credability
   in Sheffield. See John Salt, 'Isaac Ironside and Education in the
   Sheffield Region in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century',
   unpublished M.A. University of Sheffield,1960 and 'Isaac Ironside
   1808-1870, The Motivation of a Radical Educationalist', __British__
   __Journal of Educational Studies__ XIX, 1971, pp.183-201. __Michael Beal__
   (1810-1891), a watchmaker apprentice from Bridlington established
   his own business in Sheffield. He supported moral force Chartism, the
   repeal of the Corn Laws and the Stamp Duty. Active on the Town Council
   from 1853, he became Alderman in 1871 and also served on the Board of
   Guardians. He helped to establish the Liberal Association, founded
   the Chamber of Commerce in Sheffield and was President of the Board
   of Arbitration. See __S.R.I.__ 7 May 1891.
2. Fletcher, __op.cit.__ p.10.
3. Pollard, __History__, etc., p.42.

remained firmly in the hands of the employers.[1] By the 1870's, however

there was a new interest by the workingmen in local politics, stimulated

by the extension of the franchise. Working class candidates came forward

in school board and local government elections in this decade. [2] Nevertheless,

the price of success was the political patronage of the employer and

deference to his value system. Representatives of labour were generally

firm supporters of Liberalism. The Trades Council dominated by workers

drawn from the traditional craft industries customarily co-operated with

the Liberal Party. [3] This co-operation was gradually weakened by the

emergence of socialist groupings among the industrial proletariat in the

eastern part of the city. The irreconcileability of liberal and socialist

interests was revealed by the Attercliffe by-Election in 1894: the Liberals

disapproved of I.L.P. endorsed candidate Charles Hobson, a Britannia metal

smith and a leading member of the Trades Council and Hobson obediently

stepped down in favour of Batty Langley, an employer. The deference of

working class representatives to the Liberal employers is clear. However,

the strength of feeling for the I.L.P. in the east end of the city was

reflected in the fact that their candidate, a stranger to Sheffield and with

no party machine, still polled over 1,000 votes.[4] The path to socialism

was still resisted by many labour representatives in Sheffield however.

The Trades Council withdrew from the elections and between 1908 and 1920

there was a rival trades council, formed by socialists among the ironfounders

and engineers. This disunity weakened the political influence of the labour

leaders.[5]

1. ibid,p.49, Fletcher, op.cit., pp.28-34.
2. See chapter 15.
3. Pollard, History etc., p.197, Pollard et.,al., op.cit., p.13.
4. ibid, p.198; Joyce Brown, 'Attercliffe, 1894: How One Local Liberal Party Failed to Meet the Challenge of Labour', The Journal of British Studies, XIV, pp.48-77.
5. Pollard, History, etc., pp.198-201; Pollard, et.al., op.cit., pp.48.ff.

Therefore, despite the irreconcileability of their econonic interests, the workers learned to co-operate with the employers in the second half of the century. The divisions between master and man were a constant factor and the increasing proletarianisation of the workforce in the last quarter of the century made these divisions more obvious than before. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the labour aristocracy, potentially the strongest and most articulate of the working classes, were unable to alter materially the distribution of economic and political power. The workshop system, with its old familiar relationships and the belief in opportunities for social mobility, was the source of many grievances, but paradoxically took the edge off the emergence of an embryonic class consciousness. This factor, together with the rising standards of living in the second half of the century, made the leadership of the working class generally inclined to accept the status quo, and to direct their energies to making adjustments within the prevailing power relationships.

The acquiescence of the bulk of the working class with capitalism was made possible by their tacit acceptance of the values prescribed for them by the middle class. The ethic of respectability thus emerged as the ideology which supported the co-operation of class with class. The general function of this ethic will be enlarged upon below. [1.] In general, respectability helped to regulate the relations of employers and men and helped both to get the best out of capitalism for themselves. This ideology and the network of institutions and social relationships which supported it, enabled a city such as Sheffield to avoid some of the structural conflicts inherent in rapid industrialisation. Above all it enabled a community undergoing rapid economic and social change to regulate itself and enabled the individuals who were part of this process to make sense of the city. Seeminglyno more than a crude weapon of social control in the hands of the employing class, paradoxically it was also a means

of working class emancipation.

1. See below chapter 3.

The ethic of respectability, while deriving from older traditions, was essentially a nineteenth century solution to an unprecedented social trauma. Sheffield, like every other 'insensate industrial town' in this period was a community under stress:

> 'The cities of the nineteenth century embodied with
> utmost fidelity all the confusions and contradictions
> of the period of transition .... between 1820 and
> 1900 and the chaos of the great cities is like a
> battlefield'. 1.

The increased activity which caused the expansion of the town was the fundamental root of tensions and problems. These were firstly, status-orientated, secondly, environmental and thirdly, cultural.

Anxieties about status were a natural result of the anarchy of unrestrained economic expansion, which reinforced existing tendencies towards social and material emulation. Individualism and competitiveness also meant vulnerability and insecurity. Particularly vulnerable to this were the small producers, retailers and tradesmen, found in large numbers in Sheffield and described as the 'uneasy class'. [2.] The apparent homogeneity of the Sheffield trades in some ways increased this tendency. As has been observed, there was little external distinction between employer and artisan. The employer had the advantage of status in the community and a measure of economic power over his men. Nevertheless, it was common in a characteristically dynamic social situation for employer and workman to have come from the same background, to have shared a minimal education and to have been shaped by the same cultural experiences.

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1. Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities, London, 1938, p.144; Ralph Turner 'The Cultural Significance of the Early English Industrial Town', in ed. Cornelius W.de Kiewiet, Studies in British History, University of Iowa, Studies in the Social Sciences, XI, pp.32-77.
2. R.S.Neale, Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century, London 1972, p.23.

Because of this they may have understood each other better than they
understood the aristocracy and the professional middle class, or the
'rough' working class. The newly prosperous first generation employer
increasingly felt the need to advertise his status and to draw away
from the culture of his background, into new relationships with his own kind.

At the same time, the pursuit of profit seemed constantly to be
endangered by the boisterous and disrespectful culture of his workmen.
The old habits and rhythms of the old craft-based and largely rural industry
of the eighteenth century had to be altered with the advent of steam power,
mechanisation and larger industrial units. The independence of the Sheffield
workman, idle for three days and making up his work in four days' strenuous
activity, had to be made to come to terms with a new and harsher industrial
regime, in which regular and disciplined work was alternated with
controlled recreation. In practice, the old traditions died hard and
were perpetuated in some form even into the heavy steel industry. [1]

The labour aristocrat was also vulnerable to economic pressure.
Wages were often irregular: this was partly due to the disinclination of
the artisan to work a regular week and partly to the operation of market
forces outside his control. Over production was a serious threat, especially
in cutlery, where the Cutlers' Company had ceased to regulate the trade after
1814. Often, individual craft unions were weak and could offer little
protection. Manufacturers were in a position to exploit the workmen
by paying wages in goods instead of money, giving work to unskilled boys
and apprentices, manipulating price lists and holding the artisan in debt
for unpaid workshop rents. The independent outworker, trying to produce
high quality goods with constant overheads, was vulnerable to undercutting
by inferior workmen. This was made worse by the entrepreneurial activities
of the small masters, who in times of bad trade, set up their own and

1. For the older work rythms, see Lloyd, op.cit., pp.180-181

flooded the market with goods at low prices. For all these reasons, some labour aristocrats were forced down to become wage labourers. [1]

As has been observed, mechanisation also posed a threat to the traditional handicraft skills. [2] Periods of depression resulted in unemployment and a short-term decline in the standard of living. The craft industries suffered serious dislocation during the early 1840's, for example. [3] Depressed years in the late 1870's and 1880's resulted in short-time working in the steel industry and threw many skilled and unskilled men out of work. [4] Many unions faltered in the face of accumulated demands upon their resources and were unable to offer protection. [5] In the steel industry, the skilled man was increasingly vulnerable, sandwiched between a growing mass of unskilled labour and a new white collar class of workers and managers. Heavy capital investment and the tendency towards larger units of production, effectively lessened his chance of rising to become en employer. [6]

Environmental problems affected perhaps the majority of the townspeople of Sheffield during the nineteenth century, although these were felt most strongly by the working class. It has already been established that the

1. Lloyd, op.cit., pp.191-196; Pollard, History, etc., pp.54-59 S.C. on the Sweating System, Third Report, (P.P.1889,XIII) AA.24700-24910, Hill, op.cit., pp.532-533.
2. Lloyd, op.cit., pp.178-19f; Pollard, History,etc.,p.126-129, 142-143, 203ff.
3. See especially G.C.Holland, The Mortality, Sufferings and Diseases of Grinders, London, 1841: Part 1 pp.21-34, Part 2,pp.17-47, Part 3, pp.30-33; Holland, Vital Statistics etc., pp.36ff.
4. Pollard, History, etc., pp.125-126,164.
5. ibid., pp.134-137, 170.
6. ibid., pp.170-171, 235-136: Hobsbawm, op,cit., p.297.

quality of life in Sheffield during the first half of the century was

superior to those of cities such as Manchester and Liverpool, whose

population increased steeply in the two decades after 1820. [1] Nevertheless,

in some important respects, living conditions were far from ideal and

deteriorated sharply in the third quarter of the century. Even in the

1840's street cleansing and drainage were deficient and public sewers

inadequate for local needs. [2] Bad drainage and insanitary water supply

led to recurrent outbreaks of disease. The cholera epidemic of 1832 killed

400, including the Master Cutler and cholera was again in the town in

1849. There were epidemics of smallpox in 1871-2 and 1887. The Town

Council was slow to act on matters of public health. The risk of disease

only retreated in the 1880's, when adequate arrangements for the disposal

of sewage began to be made for the first time. Individual houses remained

unsewered, however and Sheffield was still a privvy midden town at the end

of the century. [3] Local sanitary conditions shocked visitors to Sheffield

and 'Virtually everywhere the picture was essentially the same: working

class families struggling to lead decent lives in conditions of

unimaginable dirt and neglect'. [4]

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1. See above, p.15.
2. Holland, _Vital Statistics_, etc., pp.75-76.
3. Pollard, _History_, etc., pp.10-11, 93-96. J.Haywood and William Lee, _Sanitary Condition of Sheffield_, Sheffield 1848; Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, (P.P.XVIII, 1845)p.317; for relative mortality rates for Sheffield and the surrounding countryside, see ibid, First Report, (PP.XVII) pp.149-150. Saunders, _op.cit._; Medical Officer of Health, _Annual Reports_; Dr.Barry, Report of an Epidemic of Smallpox at Sheffield during 1887-1888, London 1889; John Stokes, _The History of the Cholera Epidemic of 1832 in Sheffield_, Sheffield 1921.
4. Pollard, _History_, etc., p.94.

A second source of chronic illness for the workforce was the nature of local industry. Occupational diseases led to high mortality for men otherwise in their prime. The dust given off from the grinding wheels led to silicosis with a high incidence of tuberculosis. By the middle of the century, the disease had assumed major proportions, as the numbers of steam wheels proliferated. These drew men into the town, crowded them into cramped accommodation and enabled them to work almost continuously over their stones. Trades which involved dry grinding were particularly lethal, in the absence of water to settle the dust. Fork and razor grinding were perhaps the most dangerous of all, and in these trades, few men lived to be over 30 years of age. Other occupational hazards faced by the grinders were the dangers of maiming through the breaking of the grindstones at speed, injury through moving belts, and the general dampness and insanitary conditions which prevailed in the workshops. Sheffield doctors were aware of the dangers inherent in grinding as early as 1819, and 'Grinders' Asthma' was investigated in detail by G.C.Holland in the 1840's and J.C.Hall in the 1850's. Fans and other protective devices which might have lessened mortality were slow to be adopted however, and the grinders themselves were resistant to the introduction of safety devices. File cutting was another prominent trade in which there were significant risks. Files were usually cut by hand on a bed of lead and the lack of any elementary hygiene often resulted in lead poisoning.[1]

Chronic illness and the inability to work was thus the fate of many of Sheffield's skilled workers, wasted painlfully under the effects of lead poisoning or pulmonary illnesses. Trade unions and friendly societies gave some protection against the consequences of sickness, although men in the most lethal trades were not usually welcomed. [2]

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1. Occupational diseases in Sheffield have been well documented. See Arnold Knight, Observations on Grinder's Asthma, Sheffield 1822; Holland, Vital Statistics, etc., pp.111-115; Holland, Mortality etc.; Holland, Diseases of the Lungs from Mechanical Causes, Sheffield 1843; J.C.Hall, On the Prevention and Treatment of the Sheffield Grinder's Disease, Sheffield, 1857; Hall, Effects of Certain Trades on Life and Health 2nd edition, Sheffield. 1865. Pollard, History etc. pp. 62-65.

2. See below, chapter. 25.

Of course, illness or accident to the wage earner accelerated the cycle

of poverty for many working class families and the uncertain support from

a friendly society was no compensation for loss of health or wages.

Occupational diseases were a constant threat to the security of the Sheffield

worker until the advent of mechanisation and the wider use of safety

equipment in the twentieth century.

The deterioration in the standard of housing was another source of

stress in the second half of the century. When the building of back-to-back

houses was prohibited locally in 1864, there were 38,000 houses of this

type standing and the bulk of these remained until the twentieth century.

The average number of persons per house stood at 4.8 in 1891, and was

lower than in most other industrial towns. [1] This obscures the fact that

bad housing did exist, usually on speculative housing held on short leases,

such as that owned by the Duke of Norfolk in the Park, which was admitted

by the Norfolk estate to be among the worst in town. There were notorious

slum areas in the Crofts, the Ponds and in the streets between Scotland

Street and West Bar, and these returned some of the highest death rates

in the city. Action was only gradually begun against these areas in the

1890's and the Corporation demolished the Crofts as part of its first slum

clearance scheme in 1900. [2]

Another important source of stress was the problem of cultural disorientation

experienced by the migrants. Reference has already been made to the high

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1. Pollard, _History_, etc., pp.100-101.
2. _ibid._, pp.101-105; for the Crofts, see S.M.Gaskell, ' A Landscape of
    Small Houses: the Failure of the Workers' Flat in Lancashire and
    Yorkshire in the Nineteenth Century', in ed. Anthony Sutcliffe,
    Multi-Storey Living: The British Working Class Experience, London,
    1974, pp.110-113.

proportion of immigrants which made up Sheffield's population. In
1851, half the adult population had been born outside the town. The
overwhelming majority of these had come from a rural background. There
were concentrations of migrants in the expanding working class suburbs
and many of the newcomers found work as unskilled labour in the steel works.
In Darnall in 1871, almost the whole population were newcomers. As in 1851,
most of these were drawn from the immediate hinterland of Sheffield, from
Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. [1] Some of
the immigrants were already experienced metal workers and miners. The
overwhelming evidence, however, is of an influx of families and single men
used to a rural way of life, trying to make their way in unfamiliar
and urban environment. The destruction of the older forms of community meant
the breakdown of natural order, stability and continuity, and an end to
the existence of shared and established norms and values. Thus anomie was
one source of stress. [2] Migrants had to learn to accommodate themselves
to the city, but the city also had to adjust to them. The traditions and
cultureswhich they brought with them fed a new and distinctly urban
culture, but were also irrevocably eroded themselves.

Thus the difficulties of making a decent life were common to most
working class families in Sheffield during the nineteenth century. However,
despite the spectacular and unprecedented crisis of the Victorian city,
in the end material problems were to be eased:

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1. Based on the work of a W.E.A. class, Darnall, 1976.
2. Alasdair MacIntye, Secularization and Moral Change, London 1967, p.12,
   For anomie, see Emile Durkheim, Suicide, - Study in Sociology, trans.
   John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, London 1952 and R.K.Merton,
   Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, 1965, p.131.

> 'in time, the housing was improved, the streets were
> paved and sewered and here and there a little
> Victorian prosperity trickled down to the working
> classes. The physical problems, enormous as they
> seemed to sensitive contemporaries, could be
> solved, given the necessary time and money and
> will. The more intangible problems of human
> relationships were far more baffling'. 1.

In the new town of the industrial north, a totally new type of community

was emerging, 'torn by the conflicts of attitudes and interests which

marked the disintegration of a traditional culture and the emergence

of a wider, technical civilisation'. [2.] Every class and category was

marked by this process. The migrant felt rootlessness and disorientation

and faced the problems of trying to make a relationship with a new, alien

and bewildering type of society. The labour aristocrat, once secure in

the possession of fine skills, and the employer, anxious in the pursuit

of profit and status, felt the chill wind of unregulated market forces.

It was vital for the continued progress of society that the social

behaviour of the workforce should not be at odds with economic advance.

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1. J.F.C.Harrison, <u>Learning and Living 1790-1960 - A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement</u>, London, 1961,p.39
2. <u>loc. cit.</u>, see also Margaret B.Simey, <u>Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century</u>, Liverpool, 1951, pp.5-6.

PAGINATION AS IN ORIGINAL

3.   Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture –
                 The Ethic of Respectability

        Coming to terms with industrial capitalism, and the new experience
of town dwelling, thus involved the individual in new relationships, attitudes,
aspirations and fears.   At home and at work, in personal affairs and in
relation to the community, the pace of life was changing.   The rationalization
of these hopes and fears, the need to make sense of the city, involved a
redefinition of values and relationships.   One solution was the ethic of
respectability, supported by a network of new institutions and relationships.
Arguably, the emergence of this ethic, and its social support system, enabled
a city such as Sheffield to avoid some of the structural conflict inherent in
rapid industrialisation.   Through respectability, the middle classes, and an
important section of the working classes, were integrated into a common social
ideology.   In Sheffield, as in Birmingham, this ethic was the natural
development of tendencies already at work in the culture of the community.[1]
The strength of the workshop system, with its familiar relationships and
opportunities for social mobility, bound master and man together in an apparent
identity of interest.   Although the fundamentally exploitative nature of the
workshop system gave rise to persistent radicalism among some artisans in the
first half of the century, paradoxically, the intimate relationship of master
and man in the small unit of production blunted the edge of the revolutionary
tradition, and arrested the development of a proletarian class consciousness.

        In Sheffield, middle class initiative from above, in conjunction'
with working class self-help from below, helped to alleviate the problems of
the city by the creation of the ethic of respectability, and the network of
social institutions and relationships which supported it.   Respectability
has been defined as 'the approximation of working class codes of behaviour
to those of the middle classes'.[2]   On the other hand, it may be more realistic

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1.   Tholfsen, op.cit., p. 146.
2.   Pollard, History, etc., p. 122.

to see respectability as a system of values prescribed _by_ the middle classes _for_ the working classes, and acquiesced in by deferential elements within the working class. Respectability was therefore not just a statement of 'middle class consciousness', although this was an important function. Rather, it became an ideology which united the middle classes with sections of the working class in a vertical relationship.

Respectability was essentially the social expression of a behavioural conditioning, which permeated through inner attitudes, outer appearance, and general social conduct: 'the combination of certain moral qualities with a few simple techniques of living would produce those habits which would, almost inevitably, lead to success'.[1] The pedigree of those ideas was essentially Puritan, transmitted and reshaped through the dominant evangelicalism of the Victorian middle classes. In this way, what have been described as 'the social devices and conveniences of the age' were transformed into the prevailing norms and values of 'respectable' culture, by the compulsion of moral and religious sanction.[2]

Self-improvement, both intellectual and moral was the obsessive preoccupation of the individual who wished to be respectable. Samuel Smiles, its most famous propagandist, claimed that 'the spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual'.[3] He also believed that it was the true source of national progress and vigour: the link between self-help and economic prosperity was fundamental to Victorian psychology. Appearance and behaviour were regarded as essential indications of improvement. Cleanliness and neatness in dress, and modest y in behaviour, were the ideal. Unremitting diligence, the capacity for hard work, was the major quality necessary for success. This would bring an improved income, and the independence vital for self-esteem. The lesser virtues of thrift, frugality

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1.   Hanson, _op.cit._, p. 11.
2.   _Loc.cit_; see also John Marlowe, _The Puritan Tradition in English Life_, London, 1956, and see below, chapter 7.
3.   Samuel Smiles, _Self-Help_, paperback edition, London, 1968, p.11.

and self-denial were the means to this end.   Habits of punctuality, early rising, order and regularity, and an unswerving attention to detail, were some of the other supplementary virtues.   In this process, the role of the family, and particularly the woman as a refining and stabilising influence were paramount.   Privatised and family centred activities protected a man from harm, and a 'prudent marriage' was essential to the process of self-help.[1]

All social conduct which worked against this ethic was discouraged. There were taboos against sexual activity, except for the purpose of procreation, and 'sensual' amusements were to be shunned.   Loyalty to the middle class ethos in politics and religion was also demanded.   Religious infidelity and secularism , and involvement in political agitation or trades disputes implied the rejection of middle class standards, or even the naked expression of class aggression: such activities were not to be the provenance of the respectable.

In all these ways, the implication of the ethic of respectability was that it was the instrument of self-help and social mobility.   However, not all working men who were respectable could expect or indeed be allowed to become 'middle class'.   The enlarged opportunities for upward social mobility, and the implications of this, was accompanied by an intense consciousness of status.   It was important that a working man who modelled himself upon the stereotype should also know his place, and be satisfied with it.   A workforce of honest, diligent artisans was essential to the continued profit of industry, and only a minority could be allowed to rise above this. Thus unpretentious clothing, deference to superiors and to authority in the work-place and in the community were essential traits.

The ethic of respectability sprang from the fundamental premise that working class culture was a danger to the continued progress of society. Fears which were economic and social in their basis were expressed in religious and moral terms.   The short-comings of working class culture were defined in

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1.   Harrison, op.cit., pp. 86, 208; MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 41.

terms of idleness, drunkenness, irreligion and improvidence. The failure

of the working classes to conform to the economic ideal prescribed by Calvin

and Wesley turned middle class fears above the intransigence of the workforce

into a religious crusade. Religion thus became the political and moral

weapon of the employer. Behaviour which distracted from the pursuit of

profit was 'sin', and the competitive strivings of the economically ambitious

were given the ultimate sanction of religion. Thus the values of seventeenth

century puritanism were manipulated in order to answer the problems of the

employing class in the nineteenth century: 'the Evangelican discipline,

secularised as respectability, was the strongest binding force in a nation

which without it might have broken up'.[1]

This ideology was strengthened by the needs of the employer, anxious

to uphold profit and status by denunciations of working class culture.

Increasingly, this involved the assumption of the right to control and

determine working class life. This was part of the process whereby the

middle class took the leadership in social reform, religion and municipal

politics. In the context of this new awareness, working class culture

appeared at best as a problem, at worst as a threat.

It was in the work situation that one of the key issues emerged.[2]

The employer believed that it was necessary inthe interests of profit, and

therefore of the community as a whole, to condition a recalcitrant work force

to the demanding and alien habits of regularity, punctuality, diligence and

sobriety. In Sheffield, the nature of the workship system created many

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1.   G.M. Young, Victorian England - Portrait of an Age, London, 1960,
       p.5; Marlow, op.cit., passim.
2.   For work discipline and changing perceptions of time, see
       E.P. Thompson, 'Time, work discipline and Industrial Capitalism'.
       Past and Present, XXXVIII, 1967, pp. 56-97; Sidney Pollard, The
       Genesis of Modern Management, paperback edition, London, 1965, pp.
       213-231.

opportunities for licence. The skilled man, fiercely proud of his craft, and able to earn a living from a short, strenuous week, was disinclined to have his independence curtailed by longer or more regular hours. Many artisans were drawn from a rural culture, accustomed to older and more relaxed rhythms of work, with drinking and sport alternating with physical exertion.[1] These traditions were kept alive in the urban workshops. In the small unit of production which characterised Sheffield, the effects of absenteeism and irregularity were more obvious.

The behaviour of the worker outside the work situation was also a cause for concern. In order for work to be accepted as sacrosanct, patterns of recreation also had to be regulated, and a firm distinction drawn between work and leisure. Self-improvement should thus be the cornerstone of leisure. Idleness was feared, because it made men vulnerable to vice, and to habits of independent thought, which might lead to political disaffection. The dislike of violence and uncontrolled social behaviour, and the threat to property which this implied, remained a fundamental component of middle class ideology throughout the century.

The conviction of the righteousness of respectability, and the essential viciousness of working class culture, allowed the employer to escape from painful self-questioning. Poverty was a constant and ill-concealed problem throughout the century. Even when tidied away into working class ghettoes, its reality occasionally confronted the employer, and nudged him into a paternalistic and self-confident benevolence. The ethic of respectability was a powerful protection against guilt or responsibility. It provided a criterion with which to judge working class culture, and to find it wanting. Thus poverty, bad housing and disease could be blamed upon the depravity of popular culture; or upon Providence, rather than upon the economic policies of the employer, and his inability to accept moral responsibility for the workings of capitalism.

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1.   For popular culture, see above, chapter 2.

The ethic of respectability was far more than a crude weapon of social control in the hands of the employing class: paradoxically, it was also a means of working class emancipation. Self-respect and independence, and liberation from poverty, illiteracy and drunkenness, were the first basic steps in the creation of a working class political consciousness, and more especially, in the training of an élite of articulate artisans who provided leadership. Working men had to be educated to know their enemy, and to fight the antagonist with his own weapons. Trustworthiness, the ability to organise men and money, were the basic requirements for trade union organisers and friendly society officials. For the ordinary man, respectability and self-help, had material rewards. Through the cultivation of diligence and reliability, the workman could aspire to a position of responsibility within the workshop, or even set up in his own business. Even without ambitions of this nature, the practical applications of these virtues could earn him a reputation for honesty, and improve his chances of regular employment. His standard of living could also benefit, although only a man in receipt of regular wages had much hope of saving. Thrift could also be a safeguard against the excesses of economic fluctuation, and tide a workman over in periods of unemployment. Any surplus could be spent on tangible material rewards, such as consumer goods, which were a powerful advertisement of prosperity and status. The most tantalising inducement to respectability was the reward of a measure of political power. This had to be earned: only the educated and socially conformist artisan could be entrusted with the political independence bestowed by extensions to the franchise.

The ethic of respectability thus was the instrument for the transmission of 'middle class' values to 'working class' culture. It must be set in the context of the relationships of class and culture which characterised Sheffield in the nineteenth century: this is an area of especial complexity.[1]

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1. For the origins of 'class' see Asa Briggs, 'The Language of Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', in Asa Briggs and John Saville, Essays in Labour History, London, 1960; Raymond Williams, Keywords - a Vocabulary of Culture and Society, London, 1976, pp. 51-59.

The fundamental premise is that class and class experience is determined by the relation to the means of production, into which men are born, or drawn involuntarily by changing circumstances. The essence of class is that it presupposes conflict of real interest. Recent attempts to define class in terms of varying consciousnesses, rather than conflicting economic bases, have not been pursued: there is a sense in which a suggestion of a 'five class model' obscures rather than illuminates the real conflict of class interest in the nineteenth century.[1] The analyses of sociologists who approach class without the examination of a single class situation in a real historical context have not been useful.[2]

On the other hand, an analysis of class in terms of crude economic determinism obscures the subtleties of nineteenth century social relationships. Instead, the assumption has been made that class is a dynamic historical process, rather than a sociological category. Thus class has been described as

> 'a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of
> disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both
> in the raw material of experience and in consciousness...
> class happens when some men, as a result of common
> experiences...feel and articulate the identity of
> interests as between themselves, and against other men
> whose interests are different from (and usually opposed
> to) theirs'.3

The elusive and complex nature of class and class experience is well demonstrated by the example of Sheffield. Any discussion of class in relation to Sheffield in its period of industrialization involves real structural problems. As has been observed, the fundamental distinction between employer and employee at the point of production was blurred by the

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1.   R.S. Neale, Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1972, pp. 1-40

2.   For example, R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, London, 1959, pp. 148-149

3.   E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, paperback edition, 1968, pp. 9-10

prevalence of co-exploitation: artisans who sold their labour also exploited the labour of others, and were thus paradoxically both exployers and workers. This was the single most important factor determining the political conscious-ness of the city. This apparent ambiguity of class relationships was reflected in the false consciousness of the skilled worker, believing in opportunities for upward social mobility, and clinging to his independence as a small producer long after the economic reality of this had diminished. While the skilled worker could be pushed to the bounds of subsistence in times of depression, periods of good trade and the general rise in living standards in the second half of the century encouraged the artisan to believe in his identity of interest with capital. This persisted even into the third quarter of the century, which saw the hardening of class lines, the decline of the status of the skilled worker, and the growth of large capital and labour intensive units.

This acquiescence on the part of the labour aristocrat with the interests of the employing class created a distinctive pattern of social relationships. Thus the real division between employer and employee, based upon the irreconcileability of their economic interests, was cut across by vertical relationships, built upon a supposedly common consensus of interest. From the basis of the economic co-operation of class with class, new perspectives towards culture emerged, which in turn reinforced the strength of this consensus.

This analysis has dealt so far with class in terms of social relationships. There is also the problem of the individual in relation to a total class situation. The different perceptions of class create particular problems forthe historian: for example, the individual in a class situation may be defined in terms of his own consciousness of his class, how contemporaries saw him, and what we feel his 'real' class situation to have been. The reality of class, and the relationship to the means of production,

may be obscured by real or perceived differences in status and power. A study of respectability creates especial difficulties, because it is concerned with the transmission of values, and opportunities for upward social mobility. The real class basis of the individual, defined in economic terms, is concealed by the assumption of values and relationships alien to the experience of that class. Working men who involved themselves in chapel or temperance society, and assimilated the language and values of their employers, were still working class. Many individuals involved in the propagation of respectability were no longer working men in the clearly understood sense, and had become petty capitalists and tradesmen. Yet, if they were small masters, they could still be vulnerable to economic exploitation by merchants and larger manufacturers, and lacked the cultural superstructure of the established middle class. Men such as Michael Beal, apprentice turned jeweller, and Isaac Ironside, stove grate fitter turned accountant, appear to stand at the very intersections of class, employers of labour with a stake in the future of society, yet sprung from a working class background, and speaking as the self-appointed representatives of that class. The difficulties of locating such individuals in a class situation is duplicated innumerable times in a community such as Sheffield, where the working man sometimes had the appearance of economic power, and where the employer often sold his own labour elsewhere, and rarely participated in the trappings of middle class culture.

For the purposes of this thesis, 'middle class values' means the values prescribed by the employers for their workmen. These were not always the values of 'middle classness', although they may have contributed to the emergence of that class. Not all employers lived exemplary lives: there could be a serious credibility gap between the standards which they set for their men, and their personal behaviour, for example, in relation to credit, or to drink; teetotalism in particular could expose a chronic disparity between the

public and private faces of reformism. And of course, an important section of the working class had assimilated middle class values, and aligned themselves with the employers in their attitudes to religion, politics and society, whilst still remaining working class.

The term 'culture', arguably one of the most complex ideas in the English language since industrialization, also needs defining. 'Culture' has two major meanings which are relevant to this thesis. Primarily, it implies the common norms, values and aspirations which characterise a class, and occasionally transcend beyond its boundaries: this is the 'sociological' definition of culture. Secondly, it also may imply the works of intellectual and artistic activity: in this narrower sense, 'culture' is used in an 'artistic' or 'individualistic' way.[1] The idea of working class culture is a key issue in this thesis. However, there are some very real difficulties involved in a discussion of nineteenth century working class culture. Above all, it should not be regarded as a homogeneous or static entity. Using the word in the 'artistic' sense, what was arguably the natural, native popular culture was 'if not annihilated, at least fragmented and weakened by the dislocations of the Industrial Revolution,'[2] and by middle class attacks upon its integrity. An alternative proletarian culture has not been a significant force in English society, and has been described as 'small in quantity and narrow in range'.[3]

The sociological definition of culture helps to reveal the nature of the working class in the nineteenth century. It should be noted, however, that there are several distinct 'cultures' within the working class, and that what we understand by working class culture also alters in the course of the changing economic and social circumstances of the nineteenth century. 'Culture', in an 'artistic' or in a 'sociological' sense, relates fundamentally

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1.   Williams, op.cit., p. 76; Raymond Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950, paperback edition, London, 1961, pp. 17--8, 307-309
2.   Williams, Culture, etc., p. 307
3.   loc.cit.

to an historical situation.   We must be aware not only of the types of working class culture, but the relations between them, and the way in which these changed during the nineteenth century.

The old, traditional popular culture, defined both in the 'sociological' and the 'artistic' sense, survived into the city, as well as being changed by it.   Its boisterousness and improvidence were retained in the culture of the Victorian labouring poor.   The culture of the skilled artisan was influenced to a very great extent by middle class ideology, and the reinterpretation of these values for their own ends by the working class élite.   Its dominant institutions were the church and chapel, the sunday school, the mutual improvement society, the friendly society, the mechanics institute, and so on.   Nevertheless, there was another culture of the skilled, which overlapped this, and in some ways mitigated its 'middle classness'. This culture, developed by the working classes since the Industrial Revolution, was expressed in the 'collective democratic institution, whether in the trade unions, the co-operative movement, or a political party'.[1] The division between the skilled and the unskilled worker was paramount in Victorian society, and nowhere better and understood than in a city such as Sheffield.   For the bulk of the century, these categories conformed approximately and found their social definition and expression in the clearly defined dichotomy between the 'respectable' and the 'rough' within the working class.   However, the changing circumstances of the late Victorian period helped to create a new 'mass culture', essentially urban, articulate and confident, deriving selected ideas and values from both 'rough' and 'respectable'.[2]

Of course, one of the problems of defining working class culture in the nineteenth century is the heavy dependence for this upon middle class and therefore value-laden sources.   In Sheffield, local antiquarians delighted in descriptions of the violence and riotousness of the crowd in

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1.   Williams, op.cit., p. 314
2.   For patterns of culture deriving from the late Victorian working class, see Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy, London, 1957; Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum, Manchester, 1971

the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and presented the feats and fairs which survived from rural culture as the epitome of debauchery. Drunkenness within the grinding wheels and the workshops was also a common stereotype. In practice, however, drunkenness was reserved for special celebrations. Most men drank regularly, but not necessarily heavily, and in the absence of pure and cheap alternatives, alcohol was valuable for its nutritional and restorative qualities, especially for men engaged in heavy labour.

The imposition of 'middle class' values upon 'working class' culture implied far more than the crude determination of the values of one class by another. It is entirely erroneous to conceive of a 'superior' middle class culture, entrenched in battle with a drunken and violent working class, although that is how reformer s tended to express themselves. At least until the 1870's, the cultural division of the city was not so much between middle class and working class, but between 'rough' and 'respectable'. Status conscious employers were overwhelmingly respectable, or at least appeared to be so in their public utterances. An important section of the labour aristocracy were also respectable. These included some, but by no means all of the labour aristocracy, some servants and while collar workers, and were also recruited from amongst the poorest. The working man who was respectable was traditionally a church or chapel goer, active in the running of his congregation, who sent his children to sunday school. After 1835, he was also teetotal, and in the second half of the century, invested his surplus in friendly societies, freehold land or building societies, or savings banks.

Now, a nucleus of working men undoubtably behaved in this way, but there were tensions within the stereotype. For example, a providential working man who invested his savings in a friendly society meeting at his local public house was at odds with the code of conduct sanctioned by the chapel and the temperance movement from the middle of the century. Active

involvement in a trade union was also suspect, and this was reflected in the reactions of middle class employers to trade practices such as rattening. In many fundamental ways, the middle classes, with their strong sense of assertive individualism, failed to comprehend the traditions of mutality which existed in working class culture, derived from the pre-industrial extended family and community and in turn reflected in the working class institutions of the nineteenth century.[1] Some working men interpreted respectability in their own distinctive way. Ex-Chartist Michael Beal was successful as establishing himself as a small trademan and town councillor. Nevertheless, Beal rejected the monopoly of the churches over religious worship, preferring to walk the fields on a Sunday, and defended the right of the working man to drink in moderation in a public house.[2] Thus, between 'rough' and 'respectable' were an important section of the working class, armed with the knowledge of what was expected of them, and aspiring only to those middle class ways which seemed most appropriate. Men such as this could patronise the public house and the temperance entertainment with studied impartiality. The expansion of this group in the second half of the nineteenth century constituted a serious threat to the hegemony of 'middle class' values.

Respectability thus regulated the relations of employers and men, and encouraged both to get the best out of capitalism for themselves. The ethic of respectability also had important implications for newcomers to city life, or to those who felt uprooted and insecure in the face of rapid economic and social change, or who saw their old skills and values debased. What respectability had to offer the individual was two-fold: firstly, a new set of socially sanctioned values and goals, which could have positive results in terms of improved living standards and status; secondly, a network of friends and activities to replace those which no longer seemed so certain, and to reinvoke old ways with a new sense of belonging.

1. MacIntyre, op.cit., pp. 42-43
2. S.C. On the Sale of Liquors on Sunday Bill, (P.P. 1867, XIV), AA. 7722, 7728, 7755

This process was to be accomplished in an institutional framework. The voluntary societies which proliferated in Sheffield from the late eighteenth century were the vehicles for this process. The voluntary society was ideally suited to this prupose, and provided the means by which groups within a community undergoing rapid social and economic change could organise and adapt to their new situation. Different classes and social groupings were integrated together in pursuit of the same ends. It was essentially an urban solution, flourishing where primary kinship and family groups were weak. Opportunities for office bestowed status and rank, as a reward for individual worth.[1]

The churches and the temperance socieites, twin weapons of middle class ideology, were the most comprehensive examples of voluntary activity. Their role in the propagation of respectability in Sheffield will be discussed in detail below.[2] Their methods were firstly, indoctrination, and secondly protection. Sophisticated propaganda techniques were used to convince many who were seeking new directions of the sin and depravity of their lives. The catharsis of conversion, and of signing the pledge, wiped the slate clean, and brought hopes of salvation to those who sustained good behaviour. The development of a framework of institutional support was essential to this process. Popular culture provided companionship, and a measure of security in the fulfilment of common norms and values. Successful

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1. R.J. Morris, 'The Voluntary Society - A Response to Urbanism 1780-1850', unpublished paper to the Urban History Conference, University of Leicester, 1973; Michael Banton and David L. Stills, 'Voluntary Associations', International Encyclopaedia of Social Science, XVI, pp. 357-376; Thomas Bottomore, Social Stratification in Voluntary Organisations in ed. D.V. Glass, Social Mobility in Britain, London, 1954, pp. 349-368; Margaret Stacey, Tradition and Change: A Study of Banbury, Oxford, 1960, pp. 75-90

2. See below, chapters 6-10 and 19-21

voluntary societies had to replace these exactly. Institutions such as the chapel and the temperance society brought new friendships, activities and inolvements, and the approval of fellow members helped to reinforce the allegiance of the individual to the new values. The fulfillment of duties and responsibilities brought self-respect and self-definition, and also a feeling of superiority over others.

It was also important that people enjoyed themselves. The provision of counter-attractive recreation was an important function of the voluntary society. Tea parties, excursions, musical evenings, plays and concerts punctuated the calendar of the voluntary society. These were initially occasional events, often synchronised with the rhythm of popular festivities such as Whitsuntide and Christmas. However, from the 1850's, opportunities for conviviality became much more frequent. In this way, members were insulated from the temptation of drifting back to old habits and friends, and ham teas and the chance of a good 'sing' tempted newcomers into the orbit of the voluntary society. Thus from the earliest years, chapel and temperance society competed with the pub and the prize fight for the leisure of the working man.

It has already been established that the perspective of this thesis will be thematic and largely institutional. Arguably, this is an effective way of showing the emergence of middle class values, and how they worked for people in a social situation. However, it is also necessary to place the concept of respectability within the context of period. Indeed, to neglect to do so is to fail to appreciate the changing economic and social circumstances of the nineteenth century, and the way in which these affected ideology and social relationships. There is a case for determining the existence of four distinct periods within the century. These are charac-terised by the changing rhythms and achievements of industrialisation, by the relationships between the classes and their attitudes to each other, in other words, the balance between conflict and co-operation, and by the dominant institutions which they produced. The texture of economic and social

relationships , and the way in which they were expressed, was essentially distinctive, and provided each period with a unity.   However, the years marking the beginning and end of each period should be regarded as flexible - social and cultural change was a gradual and constant process, and the characteristics of one period generally originated in a previous one, and survived in an altered form into another.

The Radical Period, between 1780 and 1832, was characterised in Sheffield as elsewhere, by the acceleration of industrialisation and urbanisation, and by the tensions which these created for social relationships. Employers and workingmen were trying to bend the new industrial society to their own ends, and to be masters of the changes with which they were confronted.   The middle classes were anxious to foster profit, and to guarantee the stability of the social order which would make this possible. The working classes sought to mitigate violent social change by the reassertion of the older moral economy, and by the recognition of their rights.   Both the middle classes and the working classes in Sheffield responded to this change with a persistent radicalism.   However, there were crucial differences about the extent of change, and the form which it should take.   A wide spectrum existed between the 'moderate' middle class manufacturer, desiring limited constitutional reform which would benefit only the commercial middle class, and the artisan visionary, drawn into millenarial dreams, and violent political action.   However, some manufacturers and workingmen co-operated in political societies; this co-operation concealed the essential irreconcileability of their interests.   During these years, the middle classes were evolving a philosophy for civilising and controlling the turbulent instincts of the work-force, expressed in evangelicalism and philanthropy.   The voluntary society became established in this period as the instrument of this process.   The expansion of nonconformity, especially Methodism, and the establishment of day schools and sunday schools were the spearheads of a crude propaganda attack upon working class culture.

The Chartist period, between 1832 and 1850, was accompanied in
Sheffield by severe economic depression, increasing pressure upon the
artisan, and arguably, the worsening of urban living conditions. These
circumstances revealed the stress and disunity which characterised class
relationships, and the economic interests of manufacturer and craftsmen
were in naked conflict. Popular discontent with the failure of parliamentary
reform in 1832 to enfranchise the working class, and the oppressive nature of
the new poor law fired increased political activity among some artisans.
Class consciousness was expressed in industrial unrest, new attempts at
unionisation, and the involvement of a minority with physical force Chartism.
Yet co-operation still existed, and manufacturers and working men shared
common ground in their opposition to the Corn Laws. Ultimately, Chartism
failed as a radical political alternative. The focus of Evangelicalism
shifted from the working class child to the adult. The period saw the
proliferation of institutions of social control, with the establishment of
the Mechanics' Institute, and the involvement of the churches with denomina-
tional adult education. The influence of Owenite ideas was reflected in
the attempts by working men to provide themselves with education in the Hall
of Science and the People's College; however, an independent and separate
working class educational tradition did not survive beyond the end of the
period.

The mid-Victorian period between 1851 and 1870 was characterised
in Sheffield by a rising standard of living, and improved comfort, although a
rapid increase in population and the acceleration of factory production in the
1860's meant that the strains of industrialisation were not yet eased. Mid-
Victorian prosperity was accompanied by an increasing degree of co-operation
between the classes, and the establishment of a mature class society, with
the firm alliance of the middle class and the 'respectable' working class

against the 'rough'. Working men involved themselves in middle class institutions such as church and chapel, temperance societies and adult education. Freehold land societies and co-operative sotres were some of the institutions of respectable working class culture. The need for social control was expressed in new ways, with the advent of scientific and technical training for the artisan. At the end of the period, the extension of the franchise gave the urban working classes the privilege of some political power, in return for good behaviour. The voluntary society was probably at its heyday in this period, and its propagandist and educational functions were complemented by a dramatic expansion in recreational provision.

The Late Victorian period, between 1870 and 1900, saw some deep-rooted changes in the economy and society. New large-scale factories recruited unskilled labour, but both skilled and unskilled were volnerable to world-wide cyclical depressions. Nevertheless, despite real poverty and mass unemployment, the general standard of living continued to improve. Relations between middle class and working class continued to be characterised by co-operation, and this was expressed in new areas. Working class representatives were admitted to the increasingly complex work of local government. The Trade Union movement also strengthened its position. But ultimately, the leaders of the working class acquiesced with capitalism. The individualism of the voluntary society gradually lost ground in the face of the assumption by the state of the responsibility for social engineering. Middle class institutions were also threatened by the growth of organised recreation outside the control of church, chapel and temperance society, and by the increasing secularisation of society.

Part One

Religion

4. <u>Introduction</u>

One characteristic of the Industrial Revolution was a heightened religious consciousness: the nineteenth century has been seen as essentially a religious age. This was reflected in the continued development of the denominationalism which is a characteristic of English religion. Most of the churches which influenced society in the nineteenth century were already in existence by 1750. However, the predisposition to theological dispute crucial to English religious consciousness was carried forward. In addition, the social and economic tensions generated during the period of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation gave religion a new relevance.

The practical expression of the new religious awareness included a renewed alienation from the Church of England, and the dramatic expansion of nonconformity, especially Methodism, which in the Victorian period rivalled Anglicanism in terms of social and political influence, and occasionally eclipsed it at local level.[1] In the later eighteenth century, the richest and poorest elements of society were Church of England, or sometimes Roman Catholic, whilst Old Dissent remained solidly middle class.[2]

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1. For religion in the nineteenth century, see <u>inter alia</u> John D. Gay, <u>The Geography of Religion in England</u>, London, 1971; Ford K. Brown <u>Fathers of the Victorians - The Age of Wilberforce</u>, Cambridge, 1961; <u>Desmond Bowen, The Idea of the Victorian Church - A Study of the Church of England 1833 - 1889</u>, Montreal, 1968; Anthony Armstrong, <u>The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700-1850</u>, London, 1973; L. E. Elliott-Binns, <u>The Early Evangelicals - A Religious and Social Study</u>, London, 1953; Elliott-Binns, <u>Religion in the Victorian Era</u>, London, 2nd, ed., 1946; Maldwyn Edwards, <u>After Wesley</u>, London, 1935; E. R. Taylor, <u>Methodism and Politics 1791-1851</u>, Cambridge, 1935; R.F.Wearmouth, <u>Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England 1800-1850</u>, London, 1937; Wearmouth, <u>Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes 1850-1900</u>, Leicester, 1954; W.J. Warner, <u>The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution</u>, London, 1930; K.S. Inglis , <u>The Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England</u>, London, 1963; Robert Moore, <u>Pit-Men Preachers and Politics - The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community</u>, Cambridge, 1974; Hugh McLeod, <u>Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City</u>, London, 1974.

2. See especially Harold Perkin, <u>The Origins of Modern English Society</u>, London, 1969, p.196.

The impact of industrialisation, and the arrival of Methodism, brought a religious revival to the newly emerging working class, and an enormous expansion of middle class nonconformity. Nevertheless, religion in the formal sense was predominantly a middle class activity, whilst the bulk of the working class were secularist or indifferent.

Despite the failure of the churches to involve more than a tiny proportion of the working classes, by modern standards, religious activity in the nineteenth century was impressive. Varying patterns of attendances and sizes of congregations qualify the usefulness of church buildings as an index of religiosity[1]. however, by 1851, there were nearly 20,000 nonconformist places of worship, and a further 14,000 Anglican churches. The rate of church building had been most rapid among the nonconformists, who had licensed over 10,000 meeting places in each decade between 1811 and 1831. On Census Sunday, in 1851, half the population attended a place of worship, and over half of this church-going population was nonconformist. Nevertheless, whilst church-going was a fact of life for most middle class families the almost entire absence of the working classes, especially in the large towns was revealed. However, it may well be the case that attendance figures in any case represent that absolute minimum of people under the influence of religion at any one time , an important part of religiosity in the nineteenth century was formal attendance, but the dimensions of religious experience also relate to values and attitudes. Thus the diversity of religious prescriptions has been discussed by sociologists in terms of 'belief, practice, experience, knowledge and consequences'.[3]

1. Gay, op. cit., p.41.
2. 1851 Census of Great Britain, Report and Tables of Religious Worship in England and Wales, (p.p. 1852-53, LXXXXIX), Inglis, op. cit., p.p. Gay, op. cit., pp. 45-63; Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XI, 1960, pp. 74-86, W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census - A Useless Experiment?', British Journal of Sociology, XVIII, 1967, pp. 382-407; D.M. Thomspon, 'The 1851 Religious Census - Patterns and Possibilities', Victorian Studies, XI, 1967, pp. 87-97; Perkin, op. cit. pp. 197-199; J.F.C. Harrison, The Early Victorians 1832-1851, London, 1971, pp. 122-123.
3. R. Stark and C. Y. Glock, 'Dimensions of Religious Commitment' in ed. Roland Robertson, Sociology of Religion - Selected Readings, London, 1969, pp. 256-257.

Religion in the nineteenth century, defined in terms of values, beliefs and institutions, fulfilled important functions for the individual and for society. The fundamental role of religion has been reflected in sociological theory. In some ways, religion acts in ways which seem to be contradictory -

> 'very often it is the existence of shared beliefs that accounts for the fact that two or more groups manage to co-exist despite important divisions between them. But it is often just as true that beliefs sharpen divisions by giving expression to difference over values, goals and interests'.   1.

In other words, religion functions to maintain the social order and stability, or to promote social conflict and change.

The tradition deriving from Marx has upheld the role of religion in upholding the power relationships of the status quo. Religion was thus the 'opium of the people', and Marx argued that religiosity was due to the false consciousness of the worker in a state of alienation. Religion therefore provided.

> 'the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction , its solemn complement, its general basis of consolation and justification'.   2.

Durkeim recognised the ultimately religious role of social solidarity, exploring the role of religion as 'a refuge ... a shield ... a guardian support which attaches the believer to his cult'.[3.] This concept is developed further by Peter Berger, who has stressed the importance for the individual in a state of anomie; against this terror is the sacred cosmos,

> 'which transcends and includes man in its ordering of reality ... To be in a "right" relationship with the sacred cosmos is to be protected against the nightmare threat of chaos'.   4.

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1.   Open University, Beliefs and Religion, Bletchley, 1972, p.5.
2.   ibid., p.53, T.B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel, Karl Marx - Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, paperback edition, London, 1963, p.41.
3.   Emile Durkeim, 'The Social Foundations of Religion', Robertson, op.cit., p.47.
4.   Peter L. Berger, The Social Reality of Religion, London, 1969, pp.22-28.

In a different way, Max Weber has given religiosity historial definition in his work on the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism. The Puritan, although his primary function was to serve God, also helped to create the necessary conditions for modern capitalism. The Protestant Ethic evolved from the original Calvinist position, in which the individual was left with no sign as to whether he were one of the 'elect', predestined to eternal salvation, to a position where success in worldly business would be regarded as such a sign. Thus it was the duty of the individual to do God's will in his own calling. The compulsion was to strive earnestly in one's affairs, to save and to reinvest, instead of to spend. Protestantism was thus to be found among the thriving entrepreneurial class who stage-managed economic development.[1] The legacy of Weber, amplified by Tawney, was thus to cement the identification of religious and material success. Closely relating to this is the argument that historically, religion has acted in a firmly conservatory role, and that Methodism, in particular, prevented the development of a revolutionary movement in Britain.[2] This has been challenged, however; there is a view that religious feeling, expressed through working class sects, could be an important means of binding its members together on the basis of their conscious choice of the same set of goals and values, often in direct conflict with the social order. In the view of Niebuhr,

> 'the sect has ever been the child of an outcast minority,
> taking its rise in the religious revolts of the poor, of
> those who were without effective representation in church
> or state and who formed their conventicles of dissent in
> the only way open to them, on the democratic, associational
> pattern'. [3]

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1. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, London 1930, passism; R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, paperback edition London 1937; Open University, op.cit. pp.33-39; the analyses of the Weber thesis are too many to list, but see Perkin, op.cit. pp.83-84; for the relationship between nonconformity entrepreneurship and personality traits, see E.L. Hagen, on The Theory of Social Change, London,1964,pp.291-303.
2. Elie Halevy, History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, I, London, 1949, this has been rebutted by E.J. Hobsbawn, "Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britain", in Labouring Men - Studies in the History of Labour, London, 1964; for a general discussion of these arguments, see Moore, op.cit., pp.1-14.
3. This view has been developed by Ernest Troeltsch, and especially by H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, Connecticut 1929; see also Bryan Wilson, Religion in Secular Society - A Sociological Comment, paperback edition, London, 1969, pp.227-236.

Religious beliefs and institutions thus played a fundamental role in the establishment of cesensus values in society. The relationships forged by religion could also be cut across by other forms of religiosity, often in a more primitive stage, experienced by small groups within society, but temporarily at odds with the social order. Both aspects of religious experience were of crucial importance for class relationships in the nineteenth century. The role of religion is especially meaningful in the context of the tension and insecurity inherent in a period of rapid social and economic change. The traumas associated with industrialism have been well documented. These include most obviously the growing pains of rapid urbanization, and   Sectarian religion and radical politics had much in common, not least a fierce rejection of existing power relationships, and the hope of utopia in heaven and upon earth. They also provided the new convert with discipline, organization, and new perceptions of reality.

During the nineteenth century, then, religion worked to impose order upon the chaos of rapid social and economic change, and to give common goals and values and meaning and identity to individuals trying to make sense of it. Given this function, there are important divergences. The sects which characterised the first half of the nineteenth century, essentially working class in composition, stimulated the growth of working class political consciousness, and articulated popular hostility to the social order. Sects tended to become institutionalised, however; the role of the churches, composed of the middle classes with varying degrees of working class membership, encouraged the acceptance of the social order, and legitimised the values and power relationships of capitalism. There has been much debate as to whether Methodism, the denomination which transcended the boundaries of class, functioned in the interests of social control or the formulation of an independant working class consciousness.

Methodism meant different things to different people, often at the same time; E. P. Thompson has described how Methodism performed 'with such remarkable vigour, this double service'. [1]

Social stability in the nineteenth century was fundamentally a matter of class relationships. Through the Protestant Ethic, religious values and institutions provided for the growth of the entrepreneur; religion was the midwife of the bourgeoisie, as well as the working class. Religious beliefs joined the middle classes with some sections of the working classes in a common social ideology, and provided a yard-stick with which to measure popular culture, and to find it wanting. Through religious involvement, the potential destructiveness of social behaviour could be neutralised, and the converted assimilated to conformity with a prescribed pattern of values and behaviour. Thus religion sanctified the secular virtues essential to the maintenance of the social order, and the continued stability and prosperity of an unequal society, associated cultural dislocation, and the economic adjustments which accompanied this, such as migration, the devaluation of old skills, and poverty.[2] For many sections of the population, the period after 1750 involved a realisation of the implications of social and economic change, which threatened not only the security of society, but the material survival of the individual. Stress, death, economic vulnerability, the factors of contingency, powerlessness and scarcity which have been said to characterise human life, intensified the need for religion.[3]

Religion was therefore indispensable as an agency of social control in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. In its integrative role it operated in three ways; through the system of belief, which gave basic support to individual and social values, through ritual, which repeatedly enforced identification with, and commitment to, those values, and through its system of eternal and worldly rewards and punishments, which made sure that those values were acted out in social

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1. E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, paperback edition London, 1968, p.391 ff.
2. See above, chapter 2.
3. Thomas O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion, New Jersey, 1966, p.5; Elizabeth K. Nottingham, Religion and Society, New York, 1954, pp.29, 38-39.

behaviour.[1] Thus the biblical values of ascetisism, reaffirmed by the puritan tradition, were manipulated to solve the social tensions of the nineteenth century, and to this end, an integrated and coherent system of values was created.[2] This value system brought pressure to bear upon middle class employers, and some working men, by defining the nature and content of their social obligation. This was the undoubted function of the Evangelical Movement, which revitalised the Church of England between 1770 and 1830, and also gave rise to Methodism.[3] It has been suggested that 'the Evangelical discipline, secularized as respectability, was the strongest binding force in a nation which without it, might have broken up'.[4] Religion became a ubiquitous dynamic force, which

> 'pervaded all society, challenged men and women of every
> level of society or of education, and became fused with
> the objectives of most political parties, and the hopes
> of every class'. 5.

For the individual, religion offered support and reconciliation, and gave a fundamental answer to the problem of meaning.[6] Participation in the institutional organisation of a church gave identity, and the security of sanctified values and relationships. The desire for lay involvement was especially strong in nonconformity. Methodism in its revivalist stages depended heavily upon lay preachers, and mambers of the Free Methodist and Congregationalist denominations maintained a strong degree of local control. Throughout nonconformity, and later in the Church of England, the committee structure gave opportunities for extended involvement in increasingly diverse social and evangelical activities.

1. Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Religion and Society in Tension, Chicago, 1965, p. 17.
2. John Marlowe, The Puritan Tradition, London, 1956, passim.
3. Brown Fathers etc., passim; Elliott-Binns, Early Evangelicals, etc., passim.
4. G. M. Young, Victorian England - Portrait of an Age, 2nd edition, London, 1953, p.5.
5. G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, London, 1962, p.147.
6. O'Dea, op. cit., p.6.

Whether by active patronage or passive membership, the individual who went to church gained at least in his own eyes, a sense of righteousness and power. Church and chapel also gave much enjoyment, in the practice of a policy of counter-attractive recreation, designed to woo the individual away from the vices of popular enjoyments.

Religion in the nineteenth century also played a role which has earned it the description the 'midwife of class'. Old Dissenters freed the embryonic middle class from the 'dependency system' of hierarchical relationships controlled by the Anglican Church. It has been suggested that the New Dissent of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did the same for the urban working classes. Religion, particularly Methodism, was a model for class organisation.[1] It has been demonstrated that many radicals, Chartists and Trade Union Leaders gained experience and confidence from participation in working class political activity.[2]

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1. Perkin, op. cit., pp. 34-45, 196.
2. Moore, op. cit., pp. 9; Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle, etc., pp. 171-209.

5.   Aspects of Unbelief in Sheffield

Participation in religion guaranteed the stability of society, and secured for the righteous material and moral advantages in this world and the next. The middle classes, at any rate, were cognisant of its advantages. Sheffield, however, like all thriving industrial cities in the nineteenth century, was a working class community. Many of its inhabitants were migrants from the surrounding countryside, freed from the relationships and dependencies of rural society, and from the watchful protection of the Anglican church. Habits of devotion, followed perhaps uncomprehendingly for generations, faltered and died in the new environment of the city. [1]

The formal involvement in religious institutions is only one index of religiosity. [2] Nevertheless, it is a useful way of assessing attitudes to religion, and clearly, people who went to church out of habit in the villages ceased to do so in the towns. The working classes may have retained a residual awareness of the power of a deity, or they may have passed through secularism into indifference. What was undeniable was the failure of the churches as institutions to attract the working classes to the ritual of devotion. Victorian commentators measured the strength of religion against church attendances, and bemoaned what they saw.

Despite the Evangelical Revival, and the flurries of activity which accompanied the emergence of the Methodist sects, by the end of the eighteenth century, the churches had already lost out to the multiplying urban populations, and failed materially to improve their position during the next hundred years. One way of identifying this is to relate church buildings to population, although obviously, churches varied widely in size. In 1630, the parish of Sheffield

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1. Peter Laslett argues for a high degree of religious activity in the pre-industrial village community: Laslett, The World We Have Lost, 2nd. edition, London, 1971, pp. 74-76; the indifference of the urban working classes to religion in the nineteenth century is discussed in Inglis, op.cit., pp.1-20; MacIntyre, op.cit., pp. 10-12.

2. See above, chapter 4.

boasted a parish church and two chapels-of-ease, newly built in Ecclesall and Attercliffe. With a population of a little over 2,000, Sheffield was relatively well supplied. This relationship was never again to be reached, despite the advent of Dissent, and periods of active chapel building between 1700 and 1724, and 1764 and 1780. In 1780, as Old Dissent paused for breath, and the Methodist revival began to make headway, the number of religious buildings had reached 14, and the population of the township was estimated at 17,000, and that of the parish 30,000. Thus there was roughly one church for every 2,000 people. In 1841, after two decades of especially rapid population growth, there were 51 buildings to 110,891, people, or still one church for every 2,174 people: nevertheless, the numbers likely to be outside the orbit of any religious building had increased still further. [1]

The 1851 Religious Census demonstrated to churchmen in Sheffield, as in every other large city, the statistical failure of the churches. [2] Two facts were incontrovertible. Firstly, the number of sittings was inadequate to accommodate the population. Secondly, the seats which were available were manifestly not being filled by the working classes. Sheffield, with a population of 135,310, had accommodation for only 45,889, or 33.9% of the population. This was marginally better than Liverpool (31.4%), Manchester (31.6%), or Birmingham (28.7%), but worse than Leeds, which had 46% of the population provided for. Clearly, the churches of the major industrial cities had no room for between one half and two thirds of their inhabitants. [3] Attendances in Sheffield were less than the sittings available: the town's 70 churches provided between them 44,189 sittings, but on Census Sunday, in two sittings, and including Sunday school children, and those who went twice, there were only 43,421 attendances. This is equal to only 32.2% of the population, considerably

1. Figures from E.R. Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City, London, 1957, appendix Va.
2. Inglis, op. cit., 1,3,20,86; Gay, op. cit.,pp. 55-63; Inglis, Journal of Ecclesiastical History, pp. 74-86; Pickering, British Journal of Sociology, pp. 382-407; Thompson, Victorian Studies,pp. 87-97.
3. Census, (p.p. 1852-53, LXXXIX), Appendix F,pp. ccliii-cclxviii.
4. ibid., p.cclxviii; Wickham, op. cit., p. 109.

below the national figure of 58% projected by Horace Mann as the maximum upper limit of attendance. Sheffield was the only one of the great towns in which the attendances at two services was less even than the number of sittings. [4.]

Another insight into the deficiencies of religious attendance are provided by a local survey, undertaken by the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent in November 1881. The figures represent maximum attendances, as the census was announced in advance, and there were imputations of unchristian rivalry between the supports of Anglicanism and Dissent, who sought to drum up support. Sheffield with a population of 284,410 in 1881, boasted 196 places of worship. Sittings numbered 96,797, while the total attendances for census day were 87,756. [1.] The relationship of sittings to population show that accommodation was available for only 29.4% of the population, and the proportion of the population who went to church that day was only 32.4%. Comparisons with 1851 were not encouraging. Despite the expansion of church building and aggressive missionary work by all the denominations, the proportion of the population who could be accommodated had declined. Attendance had remained stable, but in this period, Sheffield had gained an extra 109,100 inhabitants. Thus building and church extension had kept up only with existing demand, and had made no apparent inroad upon the numbers for whom religious provision had little or no meaning.

The section of society whose members were overwhelmingly excluded from the religious censuses were the working classes. This is not to deny an element of religiosity among working men, who provided the raw material for religious revivalism, and made up part or whole of some congregations in the city: the social composition of religion in Sheffield will be discussed in more detail below. But there is evidence to suggest that the bulk of the

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1. Wickham, op. cit., p. 148; S.R.I., 21 November 1881; S.L.R.
   20 November 1881.

working classes were touched by religion only for the customary rituals of baptism, marriage and burial.

The reasons for the alienation of the working classes are complex. Indeed, 'alienation' may evoke top conscious a rejection: total indifference may more appropriately describe the attitude of the bulk of the working classes to religion. The problem is essentially one of social relationships: the working classes were excluded from religion, as they were denied an equal share in the prosperity of an expanding society that was organised increasingly on class lines. Because of the social cleavage in society, all the churches could do was enrol those of the working classes who were prepared to adapt themselves to 'middle class' ways in manners, dress and attitudes. This was a lesson that the skilled artisan, the craftsman and the small tradesman could learn without much difficulty, and indeed, it was often to their material advantage to do so. Below these were the 'submerged tenth', the 'indiscriminate poor', lacking the basic means of existence, and bred in the consciousness of their inferiority. The Church of England traditionally looked after the poor, and made free sittings in dark corners of their churches available for them. In Sheffield, however, the numbers of the poor were growing, increasingly hostile or indifferent to the protection of the establishment. Old Dissent, and many of the Methodist denominations increasingly draw money and support from the middle classes, with a relatively homogenous membership made up from the employers, prosperous tradesmen and shopkeepers, men with the confidence and education to dominate the offices available to the laity. Even the mission services, patronised almost exclusively by working men, served to show the gulf between middle class and working class religious worship. [1]

One practice which confirmed the middle class nature of religious

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1. Inglis, op. cit., passim; Wickham, op. cit., passim.

observance was the custom of pew-rents. These not only provided the churches with a regular income, especially necessary in the absence of endowments, but fed the idea that participation in the churches was a question of money and status. Pew rents were found in the churches erected by the Anglicans in the seventeenth century, and also the large permanent chapels and meeting houses of eighteenth century Dissent. Churches and chapels built in Sheffield in the last part of the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth century, continued the policy of pew-rents, which became inseparable from the power structure of the church.[1] There is little difference between Anglican and Dissenter in this. The fashionable church of St. James, built in 1789, had no free sittings, and indeed, was funded from £50 shares, in return for a pew as a freehold inheritance, and a family vault beneath the church. The Anglicans made a conscious effort with the giant 'Million Pound' churches, opened between 1825 and 1830, in which the ratio of free seats to rented seats was as much as 1:3. The proportion of free seats in Independent chapels was generally much less. Queen St. Chapel, built in 1784, had 1:7, and Mount Zion (1834) 1:8. The Wesleyans made a real attempt to release more seats to the poor. Norfolk St. Chapel, opened in 1780, had just under a quarter of its seats free, which at the time, was more than any other chapel or church in Sheffield. The proportion at Carver St. Chapel was similar, but the position was improved with the opening of Brunswick in 1832, with 650 of its 1722 seats free. The Primitive Methodists, drawn principally from the working classes, were unable to abandon pew rents entirely, and Bethel Chapel, opened in 1836 had only a third of its seats free.[2] Pew rents in the smaller chapels were generally not large: amounts between 1/6d. and 4/9d. were charged at the Park Methodist chapel. Nevertheless, this could make unwarrantable demands on the wages of a working man with a family to support.[3]

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1. Wickham, op. cit., pp. 44,48,57,78,80.
2. ibid., appendix Va. Figures derived from 1853 Ordnance Survey Map.
3. ibid., p.79.

One immediate result of the 1851 Census was an appraisal of the failure of the churches to attract the working classes: religious sources themselves present convincing evidence of working class infidelity. In the Census itself, Horace Mann spared no illusions in his assessment of the inadequacies of religious provision, specifically defined as the failure of the churches in the cities and large towns to attract the working man:

> 'they fill, perhaps, in youth, our National, British and
> Sunday Schools, and there receive the elements of a
> religious education; but, no sooner do they mingle in the
> active world or labour than, subjected to the constant
> action of opposing influences, they soon become as utter
> strangers to religious ordinances as the people of a heathen
> country .... it is sadly certain that this vast, intelligent,
> and growingly important section of our countrymen is thoroughly
> estranged from our religious institutions in their present
> aspect'. 1.

Mann ascribed the indifference of the working man not just to poverty, and the social segregation of the cities, but the indifference of the churches to the poor, the nature of the ministry, and above all, the social distinction within the churches, and the inferiority implied by the system of rented and free seats. 2.

The churches in Sheffield devoted the remainder of the century to attempting to right these wrongs. However, some churchmen were aware of the problem before 1851. The failure of the 'Million Pound' churches to attract the poor were obvious within fifteen years of their opening. Rev. Henry Farish of St. Mary's wrote that despite the provision of free places,

> 'many of the sittings are of little use, and by far the
> greater part of those which remain are occupied by the
> children of the various Sunday schools. Hence a population
> has arisen without the habit of observing the Lord's day,
> and so without any conscientious restraint on the subject'. 3.

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1. Census, (P.P. 1852-53 LXXXIX), p.clviii. Also see p.cxxviii.

2. ibid., p.clix.

3. Symonds, op. cit., p.17.

Parish found that not one in ten sunday school children went to church,
alienated by the grandeur of the building, and the free seats being in the
aisles, which made them visible to the public gaze, and ashamed of the
shabbiness of their clothing.

The lack of adequate clothes to wear was a very real impediment to the
working man, who felt that he should show deference in the presence of the
middle classes, and wear his best suit, especially when dress was taken as
an indication of status. The revival at Bethel Primitive Methodist chapel
in the 1850's had brought forward an ex-sunday school secretary, who had
fallen away from religion through the lack of respectable garments. [1].
Those who went to Bethel 'consisted almost entirely of the poorer classes'
but all the people were 'well dressed, respectable looking and well behaved'.[2].
Thus the poor famiies who went to working class chapels tactly accepted
the 'middle class' conventions of respectable dress, or otherwise stayed at
home. Some were unable or disinclined to conform, and ignored the presence
of the churches. Scotland St. Methodist New Connexion chapel was located in

> 'not a very savoury or odiferous locality, once celebrated for its goal,
> and ... now a region where Irish and English roughs do greatly congregate.
> But they do not congregate in the chapel, although it is for them,
> and they need it fearfully'. 3.

In the slums in the vicinity of Ebenezer chapel, the Wesleyans visited a court
containing over 60 people, and found that not one of them went to church. [4].
Attendances in the teeming working class districts around the steel works were
also negligible. In Attercliffe, near to John Brown's works, a district of
7,000 inhabitants with little religious provision, only 1 in 20 admitted
attending either church or chapel.

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1. J.L. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism in Sheffield and District',
   unpublished ms., S.C.L., volume 1,MD.1898, pp.57-59.
2. 'Criticus', The Churches and Chapels of Sheffield, their Ministers and
   Congregations, cuttings from the Sheffield Times, S.C.L., JC.1303, p.30.
3. ibid., p.100.
4. J.L. Spedding, 'Notes on Local Methodism', unpublished ms., S.C.L., MD 1900b,
   p.15.

The response of the Wesleyans to this blatant religious need was the erection of a small chapel, to accommodate 400 in rented pews. [1.] The lessons of 1851 took a long time to be learned.

1. ibid., p.16.

6. <u>Church and Chapel 1780-1900</u>

In Sheffield, religious observance in the nineteenth century was strongest among the elite of wealthy manufacturers, merchants and bankers, and amongst aspiring shopkeepers and tradesmen, with a leavening of artisans. The town lacked a sizeable Irish-Catholic population, which in cities such as Liverpool brought religious involvement to the lowest strata of the working class. However, it will be seen that some churches and chapels were able to attract working class support, and employers and working men co-operated within the structure of the church. A few congregations were founded and maintained exclusively by artisans and workingmen. Therefore, although Sheffield was not a religious town, the influence of church and chapel could often reach some way below the orthodox middle class support.

Co-operation was also afforded in another way, for the relations between the denominations was unusually harmonious. Although the religious strength of many northern towns has tended to be seen in terms of nonconformity Sheffield shared with Birmingham a nearly equal balance between Anglicanism and Dissent. The Established Church in Sheffield was low church and decidedly Evangelical from the beginning of the nineteenth century.[1] The nature of the town's social structure meant that both the Church of England and the Dissenters drew their strongest support from the broad band of manufacturers and tradesmen, who worked together in the multiplicity of religious and social agencies for the elevation of the poor. It was not uncommon for such men to attend both church and chapel.[2] Later in the century, Anglicanism could occasionally attract such men as Mark Firth and Henry Longden, descendants of staunch Methodists, but there was little to be gained by such a move. Throughout the century, some of the richest and most influential of Sheffield's

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1. 'Its prevailing tone was Low Church and Methodist', H. Kirk-Smith, <u>William Thomson, Archbishop of York - His Life and Times 1819-1890</u>, London, 1958, p.99.
2. Thomas Asline Ward, merchant, local political figure and sometime Master Cutler had a freehold pew in the Parish Church, and rented one in the Unitarian chapel. Odom, <u>Hallamshire Worthies</u>, etc. p.177

citizens were as likely to meet in the salubrious suburban chapels of Wesleyan

methodism and Congregationalism.

It is to Dissent that we must look for the most important historical

determinant of the religious life of the town. Forged in the seventeenth century,

a resilient tradition of non-conformity eclipsed local Anglicanism in vitality,

and helped to create a strong resistance to High Church and Tractarian influences

among the Sheffield clergy two hundred years later. During the Civil War, the

leading families were solidly Puritan in religion, and Parliamentarian in politics,

and influenced the local toolmakers and craftsmen in this direction. The Puritan

sympathies of the burgery, and the refuge offered to Dissenters by the town's

non-corporate status enabled small congregations to flourish. Following the

granting of liberty of conscience in 1686, an academy for the training of ministers

was established at Attercliffe. [1] By 1700, the Sheffield Dissenters had built

their first chapel, which rapidly became the largest dissenting congregation in

Yorkshire. [2]

The social patterns of nineteenth century religion were already

foreshadowed. The men who built Upper Chapel were mostly men of substance in

the community, gentlemen, tradesmen, and a solid core of craftsmen. A second

chapel was opened in 1714, and five more between 1774 and 1790. This was due not

to a conscious policy of expansion, but to the internal schisms inherent in

non-conformity, and especially prevalent where control was vested in the congregations. [3]

Despite the emergence of Dissent as a real alternative to the

Established Church, religious provision in Sheffield was steadily undermined

by population growth. Although some new churches were built, the Sheffield

clergy were generally characterised by their inertia. A fine new church,

1. Giles Hester, Attercliffe as a Seat of Learning, Sheffield, 1893, pp.27-30; J.E. Manning, A History of Upper Chapel, Sheffield, Sheffield, 1900, pp. 36-38.

2. Joseph Hunter, Hallamshire - History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield, edited Alfred Gatty, Sheffield, 1869, pp.293; Wickham, op. cit. pp. 32-40; G.F.B. Hawksworth, The Central Congregational Church in Sheffield, Sheffield 1971; D. Loxton, The Origin of Non-conformity in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1862; H.H. Oakley, The Beginnings of Congregationalism in Sheffield, Sheffield 1913.

3. Hunter, op.cit. p.292; Wickham. op.cit., p.47.

St. Paul's was completed in 1721, but a disagreement over the right of
presentation kept the building empty and unused until 1740.[1] Intermittent
disputes over their duties, and over the nature of ecclesiastical authority
in Sheffield, dissipated much of the energy of the Sheffield clergy.[2] Above
all, nothing was done for the increasing numbers outside the church. Such
church building as took place was undertaken by and on behalf of the merchants
and tradesmen: St. Paul's was endowed by a local goldsmith, constructed in
a lavish Renaissance style with a dome, and its fine organ was used for the
performance of oratorios for the élite of the town.[3] St. James's was founded
on the basis of £50 shares, and made no provision for the poor. As a chapel-of-
ease in its own right, there were no ppastoral duties, and the minister held
the living in conjunction with others outside the town.[4] James Wilkinson,
Vicar of Sheffield, held the living by hereditary connexions from 1754 until
his death in 1805. His contact with the population was in his capacity as
gentleman-magistrate, rather than spiritual leader, and he had no understanding
of the violence and tensions which characterised the last years of the eighteenth
century, some of which were directed against himself.[5]

Therefore, despite intermittent expansion by the Dissenters and the
Church of England, existing provision was clearly inadequate for the spiritual
needs of the populace. The impact of the Evangelical Revival, and more especially
Methodism, induced radical changes in the religious life of the community.
Evangelical preaching was begun by David Taylor, 'an itinerant preacher out of

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1. Hunter, op.cit., pp.273-274; Wickham, op.cit., pp.41-44; C.V.Collier,
   'Letters and Other Papers Relating to Church Affairs in Sheffield in the
   Eighteenth Century', Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society,
   III, 1923, pp.123-142.
2. Hunter, op.cit., p.242; Collier, op.cit., pp.193-211, 290-306.
3. Hunter, op.cit., p.274. R.E.Leader, History of the Company of Cutters in
   Hallamshire, Sheffield, 1905, p.245; William Odom, St. Paul's Church,
   Sheffield, Its Ministers and Associations, Sheffield 1919. pp.8-14
4. Hunter, op.cit., pp.276-277.
5. James Wilkinson was hereditary successor to the Jessops and Brights, magistrate
   for the North and West Ridings, and at other times pursued his interest in
   hunting and boxing at the family estate at Broom Hall. He was the focus
   for the hostility of the mob on more than one occasion, as in 1791, when his
   library and haystackes were burned. Popular poet Joseph Mather described
   him as 'that old serpent', 'that black diabolical fiend'. Hunter, op.cit.,
   pp.264, 271-272; Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc., pp.56-57.

Leicestershire', in 1738.[1] A small meeting house was established in Sheffield in 1741, but the decisive step was the arrival of John Wesley in the town in 1742.[2] The new sect faced many problems, the most threatening being the attitude of the rougher element in the population who broke up meetings, and destroyed several of the early preaching houses. In addition, the Anglican clergy in the town were almost uniformly hostile to the Methodists, and the authorities failed to protect the preachers from the attentions of the crowd during the 1740's.[3] As late as 1780, an offer from John Wesley to assist with the service at the parish church was abruptly rejected by James Wilkinson.[4] However, some individuals of an evangelical persuasion were more sympathetic. The emotional outpourings of the curate at Ecclesall chapel made him enemies among local churchman, but attracted regular visits from Sheffield Methodists.[5] There was also much cross-fertilization with existing bodies of Dissenters. People who found the existing spiritual provision at Upper and Nether chapels to be inadequate harboured Methodist preachers, provided meeting houses, and were among the first converts.

During this formative period, Sheffield Methodism attracted a wide spectrum of adherents. Interest in the sect was widespread, and the numbers who came to listen to the preachers were far in excess of registered membership. Its spiritual message awakened a response from many, from the Marquis of Rockingham, who attended preaching, and allowed societies to meet on his estates outside Sheffield, to humble and illiterate workmen.[6] The Sheffield Methodists were severely hampered by poverty: nevertheless, the status of the sect was enhanced by the adherence of respected manufacturing families such as the Holys and the Vickers who joined after 1760. The Holy family were the financiers of

1. James Everett, _Historical Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield and Its Vicinity_, Sheffield, 1823, p.4. Everett's work is the standard account of the birth of Methodism in Sheffield, See also J. Austen, _The Romance of Methodism: How the Revival Came to Sheffield_, Sheffield, n.d.; B.H. Beeson, 'The Rise and Development of Wesleyan Methodism in and Around Sheffield', unpublished ms, 1953, S.C.L; Wickham, op. cit., pp.49-58
2. Everett, op. cit., p.21ff.
3. ibid., pp.43-59; Beeson, op. cit., pp.10-11; preaching houses in Cheney Square and Pinstone Lane were destroyed in 1743 and 1746 - the refusal of the magistrates to issue a warrant against the rioters resulted in an appeal to York by the Methodists. The rio ters were fined, and the Magistrates ordered to rebuild the houses.
4. Wesley replied to Wilkinson with characteristic asperity:'Sir, there is no harm done. If you don't want me, I don't want _you_' _Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society_, December 1938
5. John Wesley,_Journal_,IV,p.343, quoted in Elliott-Binns, _Early Evangelicals_, etc.
6. Everett, op. cit., pp.96,162. (p.315; Everett, op.cit., p.20

Sheffield Methodism in the early days.[1] By 1780, the society was able to erect its first permanent chapel in Norfolk St., at a cost of £2,400, complete with a gallery given by Mrs. Holy.[2] This was public confirmation of the growing respectability of the new denomination. The affluence of the Wesleyans was reiterated in the establishment of a grand chapel at Carver St., opened in 1805, with money from families such as the Holys, which drew off many of the wealthier elements of the Norfolk St. congregation.[3] In this can be recognised the first manifestation of the migration of the socially and commercially successful into the western suburbs of the town, which was to undermine many of the central churches and chapels later in the century.[4]

Despite the forces of conservatism inherent in the social thinking and organisation of the Wesleyans, out of Methodism emerged many expressions of dissatisfaction with the status quo.[5] Internal criticism resulted in the schism of 1797, when a group of radical artisans followed Alexander Kilham to Scotland St. Chapel, in search of the vigour and truth which characterised the early years of the revival: out of this split, the New Connection sect was formed.[6] A second group, the Primitive Methodists, were in Sheffield by 1819. These attracted many working class converts, and relived some of the experiences of

1. Mrs. Holy joined the society in 1760, and lent money for the establishment of Mulberry St. preaching house. Her son Thomas, described as 'the business man par excellence and the financier of Sheffield Methodism', joined in 1766, on entering the family business. His brother-in-law John Vickers the inventor of Britannia metal, joined in 1763. The sight of Thomas Holy walking arm-in-arm through Sheffield with John Wesley was an important step towards the acceptability of Methodism. Jabez Bunting, Memoir of the late Thomas Holy esq. of Sheffield, London, 1832; Everett, op. cit., pp.166-172; John Baxter 'The Methodist Experience in Sheffield 1780-1820 - A study of Popular Religion and Social Change', unpublished M.A. University of Sheffield, 1970, pp.48,67.
2. Samuel Lees, Memoirs of Norfolk St. Chapel and Early Methodism, n.d. S.C.L.; T.A. Seed, History of Norfolk St. Chapel and Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1907, pp.40-42.
3. Jabez Bunting wrote 'In Bradford and in Keighley they are building chapels nearly as large as Carver St. Chapel in Sheffield. To what will Methodism come in a few years?', quoted by Thompson, op. cit., p.387; Wickham op. cit. p.58; Carver St. Methodist Church, Third Jubilee Handbook, Sheffield, 1955
4. See below, pp.112-113.
5. Warner, op. cit., pp.75-136; Wearmouth, Methodism and Working Class Movement etc., pp.60ff; Taylor, op. cit., pp.13ff.
6. Rev. Thomas Harris, The Christian Minister in Earnest - A Memoir of the Rev. William Bramwell, London n.d. pp.72-73; Wickham, op. cit., p.67; Thompson, op. cit., pp.48-50; Baxter, op. cit., pp.52-53; Hamilton Crothers, The Methodist New Connection in Sheffield 1797-1897 - A Centenary Review, Sheffield, 1897, pp.3-5

the early Methodists at the hands of the mob.[1] Sectarian divisions within Methodism were reflected in active chapel building and proselytizing in the vicinity of Sheffield. The emergence of Methodism as a denomination with a growing social influence worked with the Evangelical Revival from which it had sprung, to induce a new spirit of social awareness within the Church of England.

The succession of the evangelical Thomas Sutton to the living of Sheffield in 1805 prepared the way for a new policy of expansion within the Anglican Church. This was established and sustained through the influence of Sutton, who was vicar until his death in 1851, and was further developed by his successors. The church in Sheffield thus maintained its Low Church Protestantism untouched by the influence of the Oxford movement. Services were plain, and the sacraments little in evidence: 'it was the pulpit, not the altar which was the focal point of the Anglican church in Sheffield.'[2] Associated with this was a concern for the moral condition of the poor, and a wish to bring the working classes into the fold of the church. Visual evidence of this new mood was the four 'Million Pound' churches, erected in the three most populous districts, and in Attercliffe, between 1825 and 1830. Each was enormous compared to existing churches and chapels, with 2,000 seats, up to a third of which were free.[3] Despite the scale of this gesture, the new churches were criticised by many, such as Rev. Alfred Gatty, for failing to have the

1. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism in Sheffield', etc., p.5; Wickham, op. cit., pp.131-132; Taylor, op. cit., pp.105-107
2. Kirk-Smith, op. cit., p.99; Local clergy consistently affirmed their devotion to Evangelical principles. In 1850, Thomas Sutton refused to accept a chaplain who he suggested of High Church views, who never succeed in taking office, despite a legal judgement in his favour. In 1867, there was a clash with the diocese of York over the wearing of surplices, and in 1882, the succession of High Church Father Ommanney to St. Matthews' aroused considerable hostility. See Hunter, op. cit., p.266; Kirk-Smith, op. cit., p.100; Francis G. Belton Memoirs of George Campbell Ommanney Vicar of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, 1882-1936, London, 1936, pp.60-67; Rev. William Odom, Memoirs of the Life and Work of John Edward Blakeney DD. 2nd edition, London, 1895, pp.71-73.
3. Hunter, op. cit., pp.277-278; Arthur Thomas, Church Prosperity in Sheffield - Its Origin Progress and Present Position, Sheffield, 1878; Wilkinson, op. cit., pp.77-78; James E. Furniss, One Hundred Years 1825-1925 - A Brief History of St. George's Church, Sheffield, Sheffield, 1925; William Odom, The Story of St. Philip's Church, Sheffield - Centenary Record 1828-1928, Sheffield 1928; Odom, St. Mary's Church, Sheffield, Its History and Clergy, Sheffield, 1930; Arthur Robinson, The Church in Attercliffe, Sheffield, 1926

desired impact upon the poor, 'inasmuch as the purse of the nation, and not the
heart of the people, contributed to this fund'.[1] The clergy of the new churches
had no parochial cure, therefore their financial support had to be drawn from
pew rents. John Livesey, vicar of St. Philip's, drew attention to the
uselessness of these vast buildings as early as 1840, and urged smaller
parishes, with mechanics' churches, built by working class self-help.[2] In
1846, ten new parishes were planned, and existing churches provided with parishes,
and defined pastoral care.[3] Even this new provision was irrelevant to the
needs of the swelling working class districts, and the survival of the practice
of pew rents and freehold sittings into the second half of the century helped
to sustain the social exclusiveness of the Established Church.

The relative strength of the denominations in Sheffield in the middle
of the century may be gauged from the Religious Census of 1851. The growth of
nonconformity, principally Methodism, was exposed as a serious challenge to the
Established Church. Despite expansion, the Church of England in Sheffield in
1851 had only enough seats for 15% of the town's population, whilst the non-
Anglican denominations were providing for 18.9%. The Church of England provided
44.2% of the total number of sittings available, whilst the nonconformists made
up the remaining 55.8%. The numerical superiority of the nonconformists was
reflected in most of the great towns, although in Sheffield, Anglicans and
Dissenters were more equally balanced than elsewhere: in Leeds, for example,
the Church of England provided only a third of the total number of seats.[4]
Of all the denominations, however, the Church of England still had the largest
accommodation in Sheffield, and its 23 churches had 19,562 seats. The Wesleyans
were next, with 16 chapels accommodating 10,479. Ten other chapels, with
provision for 14,101, showed the vitality of the liberal Methodist churches in
the town; Old Dissent, with 16 chapels, had accommodation only for 8,306. The

1. In Gatty's edition of Hunter, op. cit., p.263; Alfred Gatty (1813-1903)
   was preacher, lecturer, local historian, and minister of Ecclesfield,
   Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc. pp.47-48
2. John Livesey, Mechanics Churches - A Letter to Sir Robert Peel on Church
   Extension in Populous Towns and Manufacturing Districts, London, 1846;
   Samuel Earnshaw; The Church and the Artisan, London, 1861, gives a similar
   view; Wickham, op. cit., pp.87-89.
3. Hunter, op. cit., p.265; S.R.I. 21 March 1846
4. Census, (P.P. 1852-53, LXXXIX), p.ccxcvii

figures for attendance show clearly which denominations were the most dynamic: attendances in two occasions during Census Sunday only barely filled the available sittings in most denominations, and fell considerably below this figure in the Church of England and the Society of Friends. However, the Primitive Methodists, with seats only for 1,000 had 2,257 attendances, and the Roman Catholic church registered 4,000 in 950 seats on that day.[1] Each of these denominations had only one building in 1851, and the expansion of the Primitive Methodists in the second half of the century fulfilled the promise shown in 1851.

The implications of the Religious Census were a stimuls to a new cycle of church building and religious evangelising, which affected all denominations. This renewed activity in the period 1850-1900 has earned it the description 'the years of religious boom'.[2] There are fundamental economic and social reasons why this should have happened.

The prosperity of the cutlery trades, and the rapid growth of the heavy steel industry resulted in a rising standard of living after 1850. In social terms, this prosperity fed

> 'the strengthening and expansion of that great middling group
> in urban society, ranging from the wealthy industrialists,
> merchants and inventors, to the little shop-keepers, tradesmen,
> clerks, working foremen and superior working men economically
> secure in well-established crafts'. 3.

This group tended to be liberal in politics, and largely dissenting in religion. They embraced religion as an integral part of their social aspiration, and gained the tangible benefits of status and respectability from the habit of church-going. Their numerical strength in Sheffield left a decisive mark upon the political and religious life of the community; local prosperity released substantial amounts of capital for church-building, and no fewer than 26 parish churches were provided by the Church of England between 1848 and 1883 a rate

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1. ibid., p.cclxviii.
2. Wickham, op. cit., pp.107-165
3. Wickham, op. cit., p.120

1.

unequalled before or since.

The period after 1850 is also characterised by dramatic expansion of liberal nonconformity. Congregationalism, after more than half a century of stagnation, built 13 new chapels between 1853 and 1880. Most of these were dominated by wealthy and politically active manufacturing families. 'Criticus' described many of these congregations in articles in the Sheffield Times. Nether Chapel, typical of the older Independent congregations,

> 'had more of Dives than of Lazarus in that place. All were well-dressed, married ladies comfortably enclosed in the costly luxuries of Cole's or Cockayne's, with their daughters equally elegantly attired... family pews are a feature at Nether as at other old-established chapels'. 2.

In the Methodist denominations, the dynamic had passed from the Wesleyans to the liberal Methodist chapels. The increasing conservatism of the Wesleyans had made them vulnerable to internal conflicts, and Methodists with Sheffield connections such as James Everett played a key part in the national schism of 1849, which seriously damaged the numerical strength of the Wesleyans. As a result, an important section of the Methodist movement aligned itself behind the reformers in the interests of a greater degree of lay control and democracy. Many of these were articulate, self-confident employers and tradesmen who had fiercely resisted the autocratic and centralising force of the Wesleyan Conference. 3. By 1881, the United Methodist Free Church and the Wesleyan Reform Union, new bodies who had emerged out of the split, had built fifteen chapels each in Sheffield. 4. The U.M.F.C. in particular tended to build large chapels for wealthy congregations. The largest of these was Hanover, opened in 1858 in the prosperous suburb of Broomhall. 5. 'Criticus' described the large and respectable congregation at Hanover,

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1. The building and endowment of churches enabled the wealthy to buy prestige: The Misses Harrison, spinster daughters of a local manufacturer built Holy Trinity, Nursery St., at a cost of £5,000 in 1839. Other benefactors to the Church of England were Henry Wilson (St. Matthew's 1855, St. Stephen's 1857), John Brown (All Saints' 1869), John Newton Mappin (St. John's Ranmoor 1878); Hunter, op. cit., pp.279-280
2. quoted in Wickham, op. cit., p.135
3. Taylor, op. cit., pp.144-195
4. Wickham, op. cit., pp.130,148
5. I.W. Schofield and R. Morrison, Hanover United Methodist Church 1860-1910 - A History of the Trust, Church and Sunday School, Sheffield, 1910.

> 'chiefly from the middle ranks of life –
> flourishing tradesmen, rising manufacturers,
> energetic shopkeepers and the better sort of artisans.
> There were several who had made money, and a great
> many who intend and expect to make it before long....
> all were welldressed and most intelligent looking.
> They are an aspiring, active, restless, enterprising
> class of people, intent upon religion and indeed
> determined.... "to make the best of both worlds".' 1.

However, although the third quarter of the century saw religion institutionalised as the preserve of the expanding middle classes, increasing numbers of respectable foremen, petty tradesmen and artisans came forward to take their places in church and chapel. Despite the middle class nature of Sheffield Congregationalism, there was a resilient strand of working class independency at the eastern end of the town: under the influence of John Calvert at Zion Chapel in Attercliffe, a vigorous working class congregation was built up, following the abolition of pew rents and an aggressive missionary policy.[2] Some U.M.F.C. chapels were found by 'Criticus' to be chiefly composed of the working classes, such as the congregation at Mount Tabor, which was characterised by free emotional utterance. The Wesleyan Reform Union concentrated on smaller, humbler buildings in unfashionable areas, with a large number of lay preachers to serve congregations which were almost exclusively working class.[3] By 1881, the W.R.U. had built chapels in areas such as Attercliffe, Burngreave, Carbrook, Darnall and Bramall Lane, which were often combinations of preaching rooms and school rooms.[4]

The new habit of chapel going on the part of respectable working class people is nowhere more plain than in the case of the Primitive Methodists. Their denomination was served by only one building until 1855: after this date, growth was rapid, and between this date and 1897, the Primitive built no fewer than 31 chapels of varying sizes, mostly concentrated in the expanding area of working class housing, such as Heeley, Attercliffe, Darnall,

1. 'Criticus', op. cit., p.33
2. Wickham, op. cit., pp.136-137; P.G.S. Hopwood, The Gates of Zion – The Story of a Church, unpublished ms, S.C.L., n.d. MD6140
3. Wickham, pp.130-131
4. ibid., pp.278-279

Grimesthorpe, Highfields and Brightside. The Primitives, more than any

other denomination in Sheffield, reached further into the lower strata of

the working classes, whilst undoubtedly retaining the allegiance of many

families who had made money. [1] Thus 'Criticus' observed at Bethel, that

> 'the congregation consisted almost entirely of the poorer
> classes; but there were several tradesmen and small manufacturers
> and their families. The people were well dressed, respectable
> looking and well behaved'. [2]

Small tradesmen and working people also provided the bulk of the congregation

at the chapel at Hoyle St., Jericho, an area of 'miserable-looking backhouses,

dirty gutters and heaps of rubbish.' [3]

Provision for the working classes, so far as it went, was by no means

the monopoly of liberal nonconformity. After 1851, the Church of England

grew increasingly anxious about its weakness in working class areas, and the

political and social implications of this. In 1861, Samuel Earnshaw, assistant

minister to the Parish Church, wrote 'the Church of England is standing on the

edge of a volcano, and the very existence of the Christian religion in this

country is menaced'. [4] The first steps were in fact taken by the

nonconformists, who set up a Town Mission, in imitation of that of Manchester

in 1850, to lead the ignorant to religion by means of home visits, reading

and prayer. [5] In 1854, however, the Vicar of Sheffield himself began open-air

preaching in populous places, with services 'specially adapted to a

promiscuous congregation'. [6] The following year, the Church of England

Scripture Readers' Society was formed, which followed the example of the Town

Mission in the use of lay people for religious work. [7] During the 1870's and

1. ibid., pp.131-134
2. 'Criticus' op. cit., p.30
3. ibid., p.115
4. Earnshaw, op. cit. - Samuel Earnshaw (1815-1888), the son of a local file
   cutter, was educated at the National Schools, and ultimately at Cambridge,
   where he became senior wrangler. He was active in religion, education and
   philanthopy, supporting the National Schools, the Charity Schools and
   Firth College. He was an eminent mathematician,&was four times president
   of the Literary and Philosophic Society. Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc.
   pp.39-40
5. Town Mission, Annual Report, Sheffield 1853
6. S.R.I. 9 July 1854; S.T. 19 August 1854
7. S.R.I. 2 December 1855

1880's the Church of England held sustained mission campaigns in the town, often attracting crowds of several thousands, and began visits to the Workhouse, the Infirmary and the workshops.[1]

Another way of tackling the problem of the irreligious poor was by the building of churches. Church Extension Societies were formed in 1865 and 1877, and between 1851 and 1881, the church increased its total stock of buildings in Sheffield from 23 to 50. Schools, mission rooms and parsonages were also built, and the amount spent between 1860 and 1885 was in excess of £300,000. By 1895, Sheffield was a city of 38 parishes.[2]

It was the intention of the Church Extension Society that all new churches should have completely free sittings. The movement to abolish existing appropriated seats was slow, however, for the issue of freehold pews was controversial, reflecting as it did the ingrained perception of the right of the wealthy to buy privilege. In any case, many congregations were conservative in their attitude to change, and pew rents were often required to make up the stipend of the minister.[3] John Livesey spoke for many when he argued that the independence of the Sheffield workman would make him reluctant to accept free seats, and thus the abolition of pew rents was not the answer to the problem.[4] Canon Sale, Vicar of Sheffield from 1851 to 1873, tried to act on the matter, but with no success, for many regarded freehold pews as an investment for future income.[5] Even the popular William Thompson, Archbishop of York, thought that seats should not be free if this was unacceptable to the congregations.[6] Only in 1880 were the pews in the Parish Church replaced by oak benches, during alterations to the building, and care was still taken to accommodate the former seat holders.[7]

1. Kirk-Smith, op. cit., pp.106-107
2. S.R.I. 20 January 1865; S.D.T. 9 January 1877; Hunter, op. cit., pp.282-283;
   Odom, Memoir, etc., pp.191-195; Wickham, op. cit., p.141
3. Wickham, op. cit., p.143
4. Livesey, op. cit.
5. Wickham op. cit., p.143; S.R.I. 23 January 1867; for Sale, see Odom,
   Hallamshire Worthies, etc., pp.52-53
6. S.D.T. 9 January 1877
7. Wickham, op. cit., p.143

Despite the resistance of church members to change, there is some evidence that the Church of England was not without success in its attempts to attract working men. The great strength of Anglicanism was its universality, as the church to which those with no other allegiance had the right to belong. It is arguable that where provision was made, the poor could in fact worship with less inhibition than at many nonconformist chapels, which were becoming increasingly respectable, and therefore socially exclusive, and where the chapel community was bound together in an intimate relationship through the structure of committees and lay societies. By the end of the century, the distinction between church and chapel was becoming less, yet

> 'it is probable that the more working-class Nonconformist denominations.... had more of the superior, respectable, politically-minded working men than the parish churches, and that the latter had more of the indiscriminate poor'. 1.

The observations of 'Criticus' show that even by 1870, the Church of England in some places was successful in attracting the poor. While churches in the new fashionable suburbs were solidly middle class, a 'sprinkling of the working classes' were observed in the Parish Church. In more mixed parishes, such as St. George's and St. Mary's, working class people came forward, and the benches for the poor were completely filled. 2. Personal factors often dictated the composition of a congregation, however: 'Criticus' noticed 'the predilection of fashionable congregations for unfashionable neighbourhoods', and the quality of the clergymen could be an important factor. 3.

The outdoor missions held by the Church of England in the 1870's and 1880's attracted crowds of several thousands. 4. Individual Anglican clergy occasionally achieved a special relationship with the working men of Sheffield, and were rewarded by a fierce loyalty. Canon Blakeney, vicar of St. Paul's, and vicar and archdeacon of Sheffield 1877-1895, had a special

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1. ibid., p.142
2. 'Criticus', op. cit., pp.82,95; Wickham, op. cit., p.144
3. Wickham, op. cit., p.145
4. S.R.I. 8 December 1871; Kirk-Smith, op.cit., pp.106-107

empathy with working men, and 'his name became a household word first in his parish of St. Paul's and then throughout Sheffield'.[1] William Thompson had a close relationship with Sheffield as Archbishop of York, and was known as 'the People's Archbishop'. He was idolized by working men, who, upon their own initiative, presented him with a two hundred piece silver cutlery service in June 1883.[2] Opposition to threats of disestablishment led to the formation of the Workingmen's Church Defence and Reform Association in 1876, allegedly without official prompting from the Church, or assistance from its funds.[3] Father Ommanney of St. Matthew's succeeded against strong opposition in turning his church into a vigorous community for the slum dwellers in that neighbourhood.[4] At St. Mary's, an enthusiastic and able incumbent, R.H. Hammond began a determined policy of bible classes, open air preaching and cottage meetings, and attracted large numbers of local working men, as well as holding the devotional loyalty of a well-to-do congregation who have moved out to the south west of the town.[5] Bible classes also became a feature at the Parish Church, and at All Saints, the church endowed by John Brown to serve the needs of his workmen in the East End.[6]

The Wesleyans, fired by the evangelical philosophies of national church leaders such as Hugh Price Hughes, also made a great effort to find new ways of building up working class adherents in the last quarter of the century.[7] A positive reorientation towards the needs of the working classes was made all the more necessary by the changing composition of many of the city centre chapels, as the wealthy middle classes who financed them moved away into the salubrious suburbs, and sought newer chapels near to their homes. Norfolk St. chapel was one which suffered from this tendency: as early as 1874, 'Criticus' observed that 'it is the ambition of a tradesman to have his house at Ranmoor and he naturally seeks a church or chapel not far from his own vine and figtree'.[8] This process was also seen in the Park, where a thriving chapel

1. Odom, Memoir, etc., p.97
2. S.R.I. 13 June 1883; Kirk-Smith, op. cit., p.103
3. S.R.I. 8 December 1875, 17 January 1876, 30 March 1876, 23 February 1881
4. Belton, op. cit., pp.95, 137; Wickham, op. cit., p.145
5. Odom, St. Mary's, etc. p.25; Wickham, op. cit., pp.146-147
6. Wickham, op. cit., p.147
7. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes, etc. pp.142-165
8. Quoted by Wickham, op. cit., p.139, Seed, op. cit., p.230

community was gradually undermined by the migration of the wealthier elements further up the hill to more fashionable streets, leaving the original chapel depleted of members and resources to cope with one of the most downtrodden areas of Sheffield, while its former supporters founded the new Victoria chapel near to their homes.[1] Of course, this problem was experienced throughout Methodism, and to a lesser extent in Old Dissent, too, although the Congregationalists and Unitarians had fewer buildings, and managed to retain the loyalties of their members. South St. New Connection chapel also suffered the loss of its congregation by the late nineteenth century. And as working class communities also moved further out, leaving the town centre for manufacturing and retailing, working class chapels such as Bethel faced a similar fate.[2] Social and economic factors therefore meant that chapels could follow their congregations into the suburbs, or stay and try to make a relationship with the working class communities which surrounded them. This approach needed new attitudes and methods. The Wesleyans were not afraid to meet this challenge, and adopted a policy of aggresive missionary activity towards the end of the century. Indeed, the denomination's oldest chapel in Sheffield, Norfolk St., was demolished and replaced by the Victoria Hall, opened in 1908 as an evangelical preaching centre and mission church.[3] Methodist lay preacher and town councillor Edwin Richmond urged house to house visits, free seats and short, popular services with hearty singing as a sure way to build up chapel attendances.[4]

These new tactics were not developed in isolation, however. Two new religious agencies had already demonstrated how evangelical work should be done. The arrival of the Salvation Army on the streets of Sheffield in 1878,

1. Wickham, op. cit., pp.139-140; S.R.I. 12 June 1909; J.J. Graham, History of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield Park, Sheffield, 1914, pp.253,257,270
2. Bethel was converted into a mission in 1905. South St. was sold in 1924 and the congregation dispersed to chapels in Nether Edge. S.W.I. 19 December 1908, 26 December 1908; S.D.I. 4 March 1924
3. Seed, op. cit., p.298
4. Edwin Richmond, Practical Methods for Filling Chapels, Sheffield 1893, Richmond was typical of the new generation of Methodists in his interest in temperance and social reform: see below, Chapter 21.

resulted in public rioting, and a degree of incomprehension from the
authorities.[1]   Nevertheless, the musical procession and the open air
services attracted support as well as abuse. By 1881, the Army had 4 halls
and a sunday attendance of 4000, predominantly

> 'men in whose minds the truth was probably dawning
> that it was not absolutely necessary to wear patent
> leather boots and a broadcloth coat to enter the
> Kingdom of Heaven'. [2]

Another agency, the Workmen's Mission to Workmen, established in 1880, and
later known as the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Movement, attracted gatherings of
several thousands, by giving the working classes somewhere to go on Sunday
afternoons, by an enthusiastic use of music and hymn-singing, and by ignoring
the conventional niceties of dress.[3]

The Religious Census conducted by the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent
in 1881 allowed churchmen in Sheffield to appraise the results of some of these
efforts. These were not encouraging. The failure of the denominations to
provide for the expanding population of the town, despite a period of
unparalleled investment in church building, has already been discussed.
Although the number of Anglican churches had more than doubled since 1851,
the proportion of the total population who could be accommodated had fallen
slightly to 14%. Old Dissent had fallen similarly from 6% to 4%, and only the
Methodists had remained stable with provision for 10% of the population. The
relative strengths of the denominations had also been slightly adjusted. The
Church of England now provided only 34% of the sittings, while the Methodists
provided 42%. The buoyancy of the Methodists is explained largely through the
active chapel building policies of the Primitives, the U.M.F.C. and the W.R.U.
Patterns of attendance had also changed for the worse: only the Church of
England, the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholics filled their seats in a

1. S.R.I. 14 August 1879; ibid., 26 September 1881; Robert Sandall, The History
   of the Salvation Army, II, London, 1950, pp.167-168, 177-178.
2. Sandall, op. cit., p.167; S.R.I. 14 August 1879; Wickham, op. cit., p.157
3. A.S.O. Birch, Christian Work in the Grand Circus, Sheffield, Sheffield, 1886;
   Workmen's Meetings and Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, Annual Report, Sheffield
   1892; The Hammer 11 November 1893; Wickham, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

total of three services.[1]

Some denominations, principally the Wesleyans, continued to make strides at least until the early years of the twentieth century. Nevertheless the 1881 figures are convenient for an assessment of the impact of religion after a period of self-criticism, and of rapid expansion. Despite all the efforts of the religious bodies, only one in three of the people of Sheffield went to church in 1881, and the total accommodation provided for rather less than this number.[2] Even when the work of the Church of England in the poorer parishes, the Primitive Methodists and the Salvation Army is taken into account, it is clear that the bulk of the working classes still remained outside the churches: thus,

> 'the religious bodies were restricted to a single social stratum,
> embracing a lower percentage of the population as they approached
> the working class, or they reached down and embraced groups of all
> classes but with smaller percentages the lower they went, and in
> so doing, produced religious groups of different social levels that
> seemed incapable of merging. Thus the Bible Classes were distinct
> from the congregations, the frequenters of the Workmen's Mission
> would not go to the classes. Beyond them all was the ocean of the
> masses and the submerged who would not go to anything'. [3]

Perhaps even more crucial than the indifference of the masses was the reorientation of working class leadership away from the traditional deference to the values and institutions of the middle classes, with the birth of working class political agencies in the 1880's; this will be discussed elsewhere.[4]

Nevertheless, the census figures of 1881 do reflect two facts crucial for the dissemination of middle class values. Firstly, the numbers who did attend church and chapel represent a vast body of religious worshippers not demonstrably rivalled before or since. Secondly, religious worship involved not just the large employers, but a whole spectrum of tradesmen, shopkeepers, white collar workers, and skilled craftsmen, welded together by collective

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1. Figures from Wickham, op. cit., p.148
2. See above p.114.
3. Wickham, op. cit., pp.158-159
4. ibid., pp.158-165; see below, Chapter 27

participation in religious institutions, who assimilated the value of middle class culture, and provided leadership during a formative period for an important section of the working classes.

Participation in religious institutions involved the adoption of clear-cut attitudes to working class culture. These derived from the Evangelical revival of the late eighteenth century, and were formulated by the two great strands of the revival, the evangelical clergy, working within the church of England, and the Methodist movement. Common to both was the conviction of the sinfulness and corruption of man, and the need for conversion and redemption. This involved a return to the bible as the supreme arbiter, and the concern for the salvation of the individual, through the practical application of the gospel. The evidence of man's sin was his depravity in social conduct. The Calvinist position of old Dissent was abandoned however: thinkers such as John Wesley argued that the regeneration of the individual was possible. This was to be authenticated by discernible evidence of social conduct; hence the concern of evangelical Anglicans with morals and manners, and the preoccupation of John Wesley with the economic ideal, with work discipline and thrift, which links Methodism with the Puritan tradition. The implications of this social philosophy for the individual will be discussed in more detail below. It fulfilled an especially dynamic role in a community such as Sheffield, which had many tradesmen and manufacturers who found the philosophy of self-improvement attractive, and who were given opportunities for upward social mobility by the economic structure of the community. Hence the strength of Methodism, and of evangelical Anglicanism: the attitudes to working class culture which they redefined and expressed permeated every aspect of middle class ideology, and provided the fundamental framework of values against which the state of a society in rapid transition should be judged.

Fired by the heightened religious consciousness of the Evangelical Revival, the middle classes were able to re-examine the nature of popular culture, and to find it wanting. Religious attitudes during the period of the Evangelical Revival, and as late as the 1840's, show a constant preoccupation with the social behaviour of the masses. With the increasing institutionalization of the churches in Victorian society, the reform of popular culture as a task for the churches became obscured by essentially political questions such as the relations of church and state, and by the concern of religious bodies with education and temperance. Nevertheless, the churches continued to act as a barometer of the attitudes of the 'respectable' to mass culture.

The evidence of working class sin was defined in terms of ignorance, violence, infidelity and uncivilised social behaviour. For clergymen such as John Aldred, ignorance was a fundamental evil, the parent of vice, violence, dishonesty, wretchedness and improvidence:

> 'Ignorance and Crime go hand in hand on their dark and
> mischievous way, like twin brothers of evil, transpiring
> over our happy land with their heavy footsteps of passion,
> envy, violence and vice'. 1.

The fear of the violence of popular culture was in fact given practical reinforcement. The early Methodist preachers were continually subjected to personal abuse and attack. Charles Wesley saw the Sheffield mobs for himself, and wrote 'those at Moorfields, Cardiff and Walsall were lambs to these'. [2] Even as late as 1839, attempts by the Wesleyans at Sunday street preaching were

> 'prevented by a number of drunken Irishmen and others,
> who pelted the preacher and his friends with rotten
> eggs and missiles of a more dangerous character'. 3.

The Salvation Army met with similar treatment: a procession in 1882 was 'a target for thousands of brutal roughs to curse, spit upon, and cover with mud and mortar, and wound with sharp cutting stones'. 4.

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1. Rev. John Aldred, <u>On the Advantages and Proper Use of General Knowledge</u> Rotherham, 1851, pp.11-12
2. Quoted in Seed, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.17
3. <u>S.M.</u> 18 May 1839
4. Sandall, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp.177-178

Throughout the period, therefore, the appearance of religious agencies on the streets and away from the protection of the church as a challenge to violent, unruly and drunken elements, who replied in physical terms to the verbal attacks of religion upon their culture, and the incursion of its spokesmen upon their territory. Popular hostility only increased the sense of mission. A particular focus of attack was the village feasts and festivals, which were carried over into the urban way of life until the middle of the nineteenth century. Such events were a compendium of every sort of vice. The Methodists were urged to avoid feasts at all costs, as they involved

> 'eating and drinking intemperately, talking profanely, or at least unprofitably; laughing and jesting, singing and dancing; cursing and swearing; fornication and adultery, and... everything ruinous to the morals of youth, and the happiness of all'. 1.

Popular sports were also particularly attacked. At Ecclesfield, bear baitings and other brutal amusements were common during the week, and on Sundays: 'the village was deemed the Sodom of all the neighbouring places'. 2.

The working classes were also attacked for their indifference to the sanctity of the sabbath; drinking, sexual immorality, time wasting and uncleanliness were both non-productive and immoral, but when pursued on a Sunday, they constituted a formidable defiance of the voice of religion. Complaints from church-goers about the desecration of the Sabbath increased from the late eighteenth century. In a letter from a Sunday school teacher to the _Sheffield Iris_ in 1816, Sabbath breaking was seen as the forerunner of a train of vices: children who were allowed to profane the Sabbath became profligate, incorrigible and undesirable as servants. 3. The abuse of Sundays was a lasting preoccupation during the nineteenth century, particularly when linked with drinking and sport. In 1835, a church-goer was alarmed at meeting on a Sunday

1. James Wood, _An Address to the Members of the Methodist Societies on Several Interesting Subjects_, London, 1799, p.4
2. Everett, _op. cit._, pp.74-75; _Wesleyan Methodist Church Ecclesfield 1817 -1917_, Sheffield, 1917, pp.2-3
3. _S.I._ 18 June 1816

> 'a large crowd of very blackguard looking working men – most of
> them young, and in their working dress, seemingly just emerged from
> the SUN or SHADES. It was quite alarming for any decent female to
> pass through them'. 1.

Hostility to drunkenness and ultimately to drink itself, was integral to the attack on popular culture: this will be discussed in detail below. In a sermon of 1823, the effects of malt were seen as

> 'mischief and murder; Adultery; Looseness; Treason, and in the
> world to come – Misery; Anguish; Lamentation; Torment'. 2

The real opposition to drink was slow in arriving, for many middle class people were unwilling to accept teetotalism. Nevertheless, drink became the symbol of the gulf between the respectable and the depraved. The influence of religion and the reform of social behaviour could not begin without the achievement of sobriety. Throughout the century, the failure of the churches to make a real impact upon the mass of the working classes could be blamed upon the hold which alcohol had over them.

Another aspect of the concept of the mob was the fear of working class political organization, involving by implication the illegitimate destruction of property. Radical activity of the period 1790-1820, the threat of physical force Chartism after 1839, and the growth of Owenism and socialism were all opposed by the churches. The vicar of Sheffield preached to Chartists in the parish church on two Sundays in August 1839, in an attempt to enforce habits of political quietism,

> 'plainly warning them of the wickedness and desparate hazard of the
> course they were pursuing, and earnestly exorting them to return to
> a sound mind, to loyal, peaceable and industrious habits, and to
> serious and diligent pursuit of those "better things which the
> gospel of Christ held out to them". ' 3.

A second time, the vicar preached the duties of forbearance, and that suffering was heaven sent:

1. _ibid._, 10 February 1835
2. Dr. Franklin, _The Way to Wealth, or, Poor Richard, to which are added the Celebrated Sayings of Old Mr. Dod, with his Sermon upon Malt_, Sheffield 1823, p.18
3. _S.M._ 24 August 1839

> 'if they were afflicted, they must be patient - if they were poor,
> they must be contented, for if they had the riches of others,
> their responsibility would be greater'. 1.

But the equilibrium between radical working men and the representatives of

the Established Church was too delicate to be maintained: in following weeks,

attempts to eject seat holders from the Parish Church were met with a display

of armed force at the gates of the church: only decently dressed individuals

were allowed to enter, and the Chartists went back to their open air meetings

in the fields at Skye Edge. 2. The growth of an independent working class

political tradition was related by some commentators to the failure of the

churches in working class areas: John Livesey argued:

> 'Can it be surprising that the profane doctrines and licentious
> practices of the Socialists, so congenial to the animal appetites
> of the ignorant, find numerous abettors? It is quite natural that
> in such a population, the demagogue and political firebrand will
> find abundant materials for sedition, treason and rebellion'. 3.

A common view was that Church Extension was the only possible means of checking

the evils of Chartism and Socialism. 4. As late as 1882, the Archbishop of

York, addressing a workmen's meeting of over 7,000, spoke with horror of the

Paris Commune, equating political action with the images of sin and depravity.

Thus,

> 'the flood of human passions (was) let loose, and a number of
> drunken dissolute villains, emerging from the darkest corners
> of the social system... broke forth; and with the cup of drink
> in their hands went mad with fury'. 5.

Thus the integral constituents of the attitude of the churches to the

working classes were a fear of crime, or the abuse of society by the individual,

and of the possibility of collective civil and social disorder by the working

classes. Certain behavioural characteristics were identified as conducive to

social disorder: these were violence, ignorance and irreligion. Although it is

1. ibid., 31 August 1939
2. ibid., 14 September 1839, 21 September 1839
3. Livesey, op. cit., ; Wickham, op. cit., pp.87-88
4. S.M. 28 March 1840
5. S.R.I. 23 October 1882

arguable that such qualities effectively transcended the bounds of social class, they became the conventional images used by the respectable to condemn popular culture. Thus the very nature of the working class individual, his appearance, values and social behaviour, were in need of reform. Evangelical religion gave these ideas a new context and sense of direction. Thus the conversion of the sinner was to guarantee the continued stability of society.

7.   <u>Religion and the Individual.</u>

The most powerful weapon of the churches in the propagation of religion and respectability was the social and psychological power of the church as an institution over the individual. The social function of religion has already been discussed in general terms.[1] The churches interacted with the individual in several ways. Its institutional framework provided varying degrees of involvement and fellowship. Its activities, some of which were recreational, provided an alternative social milieu. Religion itself, through the Protestant Ethic, offered a value system which provided a philosophy of self-advancement for the upwardly socially mobile; by maintaining the sacredness of property and social order, it helped to uphold the hegemony of middle class values. In these ways, the churches could have a potent appeal for those who were dispossessed, alienated or insecure in a community such as Sheffield, undergoing the traumas of rapid social and economic change.

The impact of the churches upon the individual is seen most dramatically in the process of religious conversion, and the impact of this upon social behaviour and values. Mass conversion, through the agency of revivalism, represents a strong strand of collective experience, running from the days of the early Methodist preachers in Sheffield, through to the Gospel Temperance Missions of the 1880's, when open air preaching converted thousands to religion and teetotalism.[2] The phenomen was closely linked to the fervour of the Methodist sects in the early revivalist days as they strove to break new spiritual frontiers with groups hitherto denied the spiritual consolation of religion: the Primitive Methodists after 1819 followed the pattern already established by the Wesleyan preachers sixty years earlier.[3] Times of extraordinary distress and insecurity, such as the

1. see above, Chapter 4.
2. Bramwell, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.p.84-85 for gospel temperance, see below, Chapter 21.
3. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism', etc, I, p.p. 1-11.

cholera epidemic of 1832, which killed 400, brought new converts flocking into the churches.[1] The missions of the American evangelists James Caughey in 1884 and 1857-58, and Moody and Sankey in 1875, tapped undercurrents of mass emotionalisism, and brought spiritual renewal to unbeliever and churchman alike. In 1844, Caughey converted over 4,000, preaching six or eight times a week to crowds of over 2,000 for four months; those brought to God included

> 'Quakers, Papists, members of the National Church, Independents, Baptists, Methodists: besides many, both men and women, who with reference to religion were nothing at all'. [2]

In 1857-58, missions mainly in the Methodist chapels attracted huge crowds into Sheffield, travelling by rail, by omnibus and on foot, from South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Manchester and the Midlands, and large numbers were said to have been brought into the churches.[3]

Although all evangelistic agencies regarded the process of conversion as crucial to their success, the strongest evidence of the influence of religion on individual awareness is found during Methodist revivals. The essence of the conversion experience was the conviction of sin, so central to the philosophy of John Wesley and others, Thus man without God was living in a condition of depravity and corruption. In this respect, Wesley's theology endorsed the Calvinist tradition; nevertheless, his 'doctrine of perfectability' represents a radical divergence from the Calvinist preoccupation with predestination. The sinner could be reclaimed, but only by the receipt of grace, and the intense conviction of his former depravity. This was what happened during 'conversion'. Evidence of redemption and grace had to be sustained through good works, and exemplary personal conduct; this will be discussed in detail below.

The phenomenon of individual and mass conversion has long been

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1. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism', etc., I, p.25.
2. S.R.I. 14 September 1844.
3. ibid., 17 October 1857, 31 October 1857, 5 November 1857.

recognised as a working out of psychic disturbance.[1] The two elements

of conversion have been identified as uneasiness and its solution.[2]

Thus eternal salvation won by Faith, was essentially an escape from stress,

and sanctification was preceded by depression, self-questioning, emotional

doubts and even physical debilitation.[3] Clearly the trauma and anomie

produced in individuals under stress in a rapidly changing social context

made them ripe for the conversion experience. This is something which

cannot easily be measured. Some individuals went through a degree of

physical illness during the conversion process. Manufacturer Henry

Longden, who became a Methodist in the early 1790's, experienced a long

period of self-doubt and reappraisal, in which he fasted and prayed, his

strength becoming so wasted that he was unable to attend to his work.[4]

In the case of Henry Longden, salvation was an experience pursued

in isolation during a period of many months. Many were converted in a more

dramatic form, through the high emotional tension deliberately generated by

mass revivalism. In this process, intelligence and reason were abandoned,

and emotion substituted: the aim of the revivalist was

> 'to create an atmosphere of contagious emotion and suggestibility,
> in which worldly reason, the counsels of selfish prudence and
> material welfare are inhibited, and the audience reduced to a
> state of relative primitive credulity'.[5]

Thus the old thoughts were disrupted, and new patterns substituted, leading

to intellectual and emotional regeneration, and a new mental harmony. This

was described by Methodist minister John Hearnshaw:

> 'The promises flowed in upon my mind as though God were speaking
> the words to me; and I literally, for a few days, rejoiced and
> prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks'. 6.

1. The process of conversion has been discussed extensively in inter alia
Sydney G. Dimond, The Psychology of the Methodist Revival - An Empirical
and Descriptive Study, London, 1926; William Sargant, Battle for the Mind
- A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-washing, London, 1957. Ian Rammage,
Battle for the Free Mind, London, 1967.
2. Dimond, op. cit., p.160.   3. Sargant, op. Cit., p.p.80-84.
4. William Bramwell, The Life of Mr. Henry Longden, compiled from his own
Memoirs, from his diary and his letters, and from other authentic documents.
Liverpool, 1813, p.p. 28-29.
5. Dimond, op. cit., p.117.
6. Spedding,'Notes on Local Methodism', etc., extract from Methodist Magazine,
July 1810, p.p. 250-251; for other descriptions of conversion, see Spedding,
'Primitive Methodism', etc., I, p.p. 8,55.

In many cases, the redirection of emotion and awareness was precipitated by the death of a friend. Henry Longden was much impressed by the deaths of two neighbours, one of whom died in agony, the other in peace, with the spiritual help of Methodists.[1] William Cowlishaw, a pen blade forger, abandoned cock fighting and fox hunting, and was converted to Methodism by the death of a friend, and the influence of Methodists at his funeral.[2] Children were often important in individual cases of conversion, bringing parents and grandparents into the churches.[3] In numerous cases, conversion worked because it reawakened latent guilt. Those who were most susceptible had been brought up in an actively religious family, or were at least trained in some knowledge of Christian values: their failure to follow the pattern set in their childhood meant that they could easily be convinced of their sin and depravity. John Coulson, the founder of Primitive Methodism in Sheffield, was the great grandchild of an Anglican clergyman, and was given a religious upbringing by his maternal grandmother, 'who with true devotion, inculcated those moral and spiritual ideals which make for righteousness', before being converted by Rev. Bramwell in a revival in Chesterfield.[4] James Sheldon, who joined the Primitive Methodists in 1823, had been once a Wesleyan Sunday School scholar, but was led astray into visiting fairs, wakes and bulldog fights.[5] Albert Bradwell flirted with secularism and radical politics, but had been brought up respectably by his Church of England mother: he was converted by James Caughey after visits to Ebenezer and Carver St. chapels.[6]

The account of the conversion of Henry Longden has become a classic in Methodist literature, for it is a revealing account of the psychology of the convert. As class leader, local preacher and financier,

1. Bramwell. op. cit., p.24.
2. Luke Tyerman, Praying William - A Memoir of the late Mr. William Cowlishaw, Sheffield, 1856, p.p. 6-8.
3. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism', etc., p.p. 11,94.
4. ibid., p.p. 1-2.
5. ibid., p.20.
6. Albert T. Bradwell, Memoir of a converted infidel, Written by Himself Being a Record of his Experience from Childhood to his Conversion under the Ministry of Rev. J. Caughey at Sheffield, and Including a History of his Infidel Opinions, Sheffield, 2nd. edition, 1844.

he brought a valued prestige to the Methodist community, combining his religious work with a successful business career, as co-partner of the Thorncliffe iron works of Longden, Newton and Chambers.[1] Born in Sheffield in 1754, the only surviving son of a small manufacturer who had buried 19 others, his childhood was spoilt and indisciplined, although the pious Calvanism of his mother imposed some restraint upon him, until her death in 1772. His youth was characterised by a capacity for drinking and fighting, and he was seriously ill on one occasion, after drinking five pints of gin at an Attercliffe feast.[2] Nevertheless, he had qualities of industry and perserverance, and once having been accused of idleness, performed a week's work in twenty four hours.[3] Longden was the archetypal Methodist convert in his retrospective belief in the evils of his early life; the pattern of sin giving way to deliverance through an emotional crisis exactly reflects the experience of many first generation Methodists. Again, the religious element was by no means absent from his early life, and he grew up with an awareness of right and wrong, and a sense of guilt which was to facilitate his conversion. He experienced a spiritual searching, which brought many people to religion. He relates how his neighbour when converted to Methodism said, 'I have had a desire to serve God for some time, but I did not know how.'[4]

The power of the conversion process is seen at its most impressive in mass revivals. The charismatic William Bramwell was involved in several revivals during his ministry in Sheffield. A pitch of emotional intensity was reached in 1794, and the events of that year added 384 to the Methodist sect in the town. Beginning at a chapel love feast,

> 'the power of God in a wonderful manner filled the
> place. The cries of the distressed instantly broke
> out like a clap of thunder from every part of the
> chapel'.   5.

1. Baxter, op. cit., p.68.
2. Bramwell, op. cit., p.11.
3. ibid., p.17.
4. ibid., p.31.
5. Rev. Thomas Harris, The Christian Minister in Earnest - A Memoir of the Rev. William Bramwell, London, 1846, p.49.

These events were also described by Henry Longden, who said that the spirit of God came as a 'mighty rushing wind', which overwhelmed everybody in the congregation:

> 'a few who did not understand it and resisted it were confounded and in their terror escaped as if for their lives. There was presently a general loud and bitter cry in every part of the chapel'.   1.

At the height of the revival, over 100 were converted in three days. Even children were susceptible to this psychic disturbance. Bramwell described children holding prayer meetings in the fields, forming a circle and praying, until they had 'some signal of divine approbation'. [2.] The primitive hysteria of such manifestations was reflected in millenial expectancy, and the belief in the imminence of a Second Coming; thus in a community already under social and economic stress, the seeds of revivalism were sown.[3.]

The desired result of conversion was the sanctification of the individual. The theological basis of this was the Calvinist theory of election. Perhaps the single most important achievement of John Wesley was his reinterpretation of this doctrine, in a way which was relevant to the spiritual awakening of the masses. The concept of election was transformed into the doctrine of perfectibility, a philosophy of living open to every individual, and firmly located in the real world. Evidence of divine grace following conversion was looked for in service to the church, as class leader, local preacher, or humble worker, and in good works, which were indispensable as a sign of election.[4] This 'imputed righteousness' was 'God's gracious reckoning of a sinner as if he had not sinned', and was synonymous with the forgiveness of that sin. Thus freed from sin, a man might

> 'walk in the newness of life, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world'.   5.

1. Bramwell, op.cit., p.84-85
2. Harris, op. cit.,p.49
3. For millenialism in Sheffield, see Baxter, op.cit., p.50; for a general discussion of this, see Thompson, op.cit.,pp.52-55,127-130,420-428,877-883.
4. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, London, 1930; R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, paperback edition,London, 1966; Warner, op.cit.,pp. 55-69; Thompson, op.cit.,pp.40-42,401; Dimond, op.cit.,pp. 239-240; Abraham Scott, The Scripture Doctrine of Election Explained, Sheffield, 1824, pp. 16-24.
5. W. Feltrup, Righteousness Imputed - A Discourse Delivered in Several of the Wesleyan Reform Chapels in the Sheffield Circuit, Sheffield, 1861,pp.4,11.

The state of perfectibility to be achieved through good works was rooted in the secular sphere of behaviour and values: arguably, the emergence of this ethic had important implications for the development of industrial capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The ethos of seventeenth century Puritanism was manipulated and reaffirmed by the Methodists, to provide a blue-print for secular and moral behaviour. The soul of the individual should be cultivated by religious devotion, and by reliving the emotional experiences of conversion and deliverence. Methodical discipline in every aspect of life was irrefutable evidence of divine grace.[1] Every hour should be spent in the fulfillment of one's secular calling: through energy and industry, one strove to serve God, and success in business was a sign of divine approbation. Thus, in the words of Max Weber,

> 'A specifically bourgeois economic ethic had grown up. With the consciousness of standing in the fulness of God's grace and being visibly blessed by him, the bourgeois business man, as long as he remained within the bounds of formal correctness, as long as his moral conduct was spotless and the use to which he put his wealth was not objectionable, could follow his pecuniary interests as he would, and feel that he was fulfilling his duty in doing so'. 2.

Thus money making became a legitimate calling, work was seen as a condition of happiness, and industriousness as a mark of moral character. Time wasting was the first and deadliest sin, for every hour lost was also lost to the glory of God. Idle talk, time away from work in excessive sociability and lack of attention to business were all sins deserving moral condemnation.[3] Profit was a tribute to God: Wesley's doctrine of stewardship allowed men to use money for God's ends, and to supply themselves with a self-respecting and independant life, while the excess should be devoted to the needs of the community. Men should therefore gain, save and give all that they had.[4]

The Protestant ethic was thus a fundamental dynamic of economic growth. Indisputably, many who were successful in commercial dealings were part of a thrusting and assertive nonconformist community: those who strove for

1. Thompson, op. cit., p.401.
2. Weber, op. cit., pp. 176-177.
3. ibid., pp. 157-158.
4. Warner, op. cit., pp. 152-159; Franklin, op. cit., passim.

perfection also exhibited a highly developed motivation towards achievement.[1]

Many who made money in the nineteenth century were aided by habits of diligence and thrift, and by the most scrupulous standards of personal conduct. The responsibility of giving diverted nonconformist energies into public philanthropy and the voluntary financial support for an increasingly institutionalised religion. This was an important way of affirming 'middle class' status. The Protestant ethic also enabled the new middle class to consolidate and protect their position by the evolution of an authoritarian relationship with some sections of the working classes. The irreligious poor, lacking the signs of divine grace, were trapped in poverty by their depravity, and by Providence.[2] Factory, workshop and chapel all placed the bourgeois employer in a relationship with the working classes. If they were not to be converted, it was important for the future stability of society that they should be controlled. Through the chapel and the workplace, the middle class employer strove to enforce work-discipline and social training upon the workman. Thus,

> 'The power of religious asceticism provided him in addition with sober, conscientious and unusually industrious workmen, who cling to their work as to a life purpose willed by God'.   3.

Thus, the birth of a self-conscious and ambitious middle class was partly generated by the idea of 'calling'. Both Calvinism, and the Arminianism inherent in Wesleyanism contributed to the development of this ethic. It has already been established that in Sheffield, of all the religious influences, Protestantism was overwhelmingly dominant.[4] Calvinist influences were found in the congregations of Old Dissent, predominantly composed of successful employers drawn from the middle ranks of society. At the same time, Wesley's doctrine of perfectability fired the dramatic expansion in Wesleyanism and Free Methodism, which penetrated downwards into some sections of the working classes during the nineteenth century. Anglicanism in Sheffield developed a

1. For a discussion of high 'n' achievement, see David C. McClelland, The Achieving Society, New York and London, 1961, pp. 47-49, 145-147.
2. Warner, op. cit., p.162; Weber, op.cit., p.177.
3. Weber, op. cit., p.177.
4. see above, chapter 6.

continuous tradition of low church evangelicalism, which looked to theories of human perfectability for its fundamental rationale.

It is arguable therefore, that Methodism developed so dramatically from the late eighteenth century in Sheffield, because the Established Church was so neglectful of its flock: ironically, it was the very success of the Methodist sects which encouraged the reorientation of the Church of England upon low church and evangelical principles, as well as reinvigorating the slumbering Calvinism of Old Dissent. From the early years, it was the Methodists who showed a heightened consciousness of service to God through the economic ideal, although the habits of diligence and asceticism were also developed among individuals of other denominations. At least until the middle of the nineteenth century, economic relationships in Sheffield were extremely conducive to this: the assiduous pursuit of one's calling resulted in tangible economic and social benefits as thrusting individuals from humble origins prospered in pursuit of moral and secular perfection.

The relationship between the Protestant ethic and commercial success is endorsed in the numerous biographies of chapel goers and manufacturers who forged the economic development of Sheffield in the first half of the nineteenth century. Often, entering a business and joining a chapel happened almost simultaneously. In Henry Longden's case, spiritual and intellectual restlessness found a parallel outlet in his business career. Upon joining his father's business, he caused it to increase by his 'unremitting industry'.[1] This natural energy was converted into a philosophy of diligence when he joined the Methodists. Longden related how he was influenced by Wesley's precept "I do one thing at once, and I do it with all my might":

> 'I therefore took for my motto, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord", and I determined to divide each day into certain portions, that one positive duty might not interfere with another, and that not anything of importance might be neglected. Accordingly, I rose at five, and spent an hour with God. From six to four I devoted to business, allowing myself frequently a few minutes for secret prayer. In which ten hours, besides managing my little business, I set myself to earn ten shillings:and this I did with great ease. From four to ten I made sacred for religious purposes: for reading and prayer; and either attending preaching, prayer meeting, class or band meeting.... my business prospered more and more;....I now had money to spare for the support of God's cause, and for the relief of God's poor'. 2.

1. Bramwell, op.cit., p.30.
2. ibid.,pp. 54-55.

Probably, the limitless energy and capacity for hard work shown by Henry Longden would have increased his commercial prosperity in any case. When moulded and directed by Methodism the result was the creation of a persuasive ideology of service to God through industry, frugality and charity, which he disseminated through his works as class leader and local preacher, until his death in 1812.

The example set by Henry Longden was followed by countless individuals during the nineteenth century. Some of them rose to positions of eminence in commercial life, in local government or public service. Sir Charles Skelton, an active Methodist who became Mayor of Sheffield in 1894, was the son of a teetotal workman. Imbued from childhood with the values of respectability, he worked between eighty and ninety six hours a week, to save money. He persistently refused to get into debt, choosing after his marriage to live in a sparsely furnished house, rather than to borrow money. His hard work and early business sense allowed him to set up in business on his own: from this time dates his involvement with Talbot St. New Connexion Chapel, where he was society steward. His success in commercial and religious life was rewarded by a seat on the town council the office of mayor and a knighthood.[1]

A similar pattern was followed by George Bassett, the son of a small Derbyshire farmer, who began his career as a confectioner's apprentice. His later success as a retailer and manufacturer of confectionery was parallel to his participation in Methodism: Bassett filled every office in the denomination which was opened to laymen, and was given public recognition of his achievement when he became alderman in 1873 and mayor in 1876.[2]

The Cole Brothers, leading drapers in the town, commenced their careers in Sheffield as apprentices in the 1840's.[3] They were newcomers to the town, coming from Pickering in Yorkshire, and in 'comparatively humble circumstances'. All three brothers were firm supporters of Norfolk St. Chapel.

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1. Spedding, 'Notes on Local Methodism', etc., p.58.
2. S.R.I. 3 May 1886.
3. seed., op. cit., pp. 126-139.

Thomas Cole held every office open to the laity, and Skelton Cole had the distinction of being trustee of all the chapels on the circuit. After serving an apprenticeship to Cockaynes, the Methodist drapery firm the brothers established their own business in 1847. The shop prospered, and the Coles involved themselves fully with the welfare of the community:

> 'All the three members of the firm were first rate business men, active, diligent, enterprising, and the growth of their business was coincidental with the development of the community ....not only Methodism, but every other form of religion and philanthropy, profited by their influence and practical support'. 1.

Others who prospered through religion are less well known. Primitive Methodist Hosea Tugby came to Sheffield in 1857, and as a newcomer to the town was converted, and joined Bethel Chapel.

> 'he was then only in receipt of a small weekly wage. Religion awakened within him an ambition to improve his position. He awaited the indications of Providence. At last the door opened. He began training (at first in a small way and with a little borrowed capital) as a metal broker. Business prospered. By constant enterprising and diligent application, his connexions increased and the volume of trade swelled until he had secured for himself a leading place and an established fame in the market'. 2.

Thrifty habits, careful investment and boundless energy helped Hosea Tugby to success: he was active in Primitive Methodist outdoor missions, a class leader for 30 years, and circuit steward for 15 years.

The religious ethic of the rising manufacturer gained him status not only through the adoption of the values most consistent with commercial success, but helped to define his position in the community as a benefactor. Thomas Holy, the financier of early Sheffield Methodism, was a model of the benevolent employer. He became a Methodist at fourteen years, and was head of the family business two years later. His piety was allegedly never influenced by his commercial preoccupations and contacts, and he adopted a

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1. ibid., p.127.
2. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism'. etc., pp. 83-85.

code of business based upon a religious ethic, combining financial dealings with 'mercy and beneficence'. Jabez Bunting endowed Thomas Holy with his conception of the ideal virtues of a manufacturer. His extraordinary success in trade was due to diligence, good judgement and absence from rash speculation, and his generosity to local Methodism and the town's charities was such that he could supposedly give away £300 in a week without being aware of it. Holy was praised by Bunting as 'a striking example of the possibility usefulness and privilege of sanctified wealth', with no awareness of any incompatibility between the twin ideals of money making and benevolence.[1]

Through involvement in religion, the Methodist employer could reinforce his authority within the workshop with authority in chapel. Employers tended to put pressure upon employees to attend religious services, and stood to gain positive economic benefits from their concern with the spiritual and moral welfare of those in their charge. Manufacturers arguably profited from the exclusion of alcohol from the workplace, and teetotal employers often put pressure upon their workmen in this respect.[2] The moral conduct of the worker could also be influenced. Charles Skelton urged young men to

> 'keep their tongues clean as to language; their
> bodies free from all defilements as smoke and drink,
> and to take plenty of healthful exercise; never to
> be afraid to work....make work a pleasure, and it
> will become their recreation, and will enable them
> to help and bless others'. [3]

The institutional structure of church and chapel were of crucial importance in the reinforcement of respectability. Participation in church and chapel involved the religious worshipper in a relationship with other church members, and conformity to their mores and values. With the spread

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1. Jabez Bunting, Memoir of the late Thomas Holy esq., of Sheffield, London, 1832.
2. see below, chapter 21.
3. Spedding, op. cit., p.58.

of Methodism, religion became a communal experience for an increasing

number of people. In the case of an Anglican or a Roman Catholic, the

church involved him primarily in a relationship with God, or with the

clergyman, as God's representative on earth. In contrast, the nonconformist

chapels were dominated by laymen, and the authority of the ministry

substantially modified. For the working man, the chapel opened up a new

world; it

> 'invited him to take a hand in the management of the affairs
> of his religious society: perhaps to help in choosing a
> minister, to feel that he had a share in its life,
> responsibility for its risks and undertakings, pride in its
> successes and reputation. As a mere exercise in self-
> government and social life, the Chapel occupied a central
> place in the affections and thoughts of people who had very
> little to do with the government of anything else.'   1.

The vitality of the chapel involved members in common enterprises, new

friendships problems and challenges which considerably enriched the whole

texture of human life, and invigorated the whole social being of the

individual. While it is fair to say that the respectability and exclusivity

of some nonconformist chapels alienated many working men in the second half

of the nineteenth century,

> 'it remains both true and important that Methodism, with its
> open chapel doors, did offer to the uprooted and abandoned
> people of the Industrial Revolution some kind of community
> to replace the older community-patterns which were being
> displaced'.   2.

The crucial relationship was with a community of believers which one joined.

Nevertheless, there was a way in which working people could make the Methodist

chapel their own, and find some place in an otherwise hostile world.[3] The

chapel could give essential support to the member in time of doubt, and

recognition of responsibilities and duties well performed.

This process involved the impositions of firm sanctions upon

individual conduct and behaviour. This was the price the individual had to

pay, in return for membership. The control of the individual by the religious

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1. J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Town Labourer 1760.1832, paperback edition, London, 1966, p.260.
2. Thompson, op.cit.,pp. 416-417; see also Margaret B. Simey, Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century, Liverpool, 1951,pp.14-15.
3. Ibid., p.417.

community was most highly developed in Methodism. The essential task was to maintain the allegiance of the member after conversion, to dispel doubts, and to provide the spiritual food which would sustain life-long commitment. John Wesley was responsible for the development of the sophisticated support system which characterised the Methodist church. Indeed, he refused to preach in any place where he could not follow spiritual awakening with organised societies with adequate leadership.[1] Failings in this direction caused vicissitudes among the early Methodists in Sheffield.[2] Until the end of the nineteenth century, the nucleus and spiritual powerhouse of the Methodist society was the class meeting. Members met weekly in groups of a dozen under the guidance of a class leader, in private houses or in chapel. The experience of the Methodist class was akin to group therapy. Problems of faith and future moral conduct could be discussed, and the support of the individual with the community.[3] The Primitive Methodists at Bethel Chapel held the functions of the class meeting to be

> 'comforting mourners, establishing believers, and
> ....training up pious praying labourers, class
> leaders and preachers, and fitting them for
> extensive usefulness'. 4.

Spiritual doubts could often be eased by discussion in class: Henry Longden debated at length with his class, and it was in the presence of the class leader and his fellow members that he received his final deliverance from sin.[5] He went on to describe the class meeting as 'far the most useful and excellent' of all the advantages of Methodism.[6]

1. Dimond, op.cit., p.112.
2. Everett, op. cit., p.p. 9-10, 20-22.
3. Dimond, op. cit., pp.110-112,212; Sargent, op.cit., pp.214-216; Currie op. cit., pp. 19,22,26, 125-126.
4. Bethel Primitive Methodist Chapel, Class Book, 1864, S.C.L., M.D.1620.
5. Bramwell, op.cit., p.34.
6. ibid., p.40.

The class leader played a fundamental role in the functioning of the group. He was originally requested to visit all his members at least once a week, and to attend the spiritual and social needs of the sick, negligent and supine, and to collect the regular class fee of perhaps a penny. This money was essential for the stipend of the minister, and was passed by the class leader to the society steward, and thence to the circuit. It also enabled access to the home of the member, and helped the chapel to determine if his life style gave evidence of divine grace. Faults at this respect could be discussed at the class meeting, and put right with the support of the group. [1] The importance of the office was described by Joseph Hunter, a distinguished class leader at Bethel Chapel for many years:

> 'The office of class leader opens in Methodist churches
> a sphere of great usefulness. It brings those engaged in
> it into close relationship with others, and enables them
> to wield a potent influence on a limited number of persons.
> It is their peculiar function to guide the erring,
> establish the feeble and comfort those who are troubled...
> to a large extent, societies are what their leaders make
> them. [2]

At quarterly meetings, the class met with the minister. Class tickets, given out on this occasion reinforced the membership of the chapel community. These were given to those who successfully lived in accordance with their professed religious convictions. The class ticket was a source of extra income for the chapel, but also reflected Wesley's acute grasp of group psychology. Tickets could be used to discipline unruly members, who suffered the shame of having their tickets taken from them.

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1. Sargent, op. cit., p.216-;'Criticus', op. cit., p.30; James Kendall, A Very Short, Very Pungent and Very Needful Rebuke to Late Attendants on Public Worship, with an Appendix on Pastoral Visiting Among the Wesleyans, London, Leeds and Sheffield, 4th Edition, 1844, pp. 14-20.
2. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism', etc., p. 193.

They also showed the member's name and the endorsement of the minister and thus duly 'acquired the character of a clan badge'.[1.]   A succession of class tickets were thus the most valued evidence of unbroken years of divine grace.   Evidence of church membership supplied by the class ticket could be the means of entry into a new community for the migrant worker: thus the chapel looked after her own.[2.]

The spirit of communion with God, and fellowship with other members, were encouraged in other ways.   Participation in religious worship brought the individual out of his spiritual and social isolation, into a new world of shared emotion and spirituality.   Henry Longden's first impressions of a Methodist preaching moved him greatly: the

> 'prayer was simple, but it opened heaven; his preaching was
> unadorned, but mighty by the power of God. He felt what he
> said, and he could not restrain tears from running down his
> cheeks. I observed that the congregation were often in tears
> also. The men sung with all their hearts, and the women
> sweetly sang the repeats alone: The men sat on one side and the
> women on the other. I thought, where am I? - this worship is
> pure, simple and spiritual; nor did I think there had been a
> people so primitive and apostolic upon earth'.   3.

The significance of singing, and of the words and music of the hymns of Methodism, was manifold.[4.]   Congregational singing, learned by the Wesleyans from the Moravians, appealed to the people because of the complete novelty of the experience.   Hymns were important for their power of suggestion, and their educational value, helping to open the mind to the permanent acquisition of religious feeling and a shared spirituality.   Through rhythm and music, many doctrines fundamental to Methodism could be instilled, and the violent emotion aroused by revivalism channelled and released. Singing and music was an essential part of the life of the Methodist chapel in Sheffield, although by the 1840's, musical performances at the wealthier chapels had become increasingly sophisticated, with performances of Handel and Haydn.   This did not pass

1.   Dimond op. cit., p.221.   2. Thompson, op. cit.,   p.417.
3.   Bramwell, op. cit.,   p.25.
4.   Dimond, op. cit., pp. 119-124.

without some criticism locally.[1] Many chapels installed organs, or at

least a harmonium, and music was used copiously at occasions such as love

feasts, which reinvoked the fervour and emotional deliverance of revivalism.

These occasions were 'Sabbath orgasms of feeling' which through the

opportunities for emotional release which they offered, made the single-

minded pursuit of labour more possible in the following week.[2]

Nonconformist denominations were organised on a democratic basis,

in varying degrees. The Wesleyans retained their deference to the autocratic

powers of central conference, and always insisted upon a professional ministry.

Nevertheless, the Free Methodists evolved a high degree of lay control in

reaction against this.[3] No matter where the power was vested, individual

chapels encouraged of lay participation in practical matters of administration.

Class meetings, stewards' meetings, preachers' meetings, circuit quarterly

meetings, annual meetings, and the duplication of work when a chapel

entered the field of day or sunday school education, temperance and missionary

work, involved the ambitious member in a milieu in which literacy,

articulateness and talents in administration and decision making were called

upon, in the public service of the chapel. Many active local politicians

received a basic training in these skills in their chapel. W.J. Clegg,

trained at Bethel Chapel and in temperance work, rose to become a solicitor,

and mayor of Sheffield; there are countless other examples of this process

at work.[4]

The accountability of the individual to the other members,

enshrined in the class meeting, was enlarged in his relationship with the

chapel community as a whole, through the spectrum of meetings and committees.

The chapel kept a close watch on the social conduct of the member, and

invoked disciplinary sanctions when necessary. It was common throughout

nonconformity to keep a roll of members; the parable of the lost sheep had an

1. S.I. 6 June 1841; Abel Bywater, A Defence of Hired Singing, Sheffield, 1848.
2. Thompson op. cit., p.406.
3. Taylor, op. cit., passim.
4. see below, chapter 19.

important place in nonconformist psychology, and in an attempt to maintain allegiance, chapel representatives would visit an absentee, and remonstrate with him over his defection.[1.] The most aggressive attempts to control the social behaviour of the membership were found where chapels were fighting a prolonged battle against the irreligion and the social disorder of the surrounding environment. The application of social and moral sanctions were particularly well developed where a community had sprung forth out of revivalism, and was struggling to achieve an identity in this struggling formative period. However, discipline would be relaxed as the chapel attracted an increasingly affluent and respectable congregation, and this had crucial consequences for the old religious ethic. In many of the Methodist chapels which sprang up in the middle class suburbs after 1850, austerity was uncongenial to members who had long had cognisance with middle class values and standards.

Social discipline tended to be maintained, however, in working class chapels, fighting and unremitting battle against the slums. In such chapels, the spirit of revivalism became extended into a long term crusade. Evidence for well developed communal discipline comes from Bethel, Sheffield's first Primitive Methodist congregation, which throughout the century, was composed almost entirely of the poorer classes.[2.] It was also exhibited at Surrey Street Chapel, a predominantly working class chapel, formed in 1830 out of a union between Independent and Protestant Methodists, who had rebelled against the authority of conference, and sought to return to the moral absolutism of early Methodism.[3.] And despite the predominantly middle class nature of congregationalism in nineteenth century Sheffield, it was possible for individual Independent chapels to adopt extreme policies of

1. For example, List of the Names and Residences of the Members in Connexion with the Independent Church, Assembling in Nether Chapel, Norfolk Street, Sheffield, 1845.
2. For Bethel, see Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism' etc., List of class leaders 1849, S.C.L.,M.D.1619; ibid, 1864, MD 1620; Minutes of Leaders' Meetings 1848-1885, N.R.130.
3. John A. Woodcock, Surrey St. United Methodist Church - One Hundred years 1831-1931. Sheffield, 1932; Also see Miscellaneous items, Surrey St., Chapel Records, S.C.L.

social control;this happened at Zion Chapel, Attercliffe, which attracted a lively congregation of working men during the ministry of John Calvert between 1857 and 1895.[1]

These chapels were almost exclusively composed of working men, many of whom were poor. These were not the sort of men to move away into the salubrious suburbs. They brought to the chapel not only a long-lasting allegiance, but a vigorous fighting spirit, and a resolution to overcome the evil which their environment represented to them. The humble social origins of these men and women meant that they lived closer to the realities of contemporary social conditions, and had to fight all the harder in the pursuit of respectability.

These factors combined to produce a strong and censorious moral spirit. At Surrey St., the social values of the chapel were institutionalised through the formulation of specific rules of social behaviour. The transgression of the will of the community was equal to a sin against God. Retribution was speedy, and complex rules relating to the exclusion of members were enforced.[2] These were a potent combination of biblical and secular virtues. The evils to be avoided included swearing, profaning the sabbath by work, buying and selling, drunkenness, tippling or drinking spirits, unless in cases of extreme necessity, fighting, quarrelling and brawling, and 'uncharitable or unprofitable conversation'. Anything 'not for the Glory of God' was to be avoided. This included balls, plays and race meetings, secular songs and books, clothing which was fashionable, decorative or provocative, needless self-indulgence, and the accumulation of worldly treasures. Some strictures had important implications for economic life, such as the opposition of the chapel to trade in uncustomed goods, unlawful interest, and the receipt of goods without the ability to pay for them. Loyalty to authority was urged, especially to magistrates, ministers and national institutions:

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1. P.G.S. Hopwood,'The Gates of Zion - The Story of a Church', unpublished MS, S.C.L., M.D. 6140.
2. Rules of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, Sheffield Circuit, Surrey St. Chapel Records, S.C.L., NRI.; Doctrines, Church Government and Doctrine, considered by the Independent Methodists to be consistent with the Word of God, Sheffield, 1822.

> 'none of us shall, either in writing or conversation,
> speak lightly or irreverently of the government under
> which we live. We are to observe that the Oracles of
> God command us to be subject to the higher powers; and
> that "honour the King" is thence connected with the
> fear of God'. 1.

In addition, members were asked to fulfill the social blueprint developed by John Wesley : they should visit the sick and needy, attend chapel services and class meetings, give financial support to the ministers, 'unless in extreme poverty', and help fellow members in the pursuit of their trade and business.

The rules of a new congregation such as Surrey St. represent a comprehensive statement of the social ethic of a chapel community struggling for identity in the first years of its existence. They were upheld by a system of sanctions, which were parallelled in other chapels. At Bethel, the circuit committee judged and penalised members who were thought to have broken the social conventions of the cummunity. Charges were often brought for sexual offences, even those which fell far short of fornication. In 1840, a member of the chapel was charged and found guilty of 'being out an untimely hour with a female'. [2] The following year, one Richard Shore was suspended until the next quarter day for the more serious offence of

> 'having married a wife contrary to the Rule of our Connexion
> and having acknowledged to some inconsistent conduct in
> allowing one Mrs D---- to sit on his knee and to kiss him
> etc. and that he had taken wine etc. in Rotherham which
> affected his head very much'. 3.

Drink and sex were probably the most common reasons for censure: time spent in these activities was time wasted in the service of God, and the lack of discipline implied in self-indulgence was contrary to the whole ethos of non-conformity. At Zion Independent chapel in Attercliffe, members found guilt of premarital sex were suspended, and received back

1. Rules, op. cit.
2. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism; etc., p.108.
3. loc. cit.

into the community only when they were married. [1] If members were drunk and disorderly, they were visited, reprimanded, and ultimately suspended. [2] Members were also disciplined for bad language, and for losing their tempers with customers in their trade or business. Bankrupts were suspended for three months; one courageous bankrupt refused to allow the chapel to investigate his financial affairs, and was struck off. [3] A similar procedure was followed at Surrey St. chapel. Those found to be guilty of dishonesty were struck off, and people who prospered again were ordered to pay off their debts in order to prove their integrity. [4] In this way, the economic relationships of members were ordered and supervised by the chapel. Even recreation under the direct control of the chapel was regulated. At Bethel, private tea meetings were condemned as injurious in 1863. In 1869, it was resolved that 'immoral' singers should not be engaged at anniversaries, and that no games should be allowed after tea meetings. [5] Surrey St. chapel enforced a similar policy in relation to the young apprentices who attended the Christian and Educational Institute. [6]

In the attempt to enforce discipline within the chapel community, no member was exempt. At Surrey St., the duties of the class leader were clearly stated, and action was taken against anyone who neglected his responsibilities for four weeks in a row. [7] Scrupulous standards of personal behaviour had to be maintained by all who would become preachers. Any man who was in debt had to clear these away before being allowed upon the preachers' plan, even on a trial basis. [8] Lay preachers were controlled by the regular preachers meetings, which imposed rules relating to punctuality and attendance, and reprimanded offenders for the neglect of their duties. [9] Public representatives of the chapel who failed to carry out orders were also disciplined. At Bethel, two ladies who were teetotallers went against chapel policy, and preached total abstinence at revival services: one

1. Hopwood, op.cit., p.86
2. loc. cit.
3. ibid, p.87
4. Rules, etc.
5. Spedding, op.cit., p.147.
6. See below, chapter 10.
7. Rules op.cit.
8. Wesleyan Methodist Protestant Association Minutes 1829-1839, Surrey St. chapel Records. S.C.L., NRI.
9. Ibid.

who refused to modify her tactics was struck of the chapel register. [1]
One implication of the degree of democratic control exhibited by the liberal
Methodist churches was that not even the ministers were safe from
remonstrance: at Bethel in 1840, the minister was ordered to wear breeches
and leggings instead of trousers. Ministers who smoked were also criticised. [2]

Through participation in church and chapel, the individual
found rules and prescriptions which guided social conduct, and helped to
make sense of an increasingly complex world. The regime of individual
chapels often seems austere, but there is no doubt that there was room for
a considerable amount of enjoyment. The degree of pleasure to be derived
from seemingly mundane committee work and chapel affairs is reflected in
the numerous nostalgic histories of Sheffield congregations. It also brought
power, the opportunity to guide the moral values of the less fortunate, and
feeling of superiority over them. Evangelism involved the church member in
a diversity of roles, as organisers, fund-raisers, missionaries and publicists.
Upon this structure of activities was superimposed a conscious recreational
rule, evolved by the churches during the nineteenth century, in an attempt to
provide a total environment, protected from the sin and distraction of the
outside world. In this, the distinction between recreation, education and
propaganda was blurred. Nevertheless, the range of activites which flourished
within the orbit of the chapel, and spilled over into educational and temperance
work, provided real opportunities for social intercourse and enjoyment in a
world in which opportunities for simple and respectable amusement were few.

The organised recreation undertaken by the churches thus drew
the individual into communal fellowship in the same way as religious worship. [3]
Activities provided enjoyment for the members, as well as attracting outsiders. The
most common form of social activity was the tea meeting. These were developed

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1. Spedding, op.cit., p. 147.
2. ibid, pp. 39, 148.
3. For Methodism and Recreation, see Currie, op. cit. pp. 132-137

by individual congregations from the earliest days. The Primitive Methodists began tea meetings in 1823, only four years after the establishment of the sect in Sheffield. These were held at a private house in Shalesmoor: the formula was food and drink, folowed by entertainment to promote moral and spiritual welfare. [1.] This remained unchanged throughout the century.

By the 1840's, the chapels evolved a complicated calendar of soirees social teas and conversaziones. These punctuated the rhythm of the chapel year, providing opportunities for celebration, as well as for fund raising. Sunday Schools, bands of hope, temperance societies, missions, tract societies and other activities located around the chapel held regular events of this kind. [2.] Sometimes, social teas were opportunities for informal education: a Primitive Methodist tea meeting at Bethel in 1857 was followed by a lecture on the life of Mahomet, 'interesting and humerous', and well received by the audience. [3.] Recitations, singing and musical performances were the usual ingredients, however. The Methodists valued music most highly. Even a small chapel, such as Bridgehouses Wesleyan Reform chapel could attract up to 400 people to tea meetings when performances of sacred music were provided: in 1857, the chapel brought a vocalist from Huddersfield for such an occasion. [4.] The wealthier chapels such as Norfolk St., set great store on their musical performances. In 1860, one of the 'most complete' organs in Sheffield was installed there, and opened with performances from Handel and Haydn. [5.] Lesser chapels also worked to instal their own organs, and held tea meetings and bazaars to this end. At Stanley St. Primitive Methodist chapel, 114 sat down to tea in 1861, in aid of the organ fund. [6.] Some chapels were more modest in their ambitions, and installed a harmonium instead. The

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L. Spedding, op, cit., p.13
2. See below, Chapters 8-9, 21.
3. S.D.T. 16 April 1857.
4. ibid., 15 April 1857.
5. ibid., 19 January 1860.
6. ibid., 27 November 1861.

Primitive Methodist chapel at Shiregreen opened their harmonium with a tea meeting in 1867. [1.] Many of the techniques developed by the sunday schools and by the temperance movement were also pursued by the churches. Annual soirees at Christmas and New Year channelled the festive spirit into safe and acceptable directions. [2.] Occasionally, trips were held to places of interest, such as the excursion to Roche Abbey by Handsworth Woodhouse Methodist Chapel in 1869. [3.]

As the century progressed, church and chapel developed an expanding range of activities, some of which had an increasingly recreational element, and all of which were intended to attach the membership more firmly to the church. Thus the Wesleyans in the Park developed the normal apparatus of evangelism, with benevolent and tract societies, a library, band meetings, a cottage prayer leaders' society, as well as bible classes, a Sunday school and an adult institute. From the 1880's, a more conscious recreational policy developed, with a social and literary society, mothers' meetings, a reading circle, Saturday evening concerts and magic lantern performances. [4.] This pattern was repeated all over the city. The Wesleyans at Ellesmere Road organised a Sunday school, temperance society, mission bands, but added to this a ladies' sewing meeting, a literary society, a mothers' meeting and a Sunday school brass band. [5.] The sunday schools provided a focus for the extension of recreational facilities Walkley Ebenezer Sunday school boasted a concertina band, maypole dancers, and an operatic society. [6.] The particular role of the Sunday schools in the provision of 'respectable' recreation will be discussed below. [7.]

The expansion of the Young Men's Christian Association in the late nineteenth century provided the churches with a model of how to provide healthy recreation for young people. [8.] Many chapels started their

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1. ibid., 27 February 1867.
2. ibid., 31 December 1862, 2 January 1864, 27 December 1867
3. ibid., 6 August 1869.
4. Graham, op. cit., pp.81-85, 199-201,228,241,246,261,268.
5. Edwin Richmond, Fifty Years Record – Ellesmere Road Wesleyan Methodist Church and Sunday School 1864-1914, Sheffield, 1914, pp. 51-52.
6. Walkley Ebenezer Methodist Church, Centenary Souvenir 1847-1947, Sheffield, 1947, pp.23-24.
7. See below, Chapter 9.
8. See below, Chapter 10.

own organisation for the young: scouts, guides, Christian endeavour societies, Wesley Guilds, Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods flourished. The Y.M.C.A. also demonstrated the extent to which religious bodies could profit by providing facilities for secular recreation. Gradually, this was followed by the chapels. The Methodists at Firth Park boasted a gymnasium, as well as a clubroom, opened nightly to keep young men out of the pubs. [1] Father Ommanney at St. Matthew's also provided a clubroom, with billiards. [2] Many of the church of England churches developed their own social and athletic clubs. [3] Walkley Ebenezer had a cricket and football club, and also an engling club, thus capitalising upon the strong interest of local artisans in fishing. [4] Provision became increasingly ambitious in the early years of the twentieth century: the Free Methodists at Cherry Tree Hill planned a new chapel at Psalter Lane, with facilities for cricket, football and tennis. [5] In 1915, Carver St. Chapel purchased a recreation ground for the use of its young members, at a cost of £900. [6]

In all these ways, religion, and especially methodism, assimilated the individual to the norms and values of the industrial bourgeoisie. The hypothesis has been advanced, most notably by Lecky and Halevy, that 'Methodism prevented prevolution'. [7] Halevy argued that during a period of anarchy in economic production in the late eighteenth century, which might have plunged the country into violent revolution, the working classes failed to find the bourgeois leadership which could have provided them with an ideology and a political programme:

> 'the elite of the working classes, the hard-working and capable
> bourgeois, had been imbused by the evangelical movement with a
> spirit from which the established order had nothing to fear'. 8.

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1. _S.W.I._ 20 February 1909.
2. Belton, _op. cit._, p.95
3. James E. Furniss, _One Hundred Years 1825-1925 - A Brief History of St. George's Church, Sheffield_, Sheffield, 1925, p.39
4. Walkley Ebenezer Methodist Church, _op. cit._, pp 11, 24.
5. _S.D.T._ 15 March 1924.
6. Carver St. Methodist Church, _Third Jubilee Handbook 1805-1955_, Sheffield, 1955, p.12.
7. W.E.H. Lecky, _History of England in the Eighteenth Century_, London, 1878-1890, II, pp. 637-638; Elie Halevy, _A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century_, etc. I, pp. 425-427. Ed. Bernard Semmel, _Elie Halevy, The Birth of Methodism in England_, Chicago and London, 1971, Moore _op.cit._, pp. 5-14.
8. Halevy, _op.cit._, pp.425-427; Semmel, _op.cit._, p.11

Thus the Methodist communities, evolved during the period of rapid industrialization, prevented revolution by the enforcement of social discipline and obedience.

This argument needs to be examined in detail before any assumptions about the social role of Methodism can be made. On the strength of Halevy's single statement, that Methodism contributed to 'preventing the French Revolution having an English counterpart',[1] a number of criticisms can be made. The most obvious problem is its imprecision. His assertion begs a number of fundamental questions about the nature of Methodism, and the revolutionary potential of the English working class. It can also usefully be widened to include the second half of the nineteenth century.

The social ambivalence of Methodism has long been recognised. Methodism performed the

'dual role as the religion of both the exploiters and the exploited'. [2]

What E.P. Thompson has called the 'Puritan character-structure' was not sacrosanct purely to the interests of the church and the employers. [3] The functions of religion were universal, and Methodism had a personal significance for the working class believer. Direct indoctrination, and the evocation of community spirit were two ways in which the Methodists could involve the working classes. Methodism may also have gained from the failure of revolution in the 1790's. The 'chiliasm of despair', marked by millenarial hysteria, was an outlet for the frustrations of the disillusioned after the mid-1790's.[4] Many such working men oscillated between politial radicalsim and revivalism: 'religious revivalism took over just at the

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1. Semmel, op. cit., p. 12
2. Thompson, op. cit., p. 412
3. ibid., p. 417.
4. ibid., pp.411-440.
5. ibid., p.428
6. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britain', in Labouring Men - Studies in the History of Labour, London, 1964, p.32

point where political or temporal aspiration met with defeat. [5.] On the other hand, the relationship between Methodism and radicalism may have been more intimate: 'Methodism advanced when radicalism advanced, and not when it grew weaker'.[6.]

The dualism of Methodism was effected in the conflicts and tensions which upset its internal organisation. The over centralising and autocractic tendencies inherent in Wesleyan Methodism were repeatedly challenged by individuals distinguished by their commitment to democtratic organisation, desire for local control, and passionate evangelism. These tensions resulted in the development of the Free Methodist churches, during a fifty year period from the formation of the New Connexion, to the reform crisis of the late 1840's. [1.] This refusal of generations of Methodists to accept the conservatism inherent in Wesleyanism is thus the single most important factor behind the explosion of the Methodist denominations in the nineteenth century, and their ability to recruit heavily from some sections of the working classes. The Free Methodists, and ultimately even the Wesleyans, produced active workers in the field of trade unionism in the later nineteenth century. Methodism provided the trade union movement with stalwart pioneers and advocates, and also with the moral fervour derived from religious commitment. Its debt in other ways was obvious: the chapel provided the new leaders of the working class with a training in literacy, public speaking and organising, and above all, the qualities of leadership, and the confidence of the community whence they had sprung. [2.]

The debate about the social function of Methodism has therefore developed around the problem of the exact relationship of Methodism with the working classes. There is no doubt that the middle class Methodism of the rich manufacturers and employers found in the rich suburban chapels of Wesleyanism

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1. Edwards, op. cit., pp. 37-59 ; Taylor, op. cit., passim Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working Class Movements,etc. pp. 195 passim, Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle, pp. 113-124; Currie, op. cit., pp. 17, 54-82

2. Thompson, op. cit., p. 430; Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working Class Movements, pp. 225-270; Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle, pp. 172-209, Moore, op. cit., passim.

and Free Methodism was ideologically opposed to the social determination of the working classes, except upon middle class terms. For the working classes, on the other hand, Methodism appears perversely as

> 'a religion of despair and rebellion, producing political leadership among working men who lived earnest and disciplined lives while engaging in spiritual orgies'. 1.

Four major questions have to be asked. To what extent was there a personal link between Methodism and radical working men in Sheffield between 1790 and 1820 and in the Chartist period? What relationship was there between Methodists and the leaders of the Trade Union movement in Sheffield in the late nineteenth century? If these alignments existed, to what extent did they function as a radical and essentially anti-capitalistic critique of society? Were the political attitudes of some religious beings in nineteenth century Sheffield sufficient to invalidate the image of religion as a counter-revolutionary force?

It has been established that Sheffield was a centre of political radicalism and working class millenarial expectation in the potentially revolutionary period of the 1790's. [1] High bread prices, food riots, the establishment of the Sheffield Constitutional Society, the growth of an underground revolutionary tradition, and the emergence of the politically conscious New Connexion in 1797 are the components of the situation. The problem is essentially one of timing. The Constitutional Society was a spent force soon after 1794, and its failure as a political force may have been a stimulus to the Kilhamite split. The affinities between the Constitutional Society and the New Connexion Methodists are clear from the similarities in their organisation, based upon classes with membership tickets, a common millenialism in language and imagery, and an overlap of personnel. Of the 45 known members of the Constitutional Society, nine were Methodists. Four of these were converted in 1796, and all of them left the Wesleyans for the New Connexion in 1797. [2] However, only one had a permanent connexion with

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1. Moore, _op. cit._, p. 8
2. Thompson, _op. cit._, pp. 19,85,286,517,521,525,544,546,667,760; Baxter, op. cit., _passim_; Donnelly, op. cit., _passim_, Thickett, _op. cit._, _passim_. This paragraph is based on Baxter, op. cit., pp.90-95.
3. These were Richard Beale, shopkeeper, William Broomhead, Cutler, John Grainger, Henry Hill, cutler, George Kent, scissor maker, Joseph Mather, entertainer, Charles Rhodes, James Watson, and Edward Oakes. Names from Baxter, _op. cit._, p. 190.

Methodism: Edward Oakes, an artisan in the plate trade, was on the committee of the Constitutional Society, a leading figure in the co-operative corn mill established in 1795, and also a Methodist class leader. He later returned to the fold of orthodox Wesleyanism, regretting his involvement with the New Connexion, and became a well-known member of the affluent Carver St. chapel, and a Wesleyan minister from 1814-1838. [1]

The example of Edward Oakes shows that there is reason to suppose that during the period of millenarial and political expectancy in the second half of the 1790's, political radicalism and the New Connexion briefly ran in harness. The importance of this needs qualifying: it has been suggested that the Constitutional Society was less 'revolutionary' and more 'respectable' than had previously been thought. [2] In any case, only a fifth of its known membership were involved with the New Connexion, and it is dangerous to make assumptions about institutional relationships on the strength of individual cases. But clearly, this relationship was never to be repeated again. The basis of New Connexion Methodism became steadily more conservative. Indeed, the failings of Old and New Connexions were the stimulus for the emergence of the new sects of Primitive, Protestant and Independent Methodists in Sheffield, each attempting to build a New Jerusalem for the working men, but lacking a political context for the pursuit of this ideal. In all their known utterances, the Sheffield Methodists were increasingly hostile to radical theoreticians such as Tom Paine,

> 'whose name.....when used by a Methodist person,
> it would blister his tongue and choke his
> utterance'. [3]

Albert Bradwell, 'converted infidel', read Paine and Owen, but was alienated by the materialism of these secular philosophies. [4] Samuel Rhodes, a grinder who became treasurer, lay preacher and class leader at Bethel, was well

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1. Spedding, 'Notes and Cuttings', etc., pp. Vol II. 206-207.
2. Baxter, op. cit., pp. 29-31.
3. A member of the Society, The Calumniator Exposed; or, a Defence of the Methodist Preachers Against the Infidel Sneers of Aaron Truehit, being a Dialogue Between Titus Simpleton and Mr. Sneer, Rotherham 1824, p.14
4. Bradwell, op. cit., p.8

read and studied much: he had read Tom Paine in his depraved youth, before

conversation to Methodism. [1] Medical Botanist William Fox initially adhered to

the Owenite Hall of Science, until his conversion by James Caughey at Mount

Tabor. [2] Samuel Rhodes and William Fox were both Primitive Methodists, and

it was this sect which most publicly set its face against political

radicalism in the nineteenth century. Individual Primitive Methodists

tried to exploit the attractions of Chartism for the masses: W. Jefferson,

minister at Bethel 1849-1852, wrote the hymm 'Lion of Judah', which was set

to a Chartist tune, and when sang in thestreets, resulted in converts. [3]

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Methodists

lent their spiritual and moral authority to the cause of party politics.

The growth of local government and the widening of opportunities for democratic

participation led to a redefinition of the political perspectives within

Methodism. The Wesleyans still reflected the inherent conservatism of John

Wesley: the tendency of the denomination 'from the outset.... fell ambigiously

between Dissent and the Establishment'. [4] A drift on the part of the Wesleyans

towards an alignment with Anglican and conservation elements was marked in

Sheffield. These was made feasible by the low church and determinedly evangelistic

principles of the Church of England in Sheffield during the nineteenth century.[5]

Ebenezer Wesleyan chapel, opened in 1823 and built in the Gothic style with

a spire, prefigured the Million Pound churches built by the Anglicans in the

same decade, and mistakenly anticipated a reunion of Wesleyanism with the

establishment. [6] In 1837, there was an attempt 'to foist a Tory on Sheffield'.

The prospective parliamentary candidate, one Thornley, was a Methodist lay

preacher, backed by S.D. Waddy, who became governor of the middle class Wesley

College, and Rev. McLean of the affluent Carver St. chapel, in a 'monstrous union'

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1. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism', etc., p.117.
2. ibid., p. 128.
3. ibid., p.46
4. Thompson, op. cit., p.385; the conservatism of Wesleyanism is discussed in
   Edwards, op. cit., pp. 13-36 ; Taylor, op. cit., passim; Warner, op. cit.,
   pp. 122 ff. ; Currie, op. cit., passim.
5. See above, Chapter 6.
6. S.D.T. 7 January 1923; Wickham, op. cit., p.79; Nikolaus Pevesner, Yorkshire
   The West Riding, 2nd edition, London 1967, p.471.

between the Church of England and a few Methodist minister. [1]

During the later nineteenth century, few Methodists were to be found as champions of labour of Sheffield. The drift of the middle classes towards the conservative party was marked by the 1870's, and many wealthy Methodists went with them. [2] Mark Firth, a munificent benefactor to the New Connexion in Sheffield began his political carrer as a liberal. In 1874, however, he scandalised the local Methodists by inviting the whole corporation to attend divine service with him at the Parish Church. [3] In the late 1870's, he inclined towards the support of Disraeli. [4] Men such as Samuel Osborne, prominent in local Wesleyanism, and a staunch liberal, kept alive the connexion between Methodism and Liberalism. [5] But other Wesleyans were drawn into the conservative camp. Benjamin Freeborough, a director of Hadfield's, and a strong supporter of Carver St. chapel, unsuccessfully stood as a conservative candidate in local elections. [6] The concern of Wesleyans on the School Board with denominational education also brought some influential Methodists into an alignment with conservatives and Anglicans. Thus, even as the Liberal Party itself faltered as a spokesman for the working classes in the 1880's and 1890's many Methodists retreated further and further into the arms of conservatism. Some of the most articulate representatives of the Liberal interest on the Town Council and the School Board were drawn from the ranks of Old Dissent, rather than from Methodism. [7]

The relationship of Methodism with the working men who ventured forward onto the Town Council and the School Board was less marked than elsewhere. There were some individuals who sprang from the orbit of chapel and trade union committee: Stuart Uttley, the secretary of the File Cutters' and Forgers'

1. A Plain Man, An Exposure of the Extraordinary combination of Certain Wesleyans and Churchmen to Foist A Tory Upon Sheffield, Sheffield, 1837.
2. D.E. Fletcher, 'Aspects of Liberalism in Sheffield 1849-1886', University of Sheffield, unpublished Ph.D., 1972. pp. 92,130,153.
3. Anon, How the Mayor of Sheffield Took the Corporation to Church, and the Good Things they Heard There, London, N.D.
4. S.R.I. 4 December 1880.
5. S.D.T. 8 July 1891.
6. Ibid., 15 January 1914
7. See below, Chapter 15.

Union from 1877, secretary of the Trades Council 1883-1907, and a town
Councillor from 1886, was active in the Pye Bank U.M.F.C. chapel, and senior lay
preacher on the circuit. [1] Other working class town councillors were
Congregationalists, such as William Llewellyn, an active lay preacher who was
elected to the Council in 1886. [2] William Wardley, secretary of the Table Blade
Forgers, president of the Trades Council 1885-1887, and a councillor from 1890,
was a prominent figure at Queen St. chapel for many years. [3] Steel melter
William Rolley, on the School Board 1876-1878, was a member of the U.M.F.C.
like Stuart Uttley: however, although active in the Liberal Association, he
went on to become conservative party agent in North Yorkshire.[4] Working men
who stood outside the Liberal party, and were moving towards socialist policies in
the late nineteenth century were not noted for their religious backgrounds.
Jonathan Taylor, who alarmed the Liberals on the Sheffield School Board,
was secularist.[5] Tom Shaw, active in the Typographical Union, and chairman of
the Sheffield branch of the I.L.P., had no recognisable religious affiliation.[6]

Thus Methodism produced few working class leaders in late nineteenth
century Sheffield. Indeed, some influential Methodists were driven inexorably
towards political conservatism. A heightened social conscience on the part
of some Methodists in this period obscures the fact that there was no link
between Methodism and socialism; the reformist impulse inherent within Methodism
at no time encouraged the formulation of a radical critique of economic power and
class relationships fundamental to socialist thinking. As a body, it is
arguable that the Methodists were more active in chapel affairs, education and
evangelising. Of all the non-conformists, it was the men of Old Dissent, born to
habits of leadership and public service, who responded to political challenge in
the last decades of the century. Only in the 1790's were some Methodist
congregations temperamentally disposed towards radical activity: individual

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1. Biographical Notices Relating to Sheffield, p. 211.
2. South Yorkshire Notes and Queries, I, 1899-1900. p. 285.
3. ibid., p.285
4. Biographical Notices Relating to Sheffield, p. 215.
5. See below, Chapter 15.
6. Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield, no volume number, p.54; ibid., vol. 35, p. 139.

cases such as Edward Oakes are not sufficient evidence of a coalition between Methodists and radicals in the late eighteenth century.

However, this is not the same as suggesting that Methodism prevented revolution. This raises important problems about the nature of violent political change. If we accept the idea that the working classes needed the leadership of the bourgeoisie to create its political consciousness, then clearly, evangelical religion as a whole, and Methodism in particular, diverted the natural leaders of the working classes into the minutiae of church and chapel affairs, and into other-worldly affairs. Thus was created a petit bourgeois class, with a vested interest in economic stability. Counter arguments about the numerical weakness of the Methodist church are something of a red herring.[1] it is indisputable that the ideology of Methodism went far beyond the actual members of ticket holding members, because of the public activities of the demomination, and the apparatus of evangelism. An admittedly partis an source assessed the membership of the Methodists at 9,000 or 13% of the population of Sheffield in 1845. This is a statement of the absolute minimum of Methodist influence: Methodists argued that two thirds of the population of the town might be reached by their propaganda machine.[2]

The pervasive influence of evangelical religion spread the awareness of the values of respectability far wider through the community than any numerical counting of heads will admit. Ultimately, the problem with the Halevy thesis is that it implies a causal relationship: because of Methodism there was no revolution. Rather, the emergence of Methodism and the failure of the working class leadership and the rank and file to unite in revolutionary consciousness is not cause and effect, but part of the same predisposition towards individualism, materialism and deference to economic ideals inherent in the English bourgeoisie since the Puritan revolution.

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1. Hobsbawm, op. cit., pp.25-29.
2. Agency and Progress of Wesleyan Methodism, As Exemplified by Statistical Details, and Considered with Refernece to its Facilities for Promoting and Sustaining a General Revival of Religion Throughout the Country, London and Sheffield, 1845.

8.   <u>Religion and Society - The Philanthropic Impulse 1790-1850</u>

The eighteenth century saw an upsurge in charitable activity. The responsibility of the wealthy for the poor and unfortunate in society was traditional, but during the century, charity was extended . from an act of purely individual benevolence, to a collective and highly organised undertaking. The charitable voluntary society became the stock response of the middle classes to the problems of poverty which confronted them, and occasionally seemed to threaten the whole foundation of society. The importance of philanthropy was increasingly seen in religious terms: the link between charity and religion were reforged by the Evangelical Revival, and charitable effort in this period has been described as 'in a large measure middle class in its support and Puritan in temper'.[1]

The Puritan concept that the devout should spend their riches in charity was essential to the thinking of John Wesley, and evangelicals within the Established Church.[2] This idea was sustained by the activities of the emerging middle classes in church and chapel, and by their individual involvement in voluntary societies. The period from about 1780 was the heyday of the provincial voluntary societies, which worked in close relationship with religious institutions as the vehicles of the new philanthropy. The prevailing religious ideology was the fundamental motivation in this activity, although after 1850, religious philanthropy became increasingly ineffective in dealing with the problems of working class culture.

The ascendancy of charitable activity was sustained by other factors. The growth of humanitarianism from the middle of the eighteenth century was expressed in a genuine compassion for the lot of the poor, the

1. David Owen, <u>English Philanthropy 1660-1960</u>, Lond₇ 1964, p.11
2. see above chapter 7.

aged and the infirm.[1] Increasingly, existing charities and almsgivings were inadequate for the needs of the expanding urban populations. The tensions and insecurities of urban life were a prime cause of working class discontent, vociferously expressed between 1790 and 1820. Charitable activity was seen as one way of stemming a tide of social unrest potentially dangerous to the security and well-being of the national interest, and the economic prosperity upon which it was based. Involvement in philanthropy was an agreeable way of discharging the obligations of conscience, and of affirming social status. The publicity and power afforded by many charities 'offered ideal conditions for those who desired to be widely known for their benevolence'.[2]

Economic factors were also important: prosperity in trade and commerce generated surplus monies, which could usefully be diverted into charity. The high period of Victorian prosperity between 1850 and 1870 was reflected not only in an increase in the numbers of voluntary societies, but of the annual incomes available to sustain them. Not all of those who involved themselves in charitable work were men. With increasing leisure, charitable activities provided a respectable means of filling time for middle class women, especially those who remained unmarried. Charity work also provided the moral and physical chaperonage which enabled them to take the first steps into the world outside their homes.[3] The attraction of the charity society for the middle classes was thus irresistable. Careful contact with the working classes, sanctioned by the nature of the work, allowed middle class values to be pressed upon the poor. In imitation of their superiors, the families of aspiring tradesmen and manufacturers also learned the duties and responsibilities of giving; by the early nineteenth century, charity had become institutionalised as a recognisable element in English life.

1. Owen, op. cit., p.14; Kathleen Heaseman, Evangelicals in Action, London, 1962, p.10
2. Heasemen, op. cit., p.11
3. loc. cit., Margaret B. Simey, Charitable effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Centiry, Liverpool, 1951, pp.62-63

In Sheffield, charitable activity during the eighteenth century was characterised by individual acts of benevolence, as well as by the beginnings of collective organisation. Humanitarian motives figures in a number of bequests. William Parkin left £100 in 1749 for decayed filesmiths and edge tool merchants. Boughton's gift of 1699 provided for poor cutlers and scissorsmiths.[1] Many charitable bequests made in the eighteenth century contained restrictive provisions which introduced moral sanctions, and sought to include only the deserving and the respectable. This was foreshadowed by the Earl of Shrewsbury's Hospital, willed in 1625, and erected in 1673. Provision was made for twenty people, who had seen better days, but had been reduced by misfortune,

> 'well esteemed for godly life and conversation,
> of good condition, peaceable and quite among their
> neighbours, such as by persons of honest repute who
> should be judged fit objects of the charity'.[2]

The running of the almshouses was supervised by a governor, who saw that those who misbehaved were fined, and the incorrigible expelled.[3]

In this new type of bequest, provision was often made for material and spiritual education. The Hollis Charities, founded in 1703 by Thomas Hollis, a wealthy nonconformist merchant, born in Sheffield but living in London, and extended by his descendants, provided almshouses and maintenance for poor widows. Provision was also included for a scripture reader to pray and visit the sick, and a schoolmaster for the education of 50 poor boys and girls, who were required to attend Upper Chapel.[4] This type of bequest was followed by Thomas Hanbey, who left £8,000 consolidated bank annuities for the poor in 1796: the interest of this was to provide coats and hats for

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1. Endowed Charities, Report to the Charity Commissions on the Results of an inquiry held in the City of Sheffield into Endowments, P.P. 1897, LXVII, pp.5,91
2. ibid., p.38
3. loc. cit.
4. ibid., p.31

'poor housekeepers, living and residing in the said
parish of Sheffield, being members of the Church
of England, of a sober life and conversation'. 1.

Education and clothing were also to be provided for charity school

children and fees for the vicar for an annual sermon.

The earliest example of cooperative philanthropy by voluntary

subscription in Sheffield is the Boys' Charity School, established in 1706.

However, the lack of a wealthy middle class inhibited the development of

large scale charitable involvement until the 1780's. A Girls' Charity School

was built in 1786, and this decade marks the emergence of a philanthropic

impulse which was sustained throughout the nineteenth century. 2. This gave

rise to a diversity of institutions, such as hospitals, a dispensary, sunday

schools and day schools, benevolent societies, tract societies and mission

and bible societies, as well as the practice of annual charity sermons, and

the mobilization of large sums of money for victims of local or national

disasters.

This sudden acceleration of charitable activity can be ascribed to

several causes. The Methodists, following the opening of their first

permanent chapel in 1780, pioneered philanthropic work in Sheffield, with

the establishment of a Benevolent Society, a sunday school, distribution of

tracts, prayer meetings. 3. The increasing wealth and respectability of the

Norfolk St. congregation enabled their methods and philosophy to influence

the other denominations, and a new cooperation began between the Methodists,

the increasingly Evangelical Anglican clergy, and the Old Dissenters. This

was encouraged by the nature of social change in the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries, with families who had made their wealth from

banking and commerce being joined by the newly prosperous merchants and

manufacturers, made rich by the expansion of the silver plate and tool trades.

Their influence was felt in the social and religious life of the community.

1. ibid., pp.9-12
2. For a discussion of the Boys' and Girls' Charity Schools, see below,
   Chapter 14
3. Seed, op. cit., pp.203-216

At the same time, the economic distress of the 1790's and the intermittent radicalism of the Sheffield artisans during this period, helped to reinforce the dividing lines between rich and poor, and established the existence of a working class politically troublesome, and frequently without the means of subsistence.

The stock response of the Middle classes to the cries of these years was an expansion of charitable activity. The precedent for many provincial societies lay with the national evangelical agencies, such as the Dissenters' London Mission Society (1795), the Church Mission Society (1799), the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804) and the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor. These societies were mainly made up of the middle classes with aristocratic patronage, and were copied by local groups in the provinces, providing as they did a new role and identity for the socially mobile.

The aim of such societies was broadly the religious, humanitarian and moral improvement of the working classes. In some, the humanitarian imperative was well-developed, but characteristically, the crisis of the late eighteenth century was interpreted largely in religious terms. Under the influence of Evangelical thought, class relationships were seen as divinely ordained, and poverty an inexorable fact of life. The ignorance and the illiteracy of the masses were sins twice over, incompatible with the national well-being, and a barrier against the propagation of religion. Poverty was essentially a moral question. Want was regarded as inevitable, and the poor were to be educated in the more serviceable traits of character which would encourage sturdy self-reliance, and enable them to bear their lot with resignation. This work was naturally associated with the churches, and it was religious thinking which provided the ideology to sustain it:

> 'many institutions in the field of social welfare,
> especially those concerned with education and
> reformation, and many schemes for the relief of
> distress, were the direct responsibility of specific
> congregations, whose members gave support in both
> time and money'.   1

The relationship between the churches and the poor is complex. The churches and chapels established their own philanthropic societies internally, or in cooperation with each other. The concern of religion for pvoerty and depravity was expressed, however, in individual as much as in institutional terms. Ministers of religion, as well as church members, carried the influence of religious values and attitudes outside the churches by becoming committee members or subscribers of voluntary societies. Hence the transcendental nature of religious values: civilised social behaviour was essentially a moral issue, and morality and religion were synonymous.' It is necessary, therefore, to consider the influence of religion in terms of religious action by individuals outside the institutional activities of the churches.

One of the earliest and most conspicuous ventures of the middle class into philanthropy was the establishment of the General Infirmary. By 1789, scarcely any large provincial town was without such an establishment and in 1793 the foundation stone was laid, to open

> 'the merciful door of Charity .... to the Stranger, the
> Friendless and the Unprotected'. 2.

The vulnerability of the Sheffield artisansto industrial injury made such an institution especially welcome. In the organisation of this venture, the Vicar James Wilkinson played a key role as initiator, trustee, subscriber, and head of the building committee.[3] The sermon which he preached upon the opening of the Infirmary shows clearly the religious and moral rationale behind such an overtly humanitarian gesture. The duty and necessity of philanthropy were firmly stressed:

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1. Simey, op. cit., p.16
2. Sheffield General Infirmary, Copy of Circular Letter 19 April 1792, S.C.L., M.P.146L; Robert Ernest, The Origin of the Sheffield General Infirmary, Sheffield, 1824; J.D. Leader and Simeon Snell, Sheffield General Infirmary 1797-1897, Sheffield, 1897; W.S. Porter, The Royal Infirmary, Sheffield – An Epitome, Sheffield, 1922
3. Wilkinson subscribed £200, donated 50 guineas, and left £10 a year for ever and a legacy of £600 to the Infirmary; Ernest, op. cit., p.ii

> 'the social and benevolent affections are the sources of
> the highest and noblest gratifications which this life
> can give, and are the bases of our ability, and the
> materials which compose our capacity for participating
> in the blessings of eternity'. 1.

Among the benefits of the Infirmary, social reformation and religious redemption were closely identified. Rules and orders were intended to promote an improvement on social behaviour:

> 'The regularity prescribed with respect to hours and diet the
> personal cleanliness, the decency of behaviour and language,
> the necessity of submitting to advice, direction and control,
> the restraint of anger and violent irritating passion, (are)
> all conducive to the reformation and improvement of the morals
> of the convalescent patients, towards the renunciation of their
> former vices, and the acquirement of settled habits of virtue
> and religion after their recovery'. 2.

Thus the provision of opportunities for religious worship was as important as the medical facilities, and reflected truly Evangelical aims. Religion was the medicine of the wounded soul, and thus

> 'the turbulent, the profligate, the profane, the intemperate,
> the debauched, the drunkard, the indolent may return from a
> temporary residence in such a house of refuge, reformed in
> manners, peaceable, pious, humble, sober and industrious'. 3.

The convergence of religious, moral and humanitarian functions which the Infirmary represented coincided with a new awareness of social responsibility and civic price: thus the success of the new venture was guaranteed. By midsummer 1795, over £15,000 in subscriptions and £600 in legacies had been amassed, with contributions from the denominations, and virtually every person of status in the community.[4] This was a collective effort which was never again to be rivalled. Nevertheless, the inability of the Infirmary to supply the wants of the poor during sickness led to the establishment of a second venture, the Sheffield Public Dispensary, in 1832. Local clergy were chairmen of the weekly boards from 1833 to 1883, and support came from local doctors, gentlemen and the aristocracy.[5]

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1. James Wilkinson, _A Sermon, preached at St. Paul's Church upon the Occasion of the Opening of the General Infirmary_, Sheffield, 1797, p.9
2. ibid., p.21
3. ibid., p.24
4. Ernest, op. cit., p.35; for subscribers, see Sheffield General Infirmary, _Annual Subscriptions and Donations_, Sheffield, 1798: _Report of the State of the Sheffield General Infirmary_, August 1797 – June 1799
5. See Annual Reports of the Sheffield Public Dispensary.

Religious, humanitarian and moral considerations were essential to other voluntary efforts of the period, although the emphasis differed. An immediate response to the distress of the 1790's came from the Norfolk St. Methodists, who in 1794 embarked upon a plan to relieve the sick and distressed of every denomination. This was welcomed by the Sheffield Iris as 'a Plan which breathes the true spirit of Philanthropy, Benevolence and Charity', and from 1795, musical festivals were held at St. James's and St. Paul's to raise money for the society.[1] The aim of this Benevolent Society was to give religious and moral instructions as well as pecuniary assistance. Much of the misery which the poor suffered was ascribed to 'vicious habits', and the society affirmed that

> 'in the case of the sick, a cordial is not more necessary to support the body, than religion is to tranquilise and console the mind'. [2]

The crisis of the 1790's made relief an immediate necessity. Cash was distributed, free medical treatment given out, and clothing and linen loaned to the needy. But clearly, the ultimate aim was the salvation of souls. Visitors were urged to be sparing in their relief, to use every opportunity for religious instruction, and to recommend 'cleanliness and frugality to in every family'.[3]

A concern for the distress of old women led to the establishment of the Friendly Female Society, later renamed the Aged Female Society, in 1810. This was for poor and infirm widows of sixty five years and over, of good character, with a maximum income of five shillings per week, and preferably, not in receipt of parish relief. After careful investigation into merits and circumstances, aid was given by female visitors. A major aim was to allow the recipients of charity to pass their days in their own homes, rather than in hospital, 'the silent, lonely, threshold of the grave', or in the workhouse,

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1. S.I. 14 August 1795; ibid., 9 September 1796
   E.D. Mackerness Somewhere Further North - A History of Music in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1974, p.21
2. Benevolent Society, Annual Report, 1823
3. ibid., 1817-1819

'the last sad refuge of abandoned profligacy'.[1] The appeal of the society

was both humanitarian and sentimental, urging relief for the

> 'hundreds of females who have outlived their friends and with
> whom no children now remain to comfort and sustain them –
> feeble with age and want; – those hands, which have long toiled
> for others, unable to earn the smallest pittance for themselves'.[2]

But moral and religious considerations were also paramount, for it was important

that those who received relief should have been honest and industrious. Age

and distress were necessary, but not sufficient, qualifications. The

propagation of religion was considered essential to the society's work, for

material relief was deemed to be ineffective without spiritual relief. The

reading of the Bible was especially important, for

> 'where its sacred pages have been read, and its benign influence
> has been felt, there has been an appearance of neatness and
> comfort which we could not perceive elsewhere'.[3]

Thus the poor became resigned to their poverty, and were given the hope of

heavenly reward in exchange for their forbearance.

The organisation which was most active in its work for the moral,

religious and humanitarian wellbeing of the Sheffield working classes was the

local auxiliary to the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor,

established in 1804,

> 'to promote the comforts and welfare of the poor, by the
> encouragement of industry, economy and order; by assisting
> them in their distress; and as far as may be, removing the
> disadvantages of their station'.[4]

The importance of religion in this work was firmly established, for 'it is in

religious principle alone that will be found the true blame for the sufferings

of human life and the powerful counteraction of all those dispositions that

lead to misery'.[5] To this end, the Society cooperated with the Sheffield

branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the dissemination of

religious material, and maintained libraries of religious and moral tracts.[6]

1. S.I. 24 April 1810
2. Friendly Female Society, Annual Report, Sheffield, 1819
3. loc. cit.
4. Hannah Kilham, Extract from an Account of the Sheffield Society for
   Bettering the Condition of the Poor, Sheffield, 1812, p.202; Society for
   Bettering the Condition of the Poor, Annual Report, Sheffield, 1819,
   (hereafter S.B.C.B.)
5. S.B.C.P., Annual Report, 1817
6. ibid., 1833, ibid., 1816

In some of its utterances, the S.B.C.P. shows evidence of a more radical appraisal of the nature of poverty: it recognised the contribution made by the poor, as a class who contributed to the common comforts of society, and were prevented from providing for themselves, and from following their useful labours by current economic circumstances.[1] In 1824, the society went so far as to assert that poverty was the natural condition of man, and that all property was the immediate produce of the labour of the poor.[2] Nevertheless, the concept of the deserving and undeserving poor was firmly rooted. Poverty was equated with crime, and the wish to prevent the overburdening of the poor rate put the society on a firmly utilitarian basis.[3]

The strength of the S.B.C.P. in Sheffield allowed it to make a concerted attack on many aspects of working class culture. The town was divided and sub-divided into districts under the responsibility of lay members. These made weekly visits, and gave not only material relief, but encouraged the development of self-help among the poor. Bedding and clothing was loaned, or sold, at half-price on an installment basis. Food was distributed in times of acute need: 40 tons of corned cod were given out in 1812, and the following year, salt fish from the London Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing Districts was turned into dinners of fish and potatoes, and sold at 1d. per pound.[4] Occasionally, soup and weekly meals were arranged at the Cutlers' Hall, and at other times, tickets distributed to buy meat and potatoes. Houses were whitewashed, blankets and rugs given out, and aid given to women during confinement.[5]

A main object of the society was to act as an agency through which individual needs could be assessed, and provided with appropriate help. Strict investigation and home visits were preferable to 'the promiscuous relief of applicants at our doors.[6] Begging was discouraged by the distribution of tickets, instead of money. The investigation of the recipient which followed

1. ibid., 1820
2. ibid., 1824
3. ibid , 1820; S.I. 27 February 1821
4. Kilham, op. cit., p.209; S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1813
5. S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1817; Kilham, op. cit., p.203
6. S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1814

meant that the idle were distinguished, the vagrants sent to settlements, and the needy referred to parish overseers. [1] Those in need of medical attention were sent to the Infirmary. [2] Some attempt at educational work was also made. An evening school was held twice weekly for young women in the manufacturing industries, for the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. [3] Often, children found to be in need of elementary education were referred to the Lancasterian Schools. Members of the society penetrated even the town's lodging houses, the workhouse and the debtors' prison in their quest for suitable objects for moral reformation. [4]

A novel means of averting the worst consequences of poverty, and of promoting self-help was the encouragement of weekly savings, which earned a premium of 25% on a shilling invested. [5] Such premiums were regarded as 'probably more acceptable from being an honourable reqard of their own continued endeavours, rather than a mere gratuitous relief'. [6] The spirit of independence and self-respect encouraged by this system was the vital first step in the pursuit of respectability. This was a theme constantly emphasised by the society:

> 'Give to the labouring classes early instruction - Give efficient
> security for any little property which they can acquire for their
> own, and which in emergencies they can employ without being
> burdensome to any, and you must essentially diminish the temptation
> to idleness, and to ennervating dependence'. 7.

Other societies which were established in the same period had aims which were more overtly religious. Following an earlier women's society established in 1805, an auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society came into existence in 1816. [8] The first tract societies were established at the same time: the Methodists came first in 1808, and by 1816, the Church of England and the Dissenters had formed their own societies. [9]

The policy of distributing cheap tracts and bibles to the heathen poor had been widely exploited by John Wesley. The only barrier to the success

1. loc. cit.
2. Kilham, op. cit., p.212
3. S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1816
4. ibid., 1810; ibid, 1815
5. S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1817
6. ibid., 1812
7. ibid., 1815
8. S.I. 30 January 1810; ibid., 16 March 1813
9. ibid., 26 March 1814

of religion was felt to be ignorance: the self-evident truths in tracts and in the bible would bring enlightenment to all who read them. The confidence in such a philosophy was boundless:

> 'By this means a spirit of reading is excited among those who are visited - a greater attention is paid to the observation of the Sabbath in the domestic circle - many are induced to attend a place of worship - and not a few have, by this simple and efficacious method, been brought to the knowledge of that Saviour "whom to know is life eternal"'. 1.

The dissemination of such material was felt to be an effective antidote against popular unrest. The poor would respond to such attentions with eagerness, instead of the 'factious principles of Paine', which had attracted many in the 1790's.[2] Bible and Tract societies could also be used to give practical training in habits of frugality. The concept of self-help was again crucial. James Montgomery argued in the columns of the Sheffield Iris in 1812 the duty of the poor to contribute perhaps a penny a week to the Bible Society, in proportion to their means: the poor, as well as the rich, should be allowed the right and privilege of benevolence.[3] By 1813, about 5,000 had enrolled, paying a weekly penny. Thus labourers and mechanics were able to supply themselves with bibles at easy terms.[4] Between 1815 and 1817, about £1,400 was provided by working men for this purpose, although only half the town was canvassed; however, subscriptions lapsed in periods of trade depression.[5]

The belief that tracts were the easiest and most economical way of doing good to the poor and destitute made sence to the utilitarian philosophy of subscribers. The Methodist Tract Society believed that 'no method of communicating religious and moral instruction can be more economical or less objectionable'.[6] There was a strong emphasis upon cheapness and value, and great attention was paid to the purchase and distribution of religious material.

1. ibid., 30 December 1828
2. ibid., 16 March 1813
3. ibid., 8 December 1812
4. ibid., 23 March 1813; ibid., 15 March 1814
5. ibid., 19 January 1819
6. ibid., 4 January 1831

Annual subscribers of one guinea to the Bible Society were allowed to purchase bibles from the national society at cost price to the value of five times their subscriptions [1]. The Methodist Tract Society sold penny tickets for distribution to the poor, who could buy fivepence' worth of tracts with each one. [2] Thus the principle of thrifty capitalist dealing was applied to the relief of the poor. The concept of poverty and irreligion was finite, and the success of the societies gauged by the amount of material which was circulated. This could be very considerable: by 1819, the Bible Society had distributed over 18,000 bibles and testaments, and calculated that out of nearly 8,000 families in the town, the 1,300 who still lacked the scriptures would be quickly supplied. [3]

Clearly, such voluntary efforts could provide no radical solution to the problem of poverty. The reliance on voluntary subscriptions limited the funds available for social relief. The sums of money distributed by the Aged Female Society were derisory: 4d. per week per head was the most that could be managed during the society's first ten years. By 1823, this amount had fallen to $2\frac{1}{4}$d. per week. Another problem was the numbers of people applying for help: there were generally more than 300 people on the society's books. [4] Other types of material aid provided by the S.B.C.P. could only provide a very temporary relief. Tracts and bibles were in fact often received with derision or indifference by working people, large numbers of whom lacked the ability or the inclination to read them. [5] Indeed, the very inability of the voluntary society to solve the vast material problems of the poor reinforced the emphasis on the religious tenets which were propagated, and increased the reliance on the passive social philosophy of the Bible.

Nevertheless, societies of this type remained the stock response of

1. ibid., 2 April 1811
2. ibid., 11 March 1817
3. ibid., 24 August 1819
4. Figure from annual reports
5. For a discussion of the use of tracts by the temperance movement, see below, Chapter 21.

some sections of the community to the problems of poverty until the middle

of the nineteenth century and beyond.   Societies such as the S.B.C.P.

maintained a conviction of the value of their work, pointing to an improvement

in the cleanliness of buildings, and in the appearance of the poor. [1]   The

Sheffield Iris observed in 1818 that

> 'this society, with very small funds, but with most exemplary
> economy and unequalled personal exertion, has done more towards
> improving the lowest families in this class of our neighbours,
> than previously had been done in fifty years. By introducing
> cleanliness, industry and frugality, where filth, idleness and
> extravagance existed, the personal, domestic and social comforts
> of the afflicted creatures have been multiplied and enhanced'. [2]

Clearly, this was an optimistic picture, but such complacency was essential

for the survival of the voluntary society as a form of social aid.   There is

reason to think that this type of institution was more meaningful for its

subscribers and its members than for the objects of its charitable endeavours.

Some of the social pleasures of belonging to such societies were fulsomely

expressed by the S.B.C.P.:

> 'how abundantly do they surpass the gratifications in which the
> heart has no share – what additional zest do they give to
> friendships already formed, and how do they open the way for
> interesting and valuable intercourse between persons of various
> religious classes in Society, who but for these associations in
> which all can unite, would have remained completely unknown to
> each other'. [3]

The attractions of this work for middle class women, circumscribed in their

activities by social convention,has already been referred to: district

visiting and tract distribution was commonly carried out by single or

married lady members, who also subscribed most generously.

Involvement with a voluntary society was a potent means of earning

status, for newly prosperous merchants and tradesmen, and was considered part

of the Christian duty of established families in Sheffield and its

neighbourhood.   In some ways, such societies were extensions of the

individualism and competitiveness of the commercial classes.   It was customary

for the élite of local society to become patrons, subscribe, and sit upon

1.S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1817
2. S.I. 18 August 1818
3. S.B.C.P. Annual Report, 1813

committees. Aristocratic support could often be relied upon. The Bible
Society attracted most prestigious support: the president was Earl Fitzwilliam,
J.A. Stuart Wortly was vice-president, and financial support came from Lord
Milton, Sir William C. Bagshaw, and from Sitwell Sitwell, who bequeather £500
to the society. Energetic support came from James Montgomery, George Bennet
and Rowland Hodgson, men of substance with a reputation for philanthropy,
manufacturers such as Samuel Roberts, Thomas Holy and Joseph Read, and a
bankers Hugh Parker and Samuel Shore. The Vicar of Sheffield, Thomas Sutton,
was prominent on the society until the 1840's, and some of Sheffield's most
fashionable churches and chapels, such as St. James's, Carver St. chapel,
Upper Chapel and the Independent Queen St. and Nether Chapels gave their
support.[1]

The Bible Society also demonstrated the ability of the voluntary
society to raise money quickly, and the increasing availability for funds
for such purposes in Sheffield, with the expansion of commercial activities.
Within two months of its establishment, £647 was raised in subscriptions and
donations.[2] Annual meetings were customarily attended by 'many respectable
persons and families from the neighbourhood';[3] total number of subscribers
numbered between 1700 and 1800 by 1819.[4] The sensation of giving to such a
society must have been most gratifying; subscribers had the pleasure not only
of public acknowledgement of their generosity in the columns of the local press,
but the knowledge that they were contributing to the work of religion and the
improvement of society in the very best of company. Prestige could be derived
from the act of giving, without the need for more direct contact with the
realities of poverty and the life of the slums. The supreme advantage of
tracts was that they 'could penetrate the ale house and prison, and go where
modesty cannot'., achieving their ends without closer contact with working

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1. S.I. 30 January 1810; ibid., 13 February 1810; ibid., 10 March 1812
2. ibid., 17 April 1810
3. ibid., 23 April 1816
4. ibid., 24 August 1819

class life, especially if they could be sold to hawkers to distribute.
But despite the evident attractions of the voluntary society for those
seeking prestige and status in a period of upward social mobility, there
was room for active voluntary work. The efforts of women visitors for the
Aged Female Society and the S.B.C.P. were the precedents for modern family
casework, and the persons who distributed soup or bedding to the poor were
as necessary as the patrons and subscribers.

Although voluntary societies of this nature were not generally an
acceptable sphere of activity for the 'respectable' working classes,
subscriptions could sometimes be drawn from the more humble in the community.
More than 50% of the subscriptions to the S.C.B.P. and the Bible Society in
1819-1820 were in excess of a guinea, but all the societies had a buoyant
category of small subscribers. Indeed, the Methodist Benevolent Society
received 30% of its subscriptions from people who gave less than half a guinea
in this period, and the smallest subscription was 2/-. None of the societies
had fewer than 17% of their subscribers in this category. Thus one of the
practical effects of the wider involvement of religion was that the small
manufacturer, artisan and tradesman, wedded to the pursuit of middle class
values through church and chapel, carried their concern for the material and
spiritual destitution of the poor into support for societies dominated by
their social superiors, and committed to the maintenance of an ordered society.

9. ## Religion and Society - The Training of the Child

A fundamental product of the Evangelical Revival was the concern for the education of the child.   This responsibility, assumed on a national scale in the 1780's, was jealously guarded and fought for into the era of state education.   Denominational attempts at the education of children in sunday schools and day schools were not only important for the proselytizing of the irreligious poor, but embodied values central to Evangelical philosophy. Until the Education Act of 1870, such provision as the churches were able to make represented the total education available to several generations of working class children.

The establishment of the sunday schools in Sheffield represented the first conscious organisation by the churches for the religious and moral improvement of the populace.   The example of Robert Raikes, credited with pioneering the first effective sunday school, was copied in Sheffield by a Mrs. Loftus, who in 1785 set up a school for 25 children in a private house with a paid teacher. [1]   This was quickly copied by methodists James Vickers and Francis Hawkes, who established a sunday school next to Garden St. Chapel in 1789.   By 1790, it was estimated that 750 children were in regular attendance in Sheffield sunday schools. [2]   The earliest schools were probably private ventures, but by 1798 the first sunday school undisputably under the control of a religious body was opened by the New Connexion Methodists at Scotland St; this was followed in the same year by a methodist school at Pea Croft. [3]   The Dissenters at Queen St. and Howard St. Chapels followed the example of the methodists.   By 1808, the Vicar of Sheffield was in receipt of a grant from the Town Trustees for a Church of England sunday school.

1. Guy Kendall, Robert Raikes - A Critical Study, London, 1939; R.E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century, Sheffield, 1901, pp.336-337; John Salt, 'Early Sheffield Sunday Schools and their Educational Importance' T.H.A.S., IX, 1967, p.180.
2. S.R. 7 June 1790.
3. Bramwell, Life of Henry Longden, etc., p.132.
4. Leader, op. cit., p.336.

The proliferation of sunday schools in the early years of the
nineteenth century led to the formation of the Sheffield Sunday
School Union, the success and vitality of which influenced unions in
Leeds, Chester and Birmingham.[1] This was established at a meeting at
Queen St. chapel in June 1812. Seven schools initially joined.
Four of these were Dissenting, two Wesleyan, and one New Connexion
Methodist.[2] George Bennet, a leading Independent philanthropist,
was the driving force behind the union, and the Congregationalist
influence remained strong throughout the century, as part of the
expression of their commitment to public voluntary activities.[3]

The consistent philosophy of the Union was undenominational
unsectarian teaching, based upon the Bible. This was central to the
Dissenters and the liberal Methodists, but proved unacceptable to the
other denominations. The first president of the Union was the
Anglican optician and cast steel refiner, William Proctor, but the
church sunday schools entered into union with the National School
Society, and held aloof, despite approaches from the committee.[4]
The Unitarians also had theological objections, and never partici-
pated in the work of the Union. Nevertheless, its officials set
great store by the degree of co-operation achieved and sustained by
churches fighting against a common enemy. This was emphasised by
the Dissenting Rev.Dixon in 1816, who asked

> 'Are we not chosen by the same Lord, redeemed by the same
> blood, called with the same 'heavenly and holy' calling
> regenerated by the same Holy Spirit, justified by the same
> righteousness, nourished by the same spiritual food, having
> the same Grace of Faith, the same Hope, the same Gospel, the
> same Saviour, the same Heaven in view; do we not hope to
> spend a happy eternity together? Surely, then we are
> brethren; and surely as such we should ever conduct
> ourselves towards each other'. [5]

Despite such protestations of harmony, however, the Wesleyan Methodists
preferred to give their children a catechistical education, with the

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1. Sheffield Sunday School Union, _Annual Report_,Sheffield,1817.
   (hereafter S.S.U.).
2. ibid.,1813, Salt, _op.cit._, p.181.
3. _Sheffield Congregational Association Yearbook_,Sheffield,1938,p.41.
4. S.S.U., _Annual Report_, 1814.
5. ibid., 1815.

aim of conversion and recruitment to the societies. Their dissatisfaction with undenominational education resulted in a split in 1831, and the establishment of the Wesleyan Sunday School Union. This maintained good relations with the older organisation, but preferred to pursue its own policies in the training of working class children.[1]

Thus the Sunday School Union ultimately came to represent only the Dissenting and Free Methodist denominations. Its history is nevertheless remarkable, not only for the continuity of its existence until the present day, but for the large numbers of children which it embraced. By 1813, 3186 scholars and 397 teachers had already registered. One school, the Wesleyan Red Hill Sunday School, founded in 1811, became very large, and within two years, had 1414 scholars and 150 teachers.[2] The numbers in the Union were swelled by the proliferation of schools at the outskirts of the town, and in outlying villages and hamlets. Schools were started in Owlerton in 1812, Bridgehouses in 1813, and in the Park and Manor areas in 1814. Such schools reflected an increasing concern with the depravity of the popular culture in these areas. Often, a sunday school was the first step towards the emergence of a congregation, and later, the establishment of a chapel.[3] Ultimately, the numbers of children who were involved in sunday schools became very large indeed, as more branch schools were established. In 1872, there were no less than 82 schools, 2630 teachers and 19,738 children in the Sunday School Union.[4] The Wesleyans claimed about half this strength, with 51 schools, 1300 teachers and 7815 scholars.[5]

The sunday school movement was varied in its social composition,

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1. Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union, Rules, Sheffield, 1870, (hereafter W.M.S.S.U.)   pp.12-14.
2. S.S.U., Annual Report, 1813; Salt, op.cit., p.181.
3. S.S.U., Annual Report, 1819.
4. S.D.T. 12 March 1872.
5. W.M.S.S.U., op.cit., p.16.

and spanned a greater range than most churches and chapels were able to do. There is reason to think that the Sunday School Movement plumbed nearly to the extremities of the working class in the children which it attracted. Thus participation in various degrees came from children of wealthy manufacture and children from the worst Sheffield slums. Financial support for the sunday schools reflected the broad basis of its membership. Much of the funds came from annual sermons, and fund-raising activities within church and chapel. However, individual donations were also common, especially when a new school was planned, and sometimes these were substantial. Money also came from working men: in 1811, the workmen of Messrs.L.and G.Graves of West St.contributed £3.9.3d.to the erection of the proposed sunday school on Broad Lane.[1]

The main impetus in the early years came from ministers of religion, and from benevolent middle class individuals such as James Montgomery and George Bennet, as a part of their general philanthropic commitment. Increasingly, a sunday school education provided the first step on the ladder for the socially aspiring, particularly in conjunction with active involvement in church or chapel. A promising scholar not uncommonly was promoted to teacher and superintendent. Many manufacturers had this sort of experience and attributed their worldly success to a sunday school background.[2] Allen St.New Connexion Methodist Sunday school claimed at least two chief magistrates, two Master Cutlers, and the president of the National School Union, as well as musicians, doctors, and missionaries.[3] Among those who had been connected with the Park Sunday School were George Basset and Samuel H allam, mayors of Sheffield, and T.W.Ward, who was Master Cutler in 1914.[4]

1.   S.I. 23 April, 1811.
2.   S.D.T. 2 December 1859.
3.   Allen St.Sunday School,One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary
          1797-1947, Sheffield, 1947.
4.   S.D.T. 9 January 1914.

Some former scholars maintained an active involvement with sunday schools, although they had achieved considerable prestige and status. Manufacturer Mark Firth received the basis of his education at sunday school, before becoming Master Cutler, J.P. and Mayor of Sheffield. He continued to teach at the Methodist Sunday schools, and often provided treats for the children of South St. New Connexion sunday school.[1] His example was followed by other substantial commercial men in the 1860's, such as draper William Cockayne, who entertained the children of Heeley Wesleyan sunday school at his house at Norton Lees in 1861.[2]

In other cases, middle class involvement took the form of general financial support and trusteeships, and in ancillary ways, such as the laying of foundation stones, and presiding over tea meetings and sunday school socials. In the S.S.U., many who were prominent in the Free Methodist and Dissenting chapels became officials of the Union. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Union drew the vast majority of its presidents, treasurers, and honorary secretaries from the commercial and manufacturing class of the town; these men were without exception employers of labour, who had a vested interest in the creation of a sober and disciplined workforce, often with commercial premises in the town, and houses in the expanding middle class suburbs of Broomhill, Nether Edge and elsewhere.

Although organised committee structures such as that of the S.S.U. depended upon men relatively well known in the commercial life of the town, there was room for working men to be active in the sunday school movement. Much of the organization and teaching, especially in the smaller schools, was undertaken by men and women who had themselves gained the bulk of their education in the Sheffield sunday schools. It was common for teachers to be recruited directly from the children.[3] Many children from superior artisan and manufacturing families attended sunday schools in the first half

1. S.D.T. 15 August 1861; S.R.I. 4 December 1880.
2. S.D T. 22 May 1861.
3. 16 May 1826.

of the century, but sunday scholars were generally speaking, the
children of the poor, and 'some of them....children of the very
poor'.[1] For many working class families with small and overcrowded
houses, it was convenient to place their children under the care of
church or chapel for a significant part of sunday.[2] Such was the
background of many sunday school teachers: essentially amateur,
untrained, and sometimes barely literate, they were subjected to
restraints similar to those imposed upon the children. The
inadequacy of such ill educated young people for the task of
fulfilling their responsibilities as teachers was recognised even
by contemporaries as a major hindrance to the success of the sunday
school movement.

The origins of the sunday school movement in Sheffield represent-
ed the first public application of the Evangelical philosophy, which
was central to the social consciousness of emerging middle class
groups from the late eighteenth century. The basic concern sprang
from a heightened awareness of the illiteracy and irreligion of the
town's children. Their behaviour became a particular threat on
sundays, when children and young people, free from the responsibilities
of home or the workshop, ran wild in the streets, and in the field
outside the town. Jelinger Symonds noted in 1843 the habit of
gambling for halfpence by children on sundays; dog fighting was
also a common sunday recreation.[3] Evidence which Symonds collected
all gave the same picture. John Livesey, minister at St.Philip's
argued that the most prominent vices were sabbath-breaking and
gaming, generally in combination:

> 'On Sunday afternoons, especially, it is impossible to pass
> along the highways, or to walk in the more retired paths,
> beyond the police boundaries, without encountering numerous
> groups of boys, from 12 years and upwards, engrossed in what is
> locally termed "pinching", i.e.gambling for copper coin'.[4]

1. S.D.T. 17 May 1864.
2. ibid. 4 May 1918.
3. Jelinger Symonds, Report on the Trades of Sheffield, and on the
and Physical Condition of the Young Persons Employed in Them,
Sheffield p.7.
4. ibid., p.p.16; also see pp.17-18.

Dog fighting and "pinching" contrasted sharply with the growing habits of religious worship and public decorum which characterised some sections of the community. The need for the moral training of the young was therefore reinforced by a wish to establish the sanctity of the sabbath, and a fear of the violence inherent in the riotous behaviour of children and young adults.

Through the sunday school movement, ideas were discussed and expressed which became fundamental to the ideology of the middle classes for the remainder of the century. Central to Evangelical thinking was the conviction of the sinfulness of the ignorant. The necessity of moral training was urged by Rev.Thomas Smith, addressing the S.S.U. in 1821. His argument was characteristically pessimistic, for

'without instruction, man differs but little from the beasts of the field, except that he is fiercer and more degraded than they. Without education, man is the creature of sensation, rather than of reflection, the slave of his appetites, rather than the follower of reason and religion'. 1.

Thus, only education could make rationality prevail over animal nature, and fit man for the enjoyments of domestic and social life, and for membership of civil and religious society. A more moderate view, expressed by Joseph Gilbert in 1813, was that if ignorance was not necessarily connected with positive misery, it would at least imply an absence of delight. 2.

The organisers of the sunday schools signalled out several aspects of urban popular culture for especial condemnation. A dislike of drinking was articulated at least fifteen years before the emergence of an organised temperance society in the town. It was the opinion of the S.S.U.in 1818 that the principle cause of juvenile delinquency was

1. Rev.Thomas Smith, 'Substance of the Speech Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Sunday School Union Whit Monday 11 June 1821; in S.S.U.Annual Report, Sheffield, 1821.
2. Joseph Gilbert, Christian Benevolence - A Sermon Before the Teachers and Superintendents of the Sunday School Union, Sheffield, 1813.

'the depraved example of Parents and the vast numbers
of Ale-houses and Dram-shops in this town and neighbourhood,
and especially from these nurseries of vice and wretchedness
being open on the Lord's Day and particularly on the eve of
that day'.   1.

A similar argument was put forward by the Wesleyan Union in 1834.

By this time, the propensity to analyse, as well as to condemn,

aspects of industrial society had emerged: for the Wesleyans,

the need for religious education was rooted in the rapid increase

in population, crowded living conditions, the numbers employed in

factories and the early age of employment, as well as in drink

and licentiousness. [2] But aspects of rural culture were equally

distressing.   George Bennet and James Montgomery on their travels

in the country districts were saddened at the numbers of adults and

children, 'sauntering through the fields, or sitting idle in the

village streets, even in the hours of divine service'.[3] By the late

1830's, the sunday schools were prepared to attack anything which

appeared to counteract the work of religion, especially the growth

of an independent working class political tradition:

'Infidelity, under the new name of Socialism, invites our
youth to its schools of atheism and licentiousness; and
by the promise of unbridled liberty in sensuous pleasures...
seeks to seduce the young into the paths of vice, and lead
them to destruction'.   4

In the 1880's, the growth of secular education, and what was described
as the 'prevailing secular spirit' led the Wesleyan Union to advocate

a guard against 'the Pantheistic Materialism, and the Atheistic and

agnostic tendencies of the day'. [5]   Whether or not man was inherently

evil, as the Evangelicals had suggested, it was the imperative

function of the sunday schools to focus attention on social trends

which might make him so.

One important aspect of the philosophy of the movement in its

early years was the transference of the idea of man's inherent evil

1.   S.S.U. Annual Report.1818.
2.   W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report, 1834.
3.   S.S.U. Annual Report. 1819.
4.   W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report. 1839.
5.   W.M.S.S.U. Circular to Teachers. Sheffield, 1886, p.4.

to the state of childhood.   The Rev.Joseph Mather argued that the
infant mind was covered with 'that film of night, which sin has
drawn over it', [1] and which must be rolled away by religion.   And
to George Highfield, preaching to the Sheffield Methodists in 1814,
children were natural liars, who should be burned in brimstone.[2]
The behaviour of the local children reinforced this opinion: the
secretary of the S.S.U.said that those in the town's sunday schools
were 'like a wild ass's colt, stubborn, intractable disobedient'.[3]
It was children such as these upon whom the future security of the
community depended.   The neglect of the child was regarded as the
'source of immorality and vice of every kind', for it was in youth
above all that man's position in life, occupation and habitual
character were generally established.[4]   The solution lay in the
moral and religious training of the child from the earliest years.
Joseph Gilbert gave perhaps the clearest statement of what the
sunday schools aimed to achieve:

> 'without any thing to ennoble the man, he has all the
> properties which are dreaded in the beast;   and these
> rendered inexpressably more terrible by the form he wears,
> and the superior sagacity he may exert.   But takethis child
> under your pitying care;; bring him among children training
> for eternity;   teach him to read;   place him within notions
> superior to those of sensuality;   let the glorious truths of
> the bible become part of his moral furniture;   form him to
> habits of respect, for the Sabbath, for instruction, for
> worship;   curb, when young, the passions which are baneful,
> and early elicit the exercise of those which are beneficial; -
> then trace him through the walks of life, and say, is he not
> another being?   He is now the man;   he respects his character,
> maintains a useful and honourable station in life, emulates the
> wealth of others, and becomes himself the object of esteem'. [5]

The purpose of a sunday school education was thus the total
transformation of the individual.   Gilbert argued that superior
respectability and a higher social station resulting from knowledge
would lead to a corresponding increase in happiness.[6]   An essential

1.   S.S.U. Annual Report. 1813.
2.   George Highfield, A Sermon Preached at the Methodist Chapel in
        Sheffield Before the Superintendents of the S.S.U. Sheffield 1814.
3.   S.S.U. Annual Report, 1818.
4.   ibid.,1813. ibid.,1817.
5.   Gilbert, op.cit.,pp.8-9.
6.   ibid., p.13.

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corollary of this was the advantage to society as a whole, through the training and disciplining of the rising generations in the interests of social order: the adults who had passed through sunday schools in their youth would be

> 'industrious, provident and peaceable subjedts; prepared
> for public changes of affairs; unwilling to engage in
> doubtful schemes of obtaining relief from pressure of
> circumstances; and especially, shrinking with horror at
> the thought of robbery and murder, however recommended by
> specious pretences, and disguised by imposing names.   1.

An awareness of the social responsibility of sunday schools for future generations was shown by the S.S.U. from its inception.   The Rev. Mark Docker urged the Union to consider how many pious parents, and perhaps future ministers would emerge from the schools, a blessing to their families and to society in future years.[2]   The opportunity to act constructively for the future, as well as for the present, was highly satisfying for those involved in sunday school work, and was part of the emergence of a new sense of responsibility.   The Bible was suitably invoked to confirm the righteousness of service to the community: quotations such as 'it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing' were often referred to during the early days of the Union.[3]   Sermons for those active in sunday school work took care to pay tribute to the virtues of Christian benevolence, and the possible reward of eternal happiness.[4]   In this way, the social awareness of the middle classes was stimulated, and the work of the sunday school was firmly related to the growing humanitarian consciousness.[5]

The work of the sunday schools was thus rooted in the necessity for the religious education and moral training of the working class child, summarized succinctly by the Sheffield Iris in 1811 as 'the instruction of youth in the principles of religion, industry and subordination'.[6]   In this process, religious education was of

1.   ibid., p.14: S.I. 1 April, 1823.   6. S.I. 5 February, 1811.
2.   S.S.U. Annual Report, 1813.
3.   Highfield, op.cit., p.5; Gilbert, op.cit., p.6.
4.   Gilbert, op.cit., pp.4-5.
5.   For example, see Rev. Edward Goodwin, An Address to Parents, Masters
     and Poor Children, Relative to Sunday Schools, Sheffield, 1786.

paramount importance. The bible was central to this, supplemented with tracts and hymns. The commonest approach to the problem of religious instruction was to ensure that children committee large sections of such material to memory. This familiarised children with passages which could provide 'warning, reproof, correction, counsel and comfort' in after life.[1] The achievement of some children in this direction was prodigious. At Leo Croft Independent sunday school, in 1822 it was a source of great satisfaction that in a single year, the children had repeated 7,600 hymns and over 30,000 verses, as well as other moral and religious pieces.[2] Such feats of learning were considered to be evidence of the childrens' delight in knowledge.[3] They also encouraged diligence, and offered a measure of control over the leisure activities of the children: it was a matter of pride that a small boy at the Wesleyan sunday school at Red Hill spent his one daily hour of leisure committing psalms to memory, which he duly repeated to his teacher on sundays.[4]

This initial commitment to religious education was upset, however, by the illiteracy of the majority of the children who attended, thus a measure of elementary education had to be given before children could even begin to read the bible.[5] Often such instruction that the teachers were able to give in rudimentary subjects was the only education that poor children could expect, especially before the Education Act of 1870.[6] Teaching children to write, or indeed any skills greater than those required to make out the bible or psalms, caused bitter controversy during the first thirty years of the sunday school movement.[7] Many Anglicans and orthodox Wesleyans believed that to go beyond teaching the children of the poor to read the bible was socially dangerous. This arose out of evangelical thinking, and the working class unrest in the 1790's led to a reappraisal of the sort of education that the

1. S.S.U. Annual Report. 1819.
2. ibid., 1822.
3. Ibid., 1818.
4. ibid., 1821
5. ibid., 1814.

6. More working class children attended sunday school than day school. Symonds, op.cit., p.9.
7. Thompson.op.cit.,pp.389-390

working classes should receive.

The columns of the _Sheffield Iris_ were several times the forum for disputes over reading and writing in sunday schools. A correspondent writing in March 1795 questioned the 'frenzy of expectation' aroused by sunday schools, and the wholesale imposition of education upon the community by certain elements of the town's population, moved by 'motives of Vanity.... and a desire of becoming conspicuous in a popular measure'. Literacy would not render the lower classes industrious, virtuous or happy, and could not prevent indolence, vice and misery; in any case, the Bible was too obscure, except for the ablest, and was better left to the clergy to explain.[1] Sectarian motives may have been an element in this denunciation, but a storm of protest resulted. James Montgomery defended the utility of knowledge, arguing

> 'the ignorance of the lower classes is one great source
> of both their vices and their miseries...everything most
> valuable in character is to be built upon the solid basis
> of a well-cultivated understanding'. [2]

The controversy raged for two months, and the consensus not only upheld the sunday schools as conducive to the respectability and future happiness of the poor and the security of the nation, but argued the natural claim of the poor to the attention of those who had achieved superiority through luck.[3]

James Montgomery remained vigilant in the defence of sunday schools. In 1800, the Bishop of Rochester was quoted as describing them as palaces where 'sedition, Jacobinism, infidelity, atheism, and all the wild and destructive principles of the new philosophy were taught and propagated!'[4] Montgomery rebutted this, asserting that the children in the Sheffield schools were trained in

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1. _S.I._ 20 March 1795.
2. _loc.cit._
3. _ibid._, 10 April 1795; _ibid._, 8 May 1795; _ibid._, 15 May 1795.
4. _ibid._, 2 October 1800.

> 'the principles of true Religion; the duty and
> importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy; of fearing
> God; and of honouring the King'. 1.

Opposition to the teaching of writing came to a head in 1808-1809,
during the ministry of arch-conservative Jabez Bunting in Sheffield.
This followed the opening of Spring St.sunday school, for the
instruction of poor children of both sexes over seven years of age
in reading and writing. Montgomery again rebutted criticisms argu-
ing that

> 'if teaching them to read be sanctifying the Sabbath
> of the Lord, reaching them to write must be conferring
> yet higher honour on that holy day, by making it doubly
> beneficial to them'. 3.

Ultimately, the responsibility for the education of the children
in secular subjects, including writing, lay with other institutions.
Indeed, the Church of England sunday schools were exclusively
religious, virtually from their inception, with classes on the
scriptures and catechism. 4. In the nonconformist sunday schools,
however, the teaching of writing lingered: it was taught in some
Methodist sunday schools as for example, at Allen St.New Connexion
Sunday School, where reading and writing were taught to equal numbers
as late as 1843. 5. Despite the fierce resistance of Bunting and
other Wesleyans, the Wesleyan sunday school at RedHill, opened in
1811 and one of the largest in Sheffield, achieved its popularity
chiefly through its reputation as a writing school. 6. Writing may
also have been taught at Brunswick Wesleyan sunday school, opened
in 1831: 900 quills were bought between June and October of 1832,
and steel pens used in 1837. 7.
Within the Wesleyan connexion, resistance to the teaching of writing
came to a head in the resolutions of Conference in 1827. 8. This
judgement began to be expressed in Sheffield schools in the 1830's

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1. loc.cit.
2. Thompson, op.cit.,p.389; S.I. 6.June 1809.
3. S.I. 23 May 1809; ibid., 6 June 1809
4. Symonds, op.cit., p.14.
5. ibid., p.13.
6. ibid., p.12.
7. W.J.Nesbit, Brunswick Wesleyan Sunday Schools,Sheffield -
   Centenary Souvenir 1831-1931, Sheffield.1931.
8. Warner,op.cit., p.233.

The resistance to writing was justified as a wish to uphold the sanctity of the Sabbath, rather than the fear of giving the working classes too much education. This was clearly expressed in the rules of the Ebenezer Wesleyan Sunday schools in 1831:

> 'Sunday schools should be strictly and entirely Religious Institutions; and ought therefore to be Schools for the Christian Instruction and Education of the Children of the Poor....it is only on this ground that the occupation of the Lord's Day in tutition can be held consistent with the due observation of the Christian Sabbath'. 1.

Thus the 'bustle and the secularity of mere school business' was to be avoided on a sunday, which was to be entirelycontrolled by the spiritual object and character of the institution. At Brunswick, it began to be recognised that the teaching of secular subjects on a sunday was but a step from a system of day school teaching. [2] In accordance with sabbatarian feeling, some chapels began secular instruction on one or two evenings a week, and formal day schools began to be run in parallel to the sunday schools. [3]

The sunday school movement attempted to bring working class children in contact with religion in a positive way. It was usual for the pupils to be taken to church or chapel for religious worship during some part of sunday. If distance or bad weather prevented this, services were conducted in the schoolroom. [4] The schools in the S.S.U. were non-denominational, and links with the chapel were loose. The Wesleyans, however, saw the sunday school as a direct means of recruiting members of the society; it had been the failure of the S.S.U. to impart doctrinal instruction which had precipitated a separate Wesleyan sunday school union in 1831. The attitude of the Wesleyans toward sunday school scholars was aggressive. Ex-scholars were followed up and watched over, lest they should be 'ingulphed in the world, and swallowed up in its sinful vortex'. [6]

1. General Principles and Rules Ebenezer Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School, Sheffield, 1831, pp.1-2.
2. Nesbit, op.cit., p.13.
3. S.I. 30 May 1809; Symonds, op.cit.,p.9.
4. Symonds. op.cit., p.12.
5. W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report, 1854.

Evangelists such as James Caughey were encouraged to preach at the
Wesleyan schools, in an attempt to involve the children in a revival.

By the middle of the century, the sunday schools concentrated
almost entirely on religious education.   A typical school was the
Independent sunday school at the Wicker.   In 1843, 300 children
were distributed between bible classes, testament classes, and
elementary reading classes.   The book used were the bible and
testament, and the 'First and Second Class Books' of the London
Sunday School Union, which contained spelling lessons and easy
scriptural passages.   Sessions commenced and concluded with hymns
and prayers.   Certain portions of the scriptures were read and
explained, ten minutes were spent in conversation, in committing
passages or verses to memory, or in spelling, and the session
concluded with an address from the minister.[2]   By the 1840's,
there were serious doubts about the effectiveness of this type
of instruction.   Concern for the efficience of the sunday schools
led to a national competition in 1847-48 for the best essays on
the Sabbath;   in 1849, this was copied by the Wicker sunday school,
and the winning essay published and circulated.   This was repeated
in many of the Sheffield sunday schools in the 1850's, in an
attempt to raise standards.[3]

Some sunday schools attempted a more positive educational role
by the provision of library facilities.   The purpose of these was
fundamentally didactic.   These grew out of collections of tracts
such as the Sunday School Repository, which were distributed to the
children of the S.S.U. as early as 1814.[4]   The usefulness of these
books was soon realised, not only to reward deserving children, but
also as a means of influencing their parents.[5]   Libraries were soon
established in the outlying schools, such as at Ecclesfield where
the robustness of popular culture caused the churches some concern.[6]

1. ibid., 1845   2. Symonds. op.cit., p.13.
3. A Working Man, The Journal and Incidents of a Seven Years'
    Mission Amongst the Young in our Sabbath Schools. Sheffield.1875
4. S.S.U. Annual Report. 1814.   PAssim.
5. ibid., 1816.   6. ibid., 1823.

The Methodists in particular came to stress the benefits of the sunday school libraries, saying in 1845 that 'a sunday school without a library is like a clock without a bell'.   Accordingly, some of the largest libraries were found in schools attached to the Wesleyan Sunday School Union.   Brunswick library had 839 volumes in 1849: divinity and church history comprised over a third of these, which included 32 volumes of the works of John Wesley. About a quarter of the books were miscellaneous letters, anecdotes, some natural history, and 20 volumes of Chambers tracts. Biography was also well represented, with 109 volumes of the memoirs of clergymen, and other exemplary figures.   Periodicals such as the Methodist Magazine, Child's Magazine and the Sunday School Teachers' Magazine were also taken. [2] This distribution was broadly repeated on other Methodist sunday school libraries in the 1840's, with miscellaneous tracts and works of divinity and biography comprising the bulk of the collection, and natural history and geography inadequately represented. [3]   However, in some of the smaller schools, library facilities were very poor.   At Broomhill Wesleyan sunday school in 1845, the library contained only a shilling's worth of books, and it was difficult to provide a child with a book that it had not already read. [4]

1. W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report. 1845.
2. Brunswick Wesleyan Sunday School, Catalogue of Books with Rules and Conditions to be Observed by the Managers and Readers, Sheffield, 1848.
3. Norfolk St.Wesleyan Sunday School, Catalogue of Books, Sheffield, 1848.
4. W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report. 1845.

Despite its drawbacks, the sunday school library remained central to the religious and moral education of working class children.   In 1873, the S.S.U.boasted 61 schools with libraries, and a total of 22,482 books.[1]   Gradually, however, the didactic purpose became less evident, and the libraries began to play a real part in the cultivation of reading for pleasure among working class children.   At Brunswick in the early twentieth century, the biblical section was no longer dominant, and the library had expanded to include the novels of Dickens, Scott, L.M.Alcott, Conan Doyle, Arnold Bennet and P.G.Wodehouse.[2]

The expansion of library facilities in the late nineteenth century coincided with a more positive educational role for the sunday schools.   One result of the advent of state education after 1870 was that the S.S.U.became more aware of training and educational standards.   From 1874, annual scripture examinations were held, and such competition was seen as an excellent foundation for the development of character.[3]   The strength of the S.S.U. was publicly acknowledged by the building of the Montgomery Hall, at a cost of almost £15,000.   This opened in 1886, with seating for a thousand people, committee rooms, a library, and reading rooms, for the use of the sunday school movement.[4]

These facilities enabled the S.S.U. to find a new role in the education of its children.   This went beyond the limits of religious instruction: secular education was left to the day schools, but Art and Industrial Exhibitions were instituted to 'encourage useful work among the children, to promote habits of industry and skill, and provide suitable employment for them on winter evenings.'[5] An industrial competition among sunday scholars in1887 attracted

1.   S.D.T. 11 March 1873.
2.   Brunswick Wesleyan Sunday School,Catalogue of Books,Sheffield 1928
3.   National Sunday School Union, Autumn Convention,Souvenir Handbook. Sheffield, 1933, p.54.
4.   ibid., p.53.
5.   S.R.I. 12 April. 1887.

over 4,000 entries: these covered a range of artistic skills,
including painting, needlework, penmanship and music, as well as
those directly relevant to the Sheffield trades, such as forging,
handcutting, silver plating and engraving.[1]   In this, the
contemporary concern for the training of the workman was super-
imposed upon the old moral imperatives.   This was expressed by
Philip Mundella, former president of the National Sunday School
Union in 1887:

> 'And so you are not only training the child in habits of
> industry and thrift, you are making him a successful, a
> skilled, a valuable workman and an art producer'.[2]

A music competition was held in 1889, and a second Art and
Industrial Exhibition in 1896.[3]

Despite the emphasis on moral training, the sunday school
fulfilled an important social and recreational role for the
working class child.   This increased the attractiveness of the
churches and their activities in the light of the financial
constraints and the lack of organised recreation available for the
working classes, especially in the first half of the century.   The
sunday school movement pioneered on behalf of the churches the
philosophy of counter-attractive recreation, and maintained this
throughout the century in the face of increasing competition from
secular amusements.   For the sunday schools, the problem of how to
safeguard the leisure of the child evolved into the organisation
of specific events which went far beyond the sphere of moral
instruction.   These often involved as participants or spectators
many thousands of Sheffield people, and made a real impact upon the
life of the community.   The plethora of recreational and social
activities carried on by the sunday schools and involving both
children and adults, reinforced their educational and moral work.
In this process, a sense of community spirit was fostered:

> 'in the long run, it was not the acquisition of the three Rs.,
> but membership of a small and active community, inspired by
> Christian principles, which was the most valuable thing that
> (sunday schools) could offer to...working men and women'.[4]

1. S.R.I. 12 April 1887.   2. loc.cit.   (p.197
3. N.S.S.U. op.cit.pp.57-58.   4. Harrison.Learning & Living.etc

Initially, however, moral and religious motives were responsible for the advent of this recreational policy. The earliest, most impressive and most long-lived of these occasions were the Whit-Monday festivals. These were organised by the Sunday School movement to impose a religious influence upon the drinking and the abandonment which characterised the Whitsun holiday in Sheffield. This began in 1813, when the first anniversary of the S.S.U. was celebrated by a procession of 3,000 children from eight sunday schools to hear a sermon at Norfolk St.chapel.[1] Within three years, Whitmonday sunday school festivities were celebrated in the outlying villages, while in Sheffield itself, children from the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Independent schools took part.[2] The scale of such activities steadily increased. In 1829, a procession of 9,000 scholars was watched by an estimated 30 to 40,000 people.[3] From 1857, the Whitsuntide gatherings were held in Norfolk Park, lent for the occasion by the Duke of Norfolk. In the 1860's, as many as 20,000 children and 50,000 spectators were involved.[4] This must have represented almost maximum capacity, for in later years, the main gathering was supplemented by subsidiary assemblies at the east and west ends of the town.[5]

An important factor in the success of such occasions was the ritual and colour. The children assembled initially on the edge of the town, and marched through the streets in strict formation, carrying flags and staves.[6] It was usual for the children to appear in their best clothing, with white dresses and ribbons, for the girls, and this was something which even the poorest families struggled to provide. The excitement of such occasions for the children, and the obvious enjoyment and interest of many of the parents, allowed the sunday schools to reach for one day of the year, many of the families beyond the usual influence of church and chapel.

1. S.I. 8 June 1813.
2. ibid., 4 June 1816.
3. ibid., 9 June 1829
4. S.D.T. 22 July 1862.
5. ibid., 7 June 1870.
6. S.S.U., Arrangements for Whitmonday, Sheffield, 1829

Organised hymn singing became an increasingly important part of the celebration. Sometimes food was provided, which must have been an additional attraction: in 1844, the children of the Wesleyan schools were given 'a good plain bun, of satisfactory size, and a cup of hot coffee each'.[1,] The sunday schools, for their part, exploited the holiday mood in the town, and regarded such occasions as opportunities for self-advertisement. Thus it was felt that

> 'the remarkably neat and cleanly appearance of all the scholars, redounded much to the credit both of their parents and instructors'. [2.]

This format was developed further during the 1850's, with the annual Band of Hope galas, held each summer in the Botanical Gardens, and specifically intended to provide popular amusements to improve the tastes and morals of the masses.[3.]

The Whitmonday festivities and the Band of Hope Galas became enshrined as prominent local events. The sunday schools continued to provide recreation in a more informal and every day way. Adults and children alike were involved in bazaars and other fund-raising activities. The practice of holding sunday school teas and annual Christmas socials was firmly established by the middle of the century.[4.] Typical of such occasions was the tea party for 300 held at the Park Wesleyan sunday school at Christmas 1856. Catering was provided by the methodist confectioner George Basset, and characteristic-ally, music was an important part of the entertainment.[5.] Periodic treats were often arranged in the grounds of rich manufacturers' houses: there would be gifts of buns, spice cake and pennies, as well as a first hand appreciation of the material benefits and comforts of a respectable life.[6.] Mark Firth provided regular treats for sunday school children from South St. New Connexion Chapel in the grounds of his house at Ranmoor.[7.] Alcohol was

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1. S.I. 30 May 1844.   2. ibid., 30 May 1844.
3. see below, chapter 21.
4. this practice was developed in the chapel community, and also followed by the temperance societies; see below, chapters 7 and 21.
5. S.D.T. 30 December 1856.
6. S.R. 30 December 1791.
7. S.D.T. 15 August 1861; S.R.I. 4 December 1880.

another attraction of sunday school treats until the late 1830's, when cases of drunkenness among teachers, and the onslaught of temperance propaganda limited future celebrations to tea, coffee or lemonade. [1]

Other attractions were also provided. For their annual treat in 1867, Shiregreen sunday school were let loose in a field especially placed at their disposal. After tea, there were games such as sack-jumping and climbing the pole, for which prizes were awarded, followed by a performance by the Ecclesfield brass band. [2] Such simple games were a direct descendant of those played at local feasts, when climbing poles f or prizes was enjoyed with gusto. Outings became more attractive still with the advent of railway excursions. Initially, parties ventured only to local beauty spots by train, but trips quickly became more ambitious: outings to London were made possible by reduced rates, and there were also excursions to sea-side resorts, such as the jubilee excursion of the Hanover sunday school to Skegness, when a train with 'well nigh 400 beaming faces' left the Victoria Station at 8 am. prompt, for a day of sunshine, refreshment and games. [3]

After 1850, the sunday schools developed a wide range of activities, which not only reaffirmed the fundamental religious values of church and chapel, but provided specific counter-attractive recreations. Red Hill sunday school embraced temperance in 1852, and formed the first sunday school band of hope in Sheffield, [4] Most methodist sunday schools had followed suit by 1870. The activities organised by the bands of hope involved not only admonitions on the dangers of drink, but illustrated lectures, teas and outings. Their philosophy was to provide 'healthy, Christian and Intellectual recreation for the rising generation'. [5] To this end, lectures were held in sunday schools on a variety of topics, including physiology, astronomy

1. Undated cutting, Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield, XVI, pp.40-41; Spedding, 'Primitive methodism', etc., pp.12,40.
2. S.R.I. 28 August 1867.
3. ibid., 21 August 1862, 26 August 1868; Schofield and morrison, op. cit. p.113.
4. Roberts, op. cit., p.25.
5. Sheffield Sunday Schools Band of Hope Union, Report, Sheffield, 1861.

other scientific subjects, as well as biblical studies and
temperance propaganda.   These were vigorously illustrated with
diagrams and magic lantern slides.   Lectures on topics such as
'Rome and the Vatican', with dissolving views, were attended by
hundreds of people. [1] Occasions such as this provided much enjoyment
for a generation of young people deprived of visual and mental
stimuli, and contributed to the popularity of the Bands of hope
and the sunday schools. [2]

The growth of secular recreation induced the sunday schools
to make a conscious effort to involve young people bythe 1880's.
Thus the existing formula of education, moral training and recreation
was noticeably expanded.   The S.S.U. began a Boys' brigade in 1888,
for the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline,
Self-Respect and all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness'. [3]
Members were given bible classes but were also trained in life-
saving, P.T., drill, bugling and signalling.   Cricket, football,
athletics and swimming were also offered.   The provision of
opportunities for sport was a novelty, although Red Hill and
Philadelphia Wesleyian Reform school had a cricket club in the
1860's. [4]   A great attraction of the boys' brigade was the annual
camp holidays at Skegness.   The early twentieth century also saw the
comparable provision of facilities for girls, with the formation of
a sunday school union girls' life brigade in 1908, offering training
in home crafts, hobbies, first-aid, nursing and P.T. [5]

Although middle class conceptions of the role of the sunday
school had widened by the late nineteenth century, the emphasis on
discipline remained fundamental and unchanged.   An early statement
of the duties of parents and masters was made by the Rev.Edward
Goodwin in 1786:   children were to be sent to sunday school punctually
and regularly, and this should be reinforced by a good example at
home and in the workshop.   A positive code of conduct was also set

1. S.D.T.27th April 1866.   2. see below Chapter 21.
3. National Sunday School Union, op.cit.p.90
4. S.D.T. 17 October 1866 ibid. 8 November,1871.
5. National Sunday School Union. op.cit. p.89

out for the children, with the earning that they were under the
protection of Jesus Christ, and would incur his wrath if they
transgressed.   Characteristically, there wasthe complete identifica-
tion of religious and social values, and the ultimate threat of
divine retribution was applied indiscriminately to the transgressor.
Children who broke the Sabbath, failed to mind advice, cursed, swore,
lied or stole would be punished by God.   The ideal presented to
them was that they should pray morning and night, obey their parents,
answer civilly, hasten on their errands, speak respectfully, attend
school punctually, behave well, learn their catechism, keep out of
the company of bad children, and carry out the principles which they
learned in sunday school during the rest of the week.[1]

The clearest evidence of such discipline, sustained over eighty
years or more, comes from the Methodist sunday schools. Complex
rules reflect the preoccupation of the denomination with organisation
and procedure,   Regulations relating to the duties, officers,
committee and teachers of the sunday schools were drawn up.   The
rules which the children were ordered to learn and obey went far
beyond the province of the sunday school, and attempted to enforce
a disciplined social conduct throughout the other six days.   Clean-
liness and discipline were the paramount virtues.   Thus children
had to attend with clean hands and faces and combed hair, and walk
in an orderly fashion to school, 'not making a noise or playing in
the street'.   Whilst in school, children had to learn to be
'silent attentive to my learning, obedient and thankful to my
teachers, because they are striving to do me good'.   During the
rest of the week, children were to be honest and obedient to their
parents, read the scriptures, pray, and be aware of their sins.[2]
Punctuality was particularly important: at Ebenezer Wesleyan
sunday school, children were required to be present at 9.30 am and
1.30.p.m., and were admonished by the superintendent if they failed [3]

1. Goodwin, op.cit., pp.5-11.
2. Red Hill Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School. Rules,Sheffield,1825.
3. Ebenezer Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School. op.cit.
         Sheffield, 1831, p.8.

to attend without good reason.   Even at the end of the nineteenth century, the religious and moral discipline imposed upon the child remained substantially unchanged.   Children at the Allen St. New Connexion sunday school in 1899 were to be orderly, decent and respectful, and additionally, were forbidden to eat sweets.[1]

A combination of rewards and punishments were invoked to enforce such rules.   At Red Hill in 1813, a hundred bonnets and tippets were given to the best girls, a device copied by the other sunday schools.[2]   Rewards soon took the form of further opportunities for self-improvement, however;   meritorious boys and girls were given tickets of admission to night school, forfeitable on bad behaviour.[3]   In 1825, the best elder scholars at Red Hill were allowed to use the library, and the younger ones given a book.[4] The establishment of libraries in many of the sunday schools also allowed stringent regulations to be enforced.   At Brunswick, fines were imposed if a book were damaged, relent, or removed without authority.[5]   Sunday schools balked at severe punishments, however. Authority, it was suggested, should be exercised with mildness and discretion.[6]   Corporal punishment was forbidden by the Methodists at Red Hill, and expulsion was the ultimate sanction for the 'incorrigible', or for those 'in the habit of lying, swearing, keeping bad company (and) sabbath breaking' at Allen St.[7]

Extensive rules also existed relating to the discipline of the teachers, who were often scarcely more than children themselves, had usually learned all that they knew at sunday school, and were not necessarily church members.   Indeed, teachers were often subjected to the same rules as the children.   At Red Hill in 1812, it was

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1.   Allen St. Methodist New Connexion Sunday School, Rules, Sheffield. 1899.
2.   H.G. Roberts, Old Times and New at Red Hill and Carver St. Sheffield, 1911, p.18; Graham, op. cit., p.58.
3.   Rules of the Methodist Sunday School, Sheffield, 1815.
4.   Red Hill, op. cit.
5.   Brunswick, Catalogue, etc.
6.   Rules. etc.
7.   Red Hill, op. cit.; Allen St., op. cit.

resolved that 'all the late scholars be put into a class by themselves, and that the late teachers be put with them'.[1] Teachers could be reprimanded or expelled for immorality, absence for more than three Sundays without due cause or the provision of a substitute, and for breaking the rules. Both teachers and superintendents were fined for lateness, the latter paying double.[2]

From the early days, the sunday schools supplemented the fundamental religious instruction with other subsidiary activities. These represented an extension and a reaffirmation of the values of the sunday schools, and were closely integrated with the work of church and chapel. Sunday school sick clubs were started. Thus a weekly contribution of a penny would stimulate the duty of Christian charity, encourage providence in parents and masters, and for the children,

> 'establish a lasting attachment to the School itself, and an inducement to his or her continuance, during their growth to riper years in religious knowledge.' [3]

At Red Hill, a Wesleyan juvenile sick society was established along these lines. An entry fee of 2d. was levied, with weekly contributions of 1d. for a full member. Children who fell ill were eligible for 3/- a week for twelve weeks, and half of this thereafter. Payments were made to the families of children who died, using a sliding scale in relation to length of membership. Sick societies allowed the chapel an increasing degree of control over the private lives of the individual member, in return for minimal financial compensation in times of sickness. Committee members visited the needy, and no benefit was paid if evidence of improper conduct was discovered. Anyone expelled from sunday school for non-attendance or immorality also lost their benefit.[4] In 1856, several hundred children were contributing £107 a year to sick

1. Roberts, op.cit., p.46.
2. Red Hill, op.cit.
3. Sunday School Sick Clubs, Sheffield, n.n. S.C.L. MP 24 L.
4. Rules of the Red Hill Wesleyan Juvenile Sick Society, Sheffield 1846.

soceities connected with the S.S.U.[1] Mission societies and bible
societies were also established at several of the sunday schools.[2]
These became widespread, and at some schools such as Red Hill and
South St., the mission societies and the bands of hope held joint
social activities, and probably had much the same membership.[3]

Despite the energies which went into the sunday school move-
ment in the nineteenth century, there is reason to think that they
were less than effective as a civilising and evangelising force.
In their public statements, the sunday schools were frequently
self-congratulatory about their impact upon the working classes.
Complacency about the effects of sunday schools upon popular
behaviour particularly characterised the first decades of the
movement, when the successful evangelising of working class culture
seemed only a matter of time. The habitual rioting and drunken-
ness which characterised former Whitmondays was felt to have given
way to the orderly processions and assemblies of the sunday school
festivals.[4] The benefits which individual children had gained
from the sunday schools were catalogued in the early reports, which
listed 'anecdotes of usefulness' as well as the obituaries of
scholars who had died in righteousness.[5] The general improvement
in the appearance, conduct and language of many sunday school
children was noted with approval.[6]

Nevertheless, by the 1840's, serious doubts about the effect-
iveness of the Sheffield sunday schools were being voiced, not only
by secular observers, but within the movement itself. Many of the
criticisms took the remainder of the century to put right. The
deficiencies of the sunday schools, as part of the general
educational provision for the working classes, were laid bare by

1. S.D.T. 1 May 1856.
2. S.S.U. Annual Report,1813, ibid., 1814.
3. S.D.T. 29 September 1863; ibid., 3 January 1872.
4. A Retrospect of the Origin, Proceedings, and Effects of the
    Sheffield Sunday School Union, Sheffield, 1824, p.5.
5. S.S.U. Annual Report, 1823.
6. ibid., 1820, p.15; W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report,1845.

Jelinger Symonds in 1843. In general, the evidence presented to him shows the failure of the sunday schools to live up to expectations, both in religious and educational terms. The Wesleyan minister, the Rev. J. Henley, remarked with perception, 'the fact is, too much has been expected from these institutions and too much dependence has been placed upon them.[1] The inadequacies of the sunday schools were part of the wider deficiencies of elementary provision in the town: local factors, such as the young age at which children entered the Sheffield trades, the length of their labours, the influence of older men and youths in the workshops, as well as parental indifference, counteracted the influence of the sunday school.[2] For children who were financially independent and hardened to work at twelve years of age, sunday school was an irrelevance.

The social milieu in which working class children grew up thus limited the appeal of the sunday school. The quality of education offered to those children who did attend in the 1840's, dramatically reduced the effectiveness of these institutions. This was recognised by many who worked within the movement. William Sissions, secretary to the S.S.U., and with over twenty years experience of sunday school teaching, lamented the failure of the churches to provide suitable teachers. Thus had been brought

'many pious and humble individuals into the labour, who though deeply impressed with the necessity of imparting knowledge to the rising generation, have nevertheless few or no advantages for acquiring the same, owing to their daily occupations for the maintenance of their families'.[3]

Meanwhile, those better qualified to teach stood aloof from such self-denying engagements. Other sunday school workers regretted the haste with which teachers were recruited as local preachers, and into the ministry, thus teaching before they had been well taught themselves.[4] And of course, as has been observed, some

1. Symonds, op.cit., p.17.
2. ibid., pp.5,7,21.
3. ibid., p.19.
4. A Working Man, op.cit., p.8.

of the teachers were barely more than children themselves.[1]

Shortage of teachers was another problem, for many teachers taught only intermittently, or on a rota basis.[2] The deficiencies among the teachers hit some schools hard. At Broomhill in 1845, there were many children in regular attendance, evidently much attached to the school,

> 'but on many occasions have some of those poor children
> sat for hours on their forms, foresaken of their teachers
> and have submitted to be taught by a boy or a girl
> (self-appointed) from a neighbouring class'. [3]

The problem of teachers took a long time to resolve. In 1861, William Sissons suggested an institute for the education of teachers and young people, but the S.S.U. possessed no facilities for this until the opening of Montgomery Hall in 1885.[4] Individual chapels sometimes attempted a limited course of instruction, such as the class in bible study begun at the Wicker Congregational sunday school in 1863.[5] H owever, these were essentially make-shift solutions, and a far cry from the necessary professional training.

For a variety of reasons, therefore, the Sheffield sunday schools were ill-fitted for the fulfillment of their self-appointed task. In educational terms, there were serious deficiencies in the teaching in the majority of schools in the first half of the century. In schools in which writing was taught, religious instruction was especially deficient. The sunday scholars at Red Hill were unable even to answer the simplest questions on the bible.[6] Spelling and geography were almost universally defective. In some schools, the teachers were scarcely literate: at Allen St., the children were discovered transcribing 'honner your father and mother'.[7] A general fault was the failure of the teacher to

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1. See above, p.194. 2. A Working Man, op.cit., p.9.
3. W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report, Sheffield 1845.
4. S.D.T. 30 July 1861.
5. ibid., 18 February 1863.
6. Symonds, op.cit., pp.12-13.
7. ibid., p.13.

ensure that the children really understood what they were reading.
At Howard St. Independent sunday school, a class was found to be
reading Chambers' _Introduction to the Sciences_, and

> 'girls who could not read without spelling everylong
> word were wading through an account of oxygen and hydrogen,
> and accounts of chemical phenomena, of which I do not
> believe they had the most distant comprehension'.

Again, in the church schools, with their heavy emphasis on the
scriptures and doctrines, there was too much reliance on learning
and answering by rote.[1]

Not all sunday schools were inferior.   Symonds praised
Brunswick Wesleyan, for the quality of its teaching, and the
obvious comprehension and intelligence of its children.[2]   This
was clearly an exception, however, and the Wesleyans freely admitted
the deficiencies of many of their other schools.[3]   The
consequences of inadequate teaching were clearly shown by Symonds.
According to his calculations, there were at least 12,000 working
class children in the town.   The numbers registered in the 100
sunday schools were an impressive 12,904, but of these, a quarter
were regularly absent.[4]   The Wesleyans made similar observations
about their own schools in 1845:   there was a general absenteeism
of 1:6.5,   At Ebenezer, absenteeism was as low as 1:10, but in
some of the central schools, the figures were very much worse.
Norfolk St.Wesleyan sunday school had one in four of the boys and
one in three of the girls absent.[5]   Attendance was no guarantee
of a successful education, for of the children actually present,
Symonds found that only 44% could read fairly.[6]

Clearly, through absenteeism and poor teaching, the sunday
schools were by and large failing in their educational role.
Children who passed through them were fortunate if they gained more
than a halting and uncomprehending acquaintance with the bible.

1.   ibid., p.14.   2.   loc.cit.
3.   W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report.1845.
4.   Symonds, op.cit.p.9;   G.C.Holland, The Vital Statistics of
        London.1843,pp220-222.   Sheffield.
5.   W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report. 1845.
6.   Symonds, op.cit. p.9.

The achievement of the schools in terms of moral and social training was also limited.   This is not to deny that the children could be induced to behave well on special occasions: the children on a Gleadless sunday school treat in 1841 won praise from the Misses Parker of Woodthorpe for their orderly behaviour and clean appearance.[1]

The Whitsun festivals were obviously an opportunity for a special effort: in 1844, it was a matter of pride that

> 'everybody was rigged in best apparel from top to toe; and if a stranger had come to Sheffield to see the "Working classes", he might have looked in vain'.   [2]

In reality, however, the unruliness of the children often led to a disruption of sunday school discipline, and fightings and even stabbings erupted in the schoolroom.[3]   The achievement of the sunday schools in this respect was thus substantially negative. The best that Symonds could say for them was that they did little to impart knowledge, but much to prevent vice, if only by keeping eight thousand Sheffield children off the streets on a sunday.[4]

It seems likely that for most of the nineteenth century, the Sheffield sunday schools were no more successful in bringing working class children into the churches.   Despite the commitment of the Wesleyans to proselytizing, in 1842, only 190 of their 4963 scholars belonged to the society.   806 of the 1040 teachers were chapel members, but a shortage of teachers meant that all the sunday schools had to supplement the 'serious' or religious with others from outside.[5]   In 1879, the Wesleyans publicly regretted that so few children were members of the denomination.   However, an enquiry by the S.S.U. in 1893 showed a significant change.   This revealed that nine-tenths of the total church membership in 106 churches had been sunday school scholars;   in 39 of the churches the figure was 100%[6]   Clearly, this reflects a changing role for

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1. S.I. 15 June 1841.   2. S.I. 30 May 1844.
3. ibid., 31 March 1840.   4. Symonds, op.cit.,p.12.
5. W.M.S.S.U. Annual Report.1842, also see S.S.U. Annual Report 1816.
6. National Sunday School Union. op.cit. p.57.

the sunday schools. With the era of state education after 1870, increasing numbers of working class children were channelled into full-time day school education. The sunday schools were increasingly used by the children of the existing church and chapel members, who by any standards had achieved a modicum of respectability. The schools' success in providing the churches with a new generation of members was achieved at the expense of an effective withdrawal from their self-appointed task of evangelising the children from the courts and the alleys of Sheffield.

Chapter 10.   Reglision and Society - Adult Education

Alongside the preoccupation with the education and training of the child,
expressed by the churches through the sunday school movement, there developed
a growing concern for the social training of youths and young adults.
Despite the energies which were channelled into the sunday schools, many
children were lost to the churches in adolesence.   The prevalence of the
workshop system in Sheffield placed young men and women in considerable moral
danger: Jelinger Symonds pointed out in 1843 the pronounced immorality
among the thirteen to twenty year old age group.[1]

An awareness of the educational needs of the young workers was a major
stimulus to the establishment of secular adult education institutions, such
as the Mechanics' Library, the Mechanics' Institute, the People's College
and the Hall of Science: these will be discussed in another chapter.[2]
The churches also made a contribution to the moral education of young
artisans.   The awareness of the inadequacies of the sunday schools led the
churches into a new area of religious and educational activity.   As in the
case of the sunday schools, much of the work which the churches undertook
with young adults was aimed primarily at the provision of a basic literacy.
The earliest attempt at this was made by the Sunday School Union.   A school
at Roscoe Place was in operation by 1812, and both apprentices and men of
mature age were taught together.   By 1814, a total of 217 adults were being
taught by the Independents at Queen St., Sycamore St., Howard St., and
Garden St. chapels, and by the Wesleyans at Red Hill, and at Handsworth
Woodhouse.[3]   Motives were fundamentally evangelical and philanthropic: a
school on an island in the Don attracted

> 'some of the most pitiable objects of the human race.
> One of these is a man of colour, may are aged and infirm.' [4]

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1.   Symonds, op.cit., p.6.
2.   See below, Chapter 16.
3.   S.S.U. Annual Report, 1814, for adult teaching in sunday schools, see
       Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp.195-196.
4.   S.S.U., Annual Report, 1817.

Some adult schools were very large.   Red Hill had 117 adult scholars in
1816.[1]   However, the numbers fell away rapidly, and attempts to educate
adults in the sunday schools were apparently discontinued by the mid 1820's.

The denominations reentered the field of 'fundamental' adult education
in the 1840's.   The Unitarians and the Quakers were especially active in
the elementary instruction of the young adult.   The Unitarians opened a
school in Hollis Hospital in 1840, which was attended in its first year by
130 people between the ages of 14 and 40 years.   The subjects taught were
limited to tables, writing, reading and spelling,   Numbers declined,
however, and the school went out of existence shortly after 1854.[2]

The only denomination to achieve a consistent success with elementary
adult education were the Quakers, following the example of Joseph Sturge in
Birmingham.   In 1852, a young men's class was added to the Society's first
day school, which had begun in 1845.[3]   Manufacturer J. H. Barber was a
founder member and a life-long supporter of the Quaker adult school, arguing
that adult education would lead to

> 'Personal respectability.   Domestic happiness.   Avoidance
> of drinking and vice.   Providence and saving.
> Independence in character and position.' [4]

Adult teaching was initially restricted to a sunday morning, but a sunday
afternoon school was opened in 1875.   Although elementary education was
increasingly becoming the responsibility of the School Board, the numbers
attending the classes expanded dramatically, and were 'only limited by our
accommodation and teaching power'.[5]   By 1878, 853 adults, including 187
women, were atending adult classes.[6]   The overcrowded school at Hartshead
overflowed into the Central Board School, and branches were formed at Heeley,
at the Attercliffe Board School, and at the Ellesmere Road Temperance Hall.[7]

1.   ibid., 1816.   Roberts, op.cit., p.20.
2.   G.P. Jones, A Report on the Development of Adult Education in Sheffield,
        Sheffield, 1832, pp. 27-28.
3.   H.M. Doncaster, James Henry Barber - A Family Memorial, Sheffield, 1905
        pp.300-303;   for Quaker Adult Schools, see Harrison, Learning and
        Living, etc., pp.197-202.
4.   Doncaster, op.cit., p.311
5.   Friends' First Day School, Report, Sheffield 1875-76.
6.   ibid., 1878.
7.   Sheffield Friends' Afternoon Adult School - An Account of its First
        Ten Years, Sheffield, 1885, p.5.

The educational scope of the Quaker school was limited, and attempts to extend instruction to week day evenings met with only limited success.[1] The school nevertheless filled an important gap between day school and the meeting house, and was held together until the 1920's and beyond by the evangelical philosophy of the Quakers, and the provision of associated societies and recreational activities. The policy of the Quakers was aggressive, and many unwilling members were bribed with free dinners and ham teas.[2] The adult school was sustained by an active savings bank, and a sick and funeral society, in the interests of thrift. A Band of Hope held fortnightly temperance concerts, and induced many to sign the pledge. In addition, there were regular nature excursions in the summer months to gather flowers for the local hospitals. There was also a billiard room, and clubs for rambling, cricket, fishing and football, a book club, a photography club and a debating society.[3]

The Quakers managed to sustain the success of their adult school through sporting and recreational activities, which survived long after the need to provide elementary education had declined. The other denominations preferred to provide a combination of religious instruction and further education for adults and young people who had already achieved a basic literacy. Provision was made initially through bible classes for adults, which offered purely religious instruction, and through mutual improvement societies, which were predominantly secular in scope. Bible classes were established by the Methodists in the 1850's at many of their sunday schools, as part of the general expansion of activities in this decade.[4] Young Men's Mutual Improvement Societies began to appear at the same time. One of the earliest was at Scotland St. Methodist New Connexion Chapel. Regular and largely didactic lectures were held on a variety of subjects, such as 'The crusades of the Middle Ages and modern missions contrasted', in November 1858, or

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1. _ibid._, p.4
2. _loc. cit._
3. S.D.T., 24th April, 1920.
4. _ibid_ 8 February 1856; _ibid._, 16 January 1858.

'The mind, its characteristics and capabilities' in January 1860.[1] Some of the larger Wesleyan chapels followed suit. Bridgehouses Chapel formed a Mutual Improvement Society in 1861.[2] There were similar societies at Carver St. and at Brunswick by the early 1870's.[3] The Wesleyans at Park Chapel began a social and literary society in 1887, with fortnightly meetings on literary and scientific subjects, and set up a mutual improvement class for young working class men in 1897.[4]

Although individual churches and chapels could often accommodate classes for adults in their growing range of facilities, some went much further. Institutes specifically for the religious and educational instruction of young adults, which combined the provision of a basic literacy with opportunities for advanced study, began to appear in the middle of the century.[5] The first of these in Sheffield was begun, perhaps untypically, by the Anglicans, who set up the Church of England Instruction Society in 1839; this was reputed to be among the first of its kind in the country.[6] Thus became the largest church institute in Sheffield. By 1843, there were 220 members.[7] In 1856, under the influence of the Rev. James Moorhouse, the Instruction Society was converted into the more ambitious Educational Institute. Support was essentially voluntary, with donations from honorary members and subscriptions, which gave the right to nominate suitable sunday school scholars, youths and apprentices as students at the Institute, free of charge.[8] It was also successful at attracting public funds for building purposes: new premises were opened in 1860, and registrations rose to 512 in 1862.[9] By the 1890's,

1. _ibid_., 13 November 1858; _ibid_., 20 January 1860.
2. George C. Dungworth, _Centenary Record of Bridgehouses Wesleyan Methodism, 1808-1908_, Sheffield, 1911, p.44.
3. _S.D.T._ 12 July 1871; _ibid._, 5 December 1870.
4. J. J. Graham, _History of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield Park._
5. For the Churches and Adult Education, see Harrison, _Learning and Living_, etc., pp. 185-194.
6. Pawson and Brailsford, _Illustrated Guide to Sheffield and its Neighbourhood_, Sheffield, 1862, reprinted 1971, p.83.
7. Holland, _op.cit._, pp. 230-231.
8. Church of England Instruction Society, _Plan and Rules, and Catalogue of the Books in the Library_, Sheffield 1841, p.7.
9. Pawson and Brailsford, _op.cit._, p.84.

grants from the city and from the West Riding under the Technical Instruction

Act made possible a wide and ambitious curriculum. Numbers increased steadily

to 1,203 in 1894 and 1,654 in 1897.[1]

A second institute was begun by the independent Methodists at Surrey

St., in 1844: the Surrey St. Christian and Educational Institute was opened

to the public in 1863.[2] This was a more modest venture, relying for its

finances upon collections from Surrey St. chapel, payments from it members,

and the proceeds of social events, although it qualified for some government

aid in the 1880's.[3] Once open to the public, registrations for week day

evening classes expanded, rising to 360 in 1866. A peak of 522 was reached

in 1877, and thereafter numbers declined, falling to 90 in 1886; after this,

the Institute ceased its evening class work.[5]

Smaller institues were attempted by other Methodist chapels; the

Wesleyans at Park ran an institue between 1867 and 1870.[6] The Free

Methodists at Hanover began one in 1869, which was disbanded in 1876.[7]

Ironically, both the Surrey St. and Hanover St. institues were replaced after

their demise with a return to mutual improvement societies, a more modest

and informal attempt to deal with the educational needs of the young worker.

Finally, the interdenominational Young Men's Christian Association, was

started in Sheffield in 1855 by two congregational ministers. This also

aimed at the moral and religious improvement of its members, but from the

mid 1870's, competed for the leisure of the young adult by offering a wide

range of recreational facilities. The Y.M.C.A. had 900 members by 1891.[8]

The people for whom these institutions were established were young,

working class, and predominantly male. The Surrey St. Institute excluded

1. Church of England Educational Institute, Annual Report, Sheffield, 1897
      Endowed Charities, op.cit., pp. 258-259.
2. John A. Woodcock, Surrey St. United Methodist Church - One Hundred Years
      1831-1931, Sheffield, 1931, pp. 10-12.
3. Annual Report, 1860, in Surrey St. Christian and Educational Institute,
      (hereafter S.S.I.), Quarterly and Annual Reports, 1860-1868, S.C.L.,
      N.R. 76.
4. Annual Report, 1866, ibid.
5. S.R.I. 1 January 1878; Annual Report, 1886, S.S.I. Quarterly and Annual
      Reports, 1883-1892, S.C.L., N.R.78.
6. Graham, op.cit., p.141.
7. Schofield and Morrison, op.cit., pp.95-102.
8. D. Thompson, Sheffield Young Men's Christian Association - A Short
      Centennial History, 1855-1955, unpublished MS, 1955, p.12.

women until it was thrown open to the public of both sexes in 1863. The number of women who came forward was declared a 'gratifying success'.[1] At the Church of England Institute, both sexes were admitted and taught together.[2] The Y.M.C.A., however, remained an exclusively male preserve. In general, it is clear that women who attended church institutes were in a minority.

The students who joined the institutes were consistently regarded as being working class, employed either in the Sheffield trades, or as white collar workers. This is firmly established by the admissions registers at Surrey St. Of the 256 who enrolled for the spring session in 1872, the largest single group were 21 of both sexes who worked as clerks in local warehouses, and for whom competence in reading and writing would have been essential. A further 12 were general clerks. The next largest category described themselves as 'engineer', 'cabinet maker' and 'butler', and produced 6 each. The remainder came variously from the whole range of Sheffield trades, and included file cutters, edge tool forgers, grinders, steel melters, a moulder and a furnace boy from the steel industry. There were also representatives of the expanding retail trades and services, such as shopgirls, milliners and a dressmaker.[3] This distribution was probably fairly typical. In 1891, the 170 young men catered for by the Y.M.C.A. were said to have been chiefly employed in warehouses.[4] It is likely that an increasing number of students would have come from offices in the city, in search of training in shorthand.

The average age of students probably declined. Many self-improving working men would have been attracted to classes in the 1850's and 1860's. At Surrey St. in 1872, however, the age range was between 15 and 39 years only. The great majority came within the 15 - 22 years age group, and 16 years was the most common age. The number over 30 years was negligible.[5]

1. Annual Report 1864 in S.S.I. Quarterly and Annual Reports 1860-1868 N.R.76.
2. S.D.T. 12 October, 1858; Pawson and Brailsford op.cit., p.85.
3. S.S.I., Registers, N.R.73.
4. Sheffield Young Men's Magazine. I, 1891, p.7.
5. S.S.I., Registers, N.R.73.

The youthfulness of the membership shows that there was a need for institutes to supplement existing facilities for elementary and ultimately vocational training. The Y.M.C.A. catered from the outset for the young: the average age in 1891 was held to be 22 years.[1]

The churches of Sheffield had a long awareness of the problems of the young adult, although nothing effective was done by the middle of the century. Attitudes to the training of youth were determined by contemporary preoccupations and fears. The S.C.U. echoed its concern for working class children in its attitude to the 13 to 21 year old age group, arguing that it was in this period that a man's social rank, manner of living, occupational and habitual character were generally established.[2] An awareness of contemporary dangers led to more precise statements as to the need to train the young adult. This was true of the late 1830's, a period seen by Dr. Favell as one of 'political convulsion, infidel emboldement and Papish advancement'.[3] Thus, as the Mechanics Institute had arisen from the political confusions of 1832, the Church of England Instruction Society followed hard upon the heels of the Chartist attack of 1839. Many working class youths had involved themselves in the upsurge of Chartism. In that year, the churches' antipathy to popular culture was recast in terms of sermons against Chartism, infidelity and Owenism.[4] Old evangelicals such as Thomas Best of St. James's spoke again of the natural sin and corruption of man.[5]

The fear of working class violence was accompanied by a feeling on the part of the Anglicans that the other denominations were increasing their hold upon the community. An awareness of the deficiencies of the sunday schools was also expressed: thus young sunday school scholars made up for the lack of secular instruction by attending nonconformist day schools, and were destined to become either dissenters, or 'irreligious characters'. An alleged increase in popish chapels, and the political progress of the Roman

1. Sheffield Young Men's Magazine, I, 1891, p.7.
2. S.S.U., Annual Report, 1817.
3. S.M. 26 October, 1839.
4. Loc.cit.
5. Rev. Thomas Best., An Introductory Lecture Delivered to the Members and Friends of the Church of England Instruction Society, Sheffield, 1840.

Catholics was also a cause for alarm. Such attitudes were a product of Anglican psychology at the time. An opinion which some Wesleyans may have shared was a fundamental criticism of the Mechanics' Institute and Mechanics' Library. Under the influence of radical working men, the Library had allowed the recent introduction of works which, it was argued, would tend to 'deprave the minds, injure the morals, and weaken, if not subvert the religious faith of the great majority of readers'.[1] The Mechanics' Institute was also criticised, for seeking to educate the working class youth of the town in a tone which was fundamentally secular.[2]

To counteract this trend, the Church of England felt the increasing necessity of adopting a more positive educational role in the community. As with the sunday school movement, there were strict reservations about the sort of education which was suitable for the working classes. The Rev. Henry Farish argued that the usefulness of knowledge depended entirely on how it was used: it was foolish, vain and wicked to pursue knowledge without an adequate object, and the only knowledge which was good was that which would expand and elevate the mind.[3] It was felt more clearly than at any time before that religion should be the true foundation of all education. Thomas Best argued in 1850 that all educational schemes which separated secular and sacred instruction were utterly unfitted for fallen man. Secular education admittedly developed the capacities, but left the individual in a state of guilt and depravity. Schemes for secular and scientific education were, in the words of Thomas Best, 'sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind'.[4]

Attitudes towards the training of youth expressed by the Methodists at Surrey St. in the 1860's had much in common with the views of the Evangelical Anglicans some twenty years earlier. Their tone was modified, however, by the receding threat of working class violence. The rules of the Institute

1. S.M. 26 October, 1839.
2. Ibid.
3. Best, op.cit.
4. Rev. Thomas Best, Where is Wisdom - A Sermon preached at St. James in aid of the funds of the Church of England Instruction Society, Sheffield, 1850.

echoed the basic need for knowledge which had been affirmed by the S.S.U.

half a century earlier:

> 'As the scriptures declare that for the soul to be
> without knowledge is not good: this institution is
> formed to promote the religious and intellectual
> culture of young men of fiteen years of age and
> upwards'.1.

Education, however modest, was held to be beneficial, for the acquisition

of elementary education by itself 'cannot fail to raise a man in the scale

of social and reflective being.'2.   The necessity of knowledge was upheld

by the Methodist institute at Hanover, who began their work in 1870, as part

of the 'intense interest in all things educational' which followed the

Education Act of that year.3.

Nevertheless, the essential function of the Methodist institutes was

religious.   It was hoped that young people would not only be given a sound

moral training, but be assimilated into the chapel community.   At Surrey St.,

it was stressed that the fundamental purpose of the institute was to promote

> 'the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the
> increase of Christian labourers and thereby the
> more extended usefulness of the society in
> connexion with Surrey St.' 4.

At both Surrey St. and Hanover, bible classes were central to the functioning

of the institutes, in the hope of creating church members.

Condemnations of popular culture had scarcely relaxed, however.   The

Surrey St. committee attacked the working class recreations such as the

theatre, casino, ale-bench and race course, urging that to 'remove this dark

blot on our character a great change must take place in the habits of the

masses'.5.   Their attitude to the artisan was also constructive, however.

The need to give working men, through education, 'that independence which

their own knowledge gives them' was stressed in 1862.6.   This positive

attitude was partly explained by the forthcoming enfranchisement of the

1. S.S.I., Minutes and Reports, 1872-1882, (N.R. 77) 16 March 1872.
2. Annual Report 1866, in S.S.I., N.R.76.
3. Schofield and Morrison, op.cit., p.95.
4. Annual Report 1860 in S.S.I., N.R.76.
5. Schofield and Morrison, op.cit., p.95.
6. S.D.T. 20 August 1862.

working classes, and in 1867, the institute urged that every thoughtful working man should feel the responsibility of self-improvement, now that parliament had entrusted him with a direct influence in the government of the country.[1] The need to educate the artisan in order to maintain prominence in the worlds' markets was also expressed.[2]

A more positive attitude was also developed by the Y.M.C.A. especially when a new period of growth began in the mid 1870's. The initial purpose of the Association was described as being to furnish young men with the weapons to fight the objections to religion frequently advanced by 'infidels' and to protect young men away from home for the first time from the threats of popular culture.[3] The proliferation of secular recreations were an especial danger, for in the words of Henry Vincent in 1859, they encouraged 'empty headed inanity, and poverty of mind and soul'.[4] The Y.M.C.A. found much in society to attack. In a sermon in 1891, the Rev. W. Pym established that the sympathies of the churches were with the weak and the poor, but attacked what he called 'communistic socialism' for its 'increasing condemnation and abuse of the rich', and argued that such a philosophy would loosen without scruple all the bands which held society together.[5] Secular recreation remained the principle focus of condemnation, however. Young men were warned against the contamination of the city, and its unhealthy social atmosphere. Self-denial was urged in indulgence such as excessive show in dress, alcohol and tobacco.[6] Nevertheless, the Y.M.C.A. was forced to adopt more tolerant attitudes to secular recreation in the 1870's. It was said that the type of member which had been associated with the Association in the 1850's was fast disappearing, and the programme had to be adjusted to meet the demands of members with changed standards of conduct and belief.[7]

1. S.R.I. 24 August 1867.
2. Annual Report, 1867 in S.S.I., N.R.76.
3. S.D.T. 5 December 1855.
4. S.R.I. 23 July 1859.
5. Sheffield Young Men's Magazine, Sheffield, 1891, I, pp.64-68.
6. Ibid., pp.21-23.
7. Thompson, op.cit., p.8.

Although institutions such as the Y.M.C.A. represented an increasing concession to secular trends, the religious function remained fundamental to the training of young people and adults. The institutes at Surrey St. and at Hanover emerged in the first instance out of the young men's and women's bible classes held at the chapels.[1] The bible classes were held to be of central importance. This was stressed by the committee at Surrey St. in 1865:

> 'The institute has an inner and an outer circle.
> Without this inner sphere your committee would
> consider their curriculum incomplete'. [2]

In 1860 there were four bible classes, and by 1866, this had expanded to six. These catered for men and women over 18 years, young men between 15 and 18 years, young women from 14 to 18 years, and an elementary group which was learning to read.[3] This pattern was continued well into the 1880's. Similarly, at Hanover, five classes accommodated men and women from fifteen to twenty years and over, strictly divided according to age and sex.[4] It was usual for bible classes to meet on Sunday mornings and afternoons, which was a determined attempt to ensure that young people should spend the greatest possible amount of their sole day of leisure under the protection of the chapel. At Surrey St., the bible classes were a direct means of religious recruitment, and members of the secular evening classes were encouraged to join them. In any case, there was a direct link between the institute and the chapel: many of the institute's officers and teachers were not only chapel members, but were of sufficient importance to be represented at the circuit quarterly meetings. Such a group were in a position to exert a potential proselytizing influence upon other members of the institute. The need for sunday bible classes was also recognised by the Y.M.C.A., and were a regular feature of the association's work, in order

> 'to get hold of those young men who, reaching a certain
> age, consider themselves too important to go to sunday
> school, and generally drift into loafing about the streets
> on sunday afternoon'. [5]

1. Annual Report 1860, in S.S.I. N.R.76.
2. Annual Report 1865, ibid.
3. S.S.I. minutes of bible class committee meeting, 18 October 1873, N.R.77
4. Hanover Christian and Educational Institute, Arrangements for Winter and Spring Session, Sheffield 1873.
5. Sheffield Young Men's Magazine, I, 1891, p.21.

Thus an active religious policy was pursued, with weekly open air services, visits to lodging houses, prayer meetings and bible classes, announced on the streets with a portable harmonium.[1]

The sunday bible classes were, however, an exclusively nonconformist preoccupation. The Church of England Instruction Society preferred to function more directly upon the principles of the Mechanics' Institute, except that religious instruction took its place alongside the other subjects which were taught on week day evenings. The only difference was that religious classes commenced and concluded with singing and prayer.[2] Jelinger Symonds noted in 1843 that there were classes in the doctrines and duties of religion, and in sacred vocal music.[3] In 1862, natural theology and comparitive religion were included.[4] Classes in religious instruction were supplemented by monthly public lectures, mostly by the clergy, which dealt with subjects such as sacred biography, biblical knowledge and ecclesiastical policy: again, singing and prayer preceded each lecture.[5] This emphasis was a direct reflection of the influence of the Anglican clergy upon the institute. A proportion of the teachers were always drawn from the ministry, and had a good reputation for literary and scientific attainment.[6]

It is likely, however, that despite the religious emphasis, the institutes made an impact through the facilities for secular education which they offered. Costs were deliberately kept low. The Church of England Institute in 1841 charged an entrance fee of 5/-, and an annual fee of 8/-, reduced to 6/- for apprentices, and 4/- for sunday and national school scholars.[7] The Methodist institutes were cheaper. At Hanover, chapel members were charged 1/-, and non-members 2/- a session.[8] The Park

1. Thompson, op.cit., p.17.
2. Church of England Instruction Society, Plan, etc., p.9.
3. Symonds, op.cit., p.14.
4. Pawson and Brailsford, op.cit., p.85.
5. Holland, op.cit., p.230.
6. ibid., p.231; Pawson and Brailsford, op.cit., p.85.
7. Church of England Instruction Society, Plan, etc., pp.7-8
8. Hanover Christian and Educational Institute, op.cit.

institute charged 1/6 a session in 1869, with a shilling extra for the chemistry class.[1] At Surrey St., a flat rate of 2/- a session, or 4/- a year was charged in 1864, although occasionally, the cost of hiring specialist teachers was passed on to the members in extra fees.[2]

Perhaps the most important of all the week day evening classes were those which offered elementary reading and writing. The limitations of Sheffield's sunday schools and day schools before 1870 meant that many young people were at best barely literate, at a time when the ability to read and write was becoming essential, not just for self-improvement, but as part of the daily realities of living. This was discovered by the Methodists at Surrey St., when many of the young men who came to the first bible classes were illiterate, and had to be given an elementary education.[3] This type of instruction was also undertaken by the Church of England, who offered rudimentary classes in reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar.[4] The need for classes of this type remained undiminished. Even by the 1860's, it was discovered that many young people leaving day schools and coming to Surrey St. were unable to sign their names.[5] Thus the frustrations experienced by the sunday school movement, the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College were duplicated in the churches' attempts at adult education.[6] The enrolments at Surrey St. are clear evidence of the demand for classes of this nature. In 1865, out of a total registration of 341, 70 enrolled for reading and 45 for writing. Grammar attracted 36, whilst the enrolments for advanced classes were generally below 20.[7] The need for elementary classes was still felt in the 1880's, and enrolments remained buoyant.[8]

The task of elementary education was aided by the provision of library facilities. A library not only encouraged reading, but ensured that what

1. Graham, op.cit., p.141.
2. Annual Report 1863 in S.S.I., N.R.76; Annual Report 1866 ibid.
3. Annual Report 1860, ibid.
4. Holland, op.cit., pp.230-231; Symonds, op.cit., p.14.
5. Annual Report 1864 in S.S.I., N.R.76.
6. See below, Chapter 16.
7. Annual Report 1865 in S.S.I., N.R.76.
8. Annual Reports 1883-1892, in S.S.I., Quarterly and Annual Reports N.R.78.

was read was suitable. The Church of England Instruction Society established its library by 1841. Any book had to be passed by a two-thirds majority on the committee before being accepted; books 'containing principles immoral, or in any respect opposed to the doctrines and principles of the Word of God, or to the discipline of the Established Church' were excluded.[1] Novels, romances and plays were also kept out. The Methodists at Surrey St. were also anxious to provide a library. This was seen as a matter of urgency in the 1860's, when the repeal of the paper duty had unleashed a flood of cheap reading material, condemned by the Institute as

> 'tales of romance continued through successive numbers
> of the wildest most exciting or most tawdry nature'.

not only time wasting, but demoralising and mentally inebriating.[2] By 1872 the library was in full working order, although apparently, not much used.[3] In 1877, the stock had expanded to 527 books, used by 106 readers from the bible and week day evening classes. The books available were fundamentally didactic. New acquisitions in 1869 included Foxe's Book of Martyrs, and Samuel Smiles's Self Help. The institute declined to buy 43 volumes of Entertaining Knowledge, as this was felt to be out of character with the wants of the members.[4] The limited range of the library may account for its low level of usage. Even in the 1870's, the Surrey St. library was smaller than that possessed by the Wesleyan sunday school at Norfolk St. thirty years earlier.[5]

Despite the preoccupation with the provision of elementary facilities, the church institutes also attempted a more advanced educational programme. During the 1840's, classes were modest: the Church of England could only offer geography, drawing and grammar in addition to its elementary classes. By the 1860's, however, the curricula had become far more ambitious. In 1864-66 Surrey St. offered in addition to classes in elementary subjects, English grammar, composition, drawing, phonography, singing from notes,

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1. Church of England Instruction Society, Plan, etc., p.4.
2. Annual Report 1862, S.S.I. N.R.76.
3. Report to Sunday School Union, S.S.I., N.R.77.
4. Minutes of committee meetings, 20 February 1860 and 3 October 1860 in S.S.I., N.R.77.
5. See above, Chapter 9.

French, elocution, logic, history, geography, natural philosophy, geometry, practical geography and German. Occasionally, ambitious subjects such as Greek and rudimentary Latin were tackled, and classes in advanced Latin and Hebrew were planned. The more specialised subjects attracted far fewer students, however. Classes in geometry, Latin and German had fewer than 7 members in 1866.[1] Classes in commercial and scientific subjects had a greater relevance to the Sheffield artisan. In 1868, the Surrey St. Institute began classes under the requirements of the government Science and Art Department, and inorganic chemistry was taught by a teacher from the Royal School of Mines in London, for which government prizes were offered.[2] By 1870, classes in practical, plain and solid geometry, machine drawing and building construction were formed, specifically for the instruction of local artisans, mechanics and builders.[3]

The Church of England Institute also attempted an extensive curriculum Secular subjects taught in 1862 included Hebrew, Latin, German, French, English Literature, readings with the poets, Shakespearian readings, Euclid, Book-keeping, singing, geography, English grammar, dictation and composition, and short-hand.[4] There were considerable similarities with the Mechanics' Institute. A philosophical section ran occasional monthly papers, often given by local clergymen, with papers on geology, botany, mineralogy, political economy, moral philosophy, art and church history.[5] The provision made by the Hanover institute was more modest. Week day evening classes were divided into 4 standards in the early 1870's; the fourth or advanced standard included French, English History, Mechanical Drawing, shorthand, elocution, free-hand drawing and book-keeping.[6]

In the 1870's, however, the Methodist institutes began to get into difficulties. Hanover reduced its evening classes in 1874, and these were finally disbanded in 1876, except for a class in shorthand.[7] At Surrey

1. Annual Reports 1864-66, S.S.I., N.R.76.
2. Annual Report 1868, ibid.
3. S.R.I. 29 December 1870.
4. Pawson and Brailsford, op.cit., p.85.
5. Holland, op.cit., p.231.
6. Hanover Christian and Educational Institute, op.cit.
7. Schofield and Morrison, op.cit., p.98.

St., science was abandoned, and the range of classes increasingly restricted. In 1885, the only advanced subjects to be offered were geography, shorthand, book-keeping, French and drawing.[1] The need for classes in elementary subjects had been reduced by the effects of the Education Act of 1870, and by the vigorous policy of the Sheffield School Board in establishing new schools.[2] This was recognised by the committee at Surrey St., who remarked in 1884 that it was impossible to find a child of thirteen who could not read and write tolerably.[3] Although the sunday bible classes still gave evidence of life, the Institute was finally closed in 1889.

Nevertheless, the Church of England Institute survived. In 1894, it was still offering elementary classes under a government grant, as well as commercial and technical classes, and received an annual grant from the city of Sheffield, and from the West Riding, for the latter.[4] Science and Art department examinations were held in a range of subjects in 1897, including machine construction, applied mechanics, practical, plain and solid geometry and model and geometrical drawing. There were also classes in commercial subjects, including typewriting, book-keeping and shorthand, and in domestic subjects, such as household cookery, dressmaking and laundry work. Traditional classes continued in French, Greek, Latin and Church History.[5] This was an impressive contribution to educational facilities in the city. The Y.M.C.A. also offered a wide range of classes in the 1890's, including first aid, bible study, shorthand, Spanish, French, German, elocution, grammar, book-keeping and arithmetic.[6] The survival of the Church of England Institute and the Y.M.C.A. as educational providers well into the era of state education, and in the face of the collapse of other church and secular efforts, was probably due partly to significant concessions to changing working class demand. This will be discussed below.

1. Annual Report 1885 in S.S.I., N.R.78
2. See Below, Chapter 15.
3. Annual Report 1884, in S.S.I., N.R.78
4. Endowed Charities, op.cit. pp.258-259
5. Church of England Educational Institute, _Annual Report_, 1897.
6. Thompson, _op.cit._, p.12.

The church institutes attracted members not only for their educational and cultural provision, but for the opportunities which they provided for recreation. The conventional celebrations of church, chapel and sunday school were reproduced by the institutes. The formula for such gatherings was unchanging. Customarily, a crowd of a hundred or more were invited to tea, listened to addresses and speeches upon the progress of their institute, and were entertained with singing and music.[1] Annual excursions were also arranged. These were enormously popular with young working class members, for whom the railway train was a novelty, and travel beyond the immediate vicinity of Sheffield a rarity. The Church of England organised a trip to York in 1848. This was the first trip of any importance to run from Sheffield, and was remembered by the antiquarian Henry Tatton:

> 'many hundreds went that morning .... from the Wicker
> station. There were crowds on the hillside where
> Carlisle St. is now to see it. It was a long train,
> and most of the carriages was (sic) like cattle trucks'. 2.

The institutes could thus provide occasional opportunities for real enjoyment. The margin between education and entertainment was slight. The science classes held for working men in the 1860's were attened for curiosity and excitement, as well as for the pursuit of knowledge. The demonstration principle was used to great effect. At Surrey St. in 1869, A. H. Allen, F.C.S. lectured on 'the wonder of science' to a packed room. His talk was wide ranging, covering a demonstration of the properties of electric currents, their application to warfare in a torpedo, the action of an electro-magnet, the principles of electro-plating and a demonstration of photography, showing the action of light upon chemical substances.[3] Peformances such as these were a constant attraction to working men who were curious about science, but whose response to the excitements of the visual demonstration was far easier than those of the written word.

Until the 1880's, however, the recreational function was incidental rather than deliberate, a by-product of the preoccupation with education and moral training. Significantly, however, the institutions which were to

1. S.D.T. 1 May 1872
2. Henry Tatton, 'Old Sheffield', unpublished ms., S.C.L. M.D.1054, pp.66-67
3. S.D.T. 31 August 1869

survive into the twentieth century, the Church of England Institute and the Y.M.C.A., did so by compromising with and ultimately exploiting the new trends in secular recreation. Among the facilities offered by the Anglican in 1897 were 'lantern lectures, recreative classes, the library, the reading room, the gymnasium, the Foresters women's friendly society, the singing class.[1] It was the Y.M.C.A. however, which made the most significant contribution in this direction. A start had been made in 1858 with the provision of a reading room, offering London and provincial papers, reviews and magazines.[2] The Association attempted to expand its recreational provision in the 1880's but this could not be really successful until the opening of new premises on Fargate, adjacent to the Sunday School Union's Montgomery Hall, in 1891, built at the cost of £20,000.[3] The new building and its amenities were described as the Y.M.C.A.'s greatest asset, and the Association was said to be second to none in Sheffield in the quality of its facilities. Cricket, football, rambling, cycling, chess, swimming, running, gymnastics and photography took their place alongside the conventional classes.[4] Saturday evening concerts were held for up to four hundred people. The Harriers club was the oldest, and the swimming club the second oldest in Sheffield, and a football club was started in 1886.[5] A refreshment room provided tea and snacks, and the premises remained open until 9 o'clock each evening.[6] The gap between the sunday schools and the Y.M.C.A. was filled by the establishment of a juvenile branch, which had facilities for chess and draughts, the use of papers and periodicals, and encouraged gym and rambling.[7]

Provision by the churches for the training of young people and adults were of considerable educational importance in Sheffield, and were made more attractive by the opportunities for recreation which they offered. They also provided an environment in which the social behaviour of their members

1. Church of England Educational Institute, Annual Report, 1897.
2. Thompson, op.cit., p.3.
3. ibid., p.9.
4. ibid., pp.10-12.
5. ibid., pp.18-20.
6. ibid., p.43.
7. ibid., p.32.

could be moulded. Predictably, this was especially pronounced in the Methodist institutes. At Surrey St., the propagation of the ethic of respectability was attempted in three ways: by the nature of the education which was offered, by the drive to determine the social behaviour of members outside the institute, and by the provision of associated facilities. The wish to attract members away from the 'low and vicious amusements of the day' led to the inclusion of music and elocution in the curriculum.[1] Elocution was particularly necessary, in view of the broad dialect of the artisans, which meant that their reading was generally marked by vulgarism in pronunciation.[2] Dramatic reading classes were instituted in 1868, to teach the students to 'shun provincial vulgarisms, for the use of which we natives of Sheffield have such a questionable reputation'.[3] Drama may have helped pronunciation, but the activities of such classes were closely watched. Disapproval was expressed at a request that the young men should recite the sacred drama 'Belshazzar' for Walkley Free Methodist Chapel. This was forbidden, as such activities were deemed to be 'degrading both to the Institution and to the young men taking part therein'.[4]

Considerable attention was given to regular and punctual attendance. This was partly for reasons of efficiency, in view of the contemporary habits of irregularity, and the ambitious educational programme which was attempted. The implication went far beyond the class room, however. Given the unruliness of popular culture, there was a need for discipline for contemporary conceptions of religion and education to succeed. The task was made all the more difficult by the rivalry of external wordly temptations, such as music halls and public houses, which might ensnare the student away from evening classes. Both efficiency and propaganda were involved in attempts to enforce regular punctual attendance. At Surrey St., a system of merit marks and cash prizes was given in the sunday bible classes and the week evening classes, on the basis of attendance, rather than progress. Everyone who gained three quarters

1. Annual Report 1860, S.S.I., N.R.76.
2. Annual Report 1875, ibid.
3. Annual Report 1868, ibid.
4. Minutes of meeting 19 December 1868, in S.S.I., Minutes of Quarterly Meetings 1867-1872, N.R.83.

or more of the highest mark got a prize. It was held that 'these prizes induce competition, and supply a healthy stimulant in its pursuit'.[1] The mark system grew sophisticated. Diligent members of the bible classes could expect to earn a total of 11 if they attended morning and afternoon classes, and the sunday services.[2] Teachers were also subjected to the mark system, and concessions had to be made so that those absent on preaching duties, through illness or distance could still claim their full complement of marks.[3] Teachers, as well as class members, were expected to behave with decorum. The vengeance of the Institute for a lapse of behaviour could be swift. In 1872, a special meeting censured Brother Marsden for greeting two young women in his class with a kiss. This was condemned as 'very indiscreet, and opposed to the usages not only of the Institute but of Christian society in general'.[4]

The attempts to mould the social behaviour of students extended to a concern about their conduct outside the premises. At Surrey St., in the interests of 'good order and public respectability', members were requested not to stand about in groups before or after public services on a sunday, or any week day classes. No 'sparring, playing or games' were allowed during social teas or holiday gatherings.[5] Aggressive attitudes to popular culture were perhaps best displayed by the Y.M.C.A.. Membership of the Association was based upon conversion to God, and for a young man to be suitable for membership, 'satisfactory references to morality and respectability' were necessary.[6] The Association, through its classes, and its publication, The Sheffield Young Men's Magazine represented a continuous onslaught on unsuitable social behaviour, through exemplary biographies of Sheffield worthies, improving articles, and general social comment. The Association embarked upon a unilateral assault on many aspects of working class

1. Annual Report 1860, S.S.I., N.R.76.
2. Minutes of Bible Class committee meeting 16 March 1872, S.S.I., N.R.77.
3. Minutes of bible class committee meeting 18 January 1873, ibid.
4. Minutes of special meeting 30 August 1872, ibid.
5. Minutes of committee meeting 19 December 1862, S.S.I., Minutes 1859-1862, N.R.63.
6. Sheffield Young Men's Magazine, I, 1891, p.5.

culture. This was reflected in its social evils committee, which condemned gambling, opium, the desecration of the sabbath, smoking and drinking.[1]

In general, the philosophy of the Y.M.C.A. came out most strongly against what were described as harmful indulgences. These included not only drinking and smoking, but excessive show in dress, and the evil influence of books.[2] In an essay on gambling, the Rev. David Young reinvoked the connexion between work and the Protestant Ethic. Work was the one great condition of all legitimate gain, and the source of profit, for the individual and for society. Gambling violated this because it was not work, it destroyed the laws of progress, cultivated injurious excitement and led to evil associations.[3] Swearing was also condemned, because it destroyed a man's character and excluded him from good society, being more destructive to the community than cholera or plague.[4] Social purity and healthy, outdoor recreations were thus the only solution to the contamination of the city. Thrift was a key concept, because it meant not only the avoidance of harmful indulgence, but promoted self-denial, independence, industry, and the ability to provide for a rainy day.[5]

In its retreat from the realities of urban life, and its evocation of clean living and self-culture, the Y.M.C.A. offered a kind of Christian escapism. Political activity was valid only if it was conducted in the spirit of conciliation. The dangers of agitators, who excited false hopes were stressed.[6] Nevertheless, the Association not only pursued a policy of vigorous evangelism in the city, but brought considerable pressure to bear upon what it considered to be key issues. In 1857, the realisation that attendances at the week day evening classes were being impaired by late working hours, led the Association to throw its weight behind the early

1. ibid., II, 1892, p.103.
2. ibid., I, 1891, pp.21-23
3. ibid., II, 1892, pp. 8-9
4. ibid., I, 1891, p.108
5. ibid., II, 1892, p.28.
6. ibid., I, 1891, p.67.

closing movement.[1] In 1858, it joined with the churches in successfully requesting the Town Council not to open the Free Library on sundays, and appealed to the watch committee to enforce the sunday closing of pubs.[2]

The influence of the religious institutions was extended by the provision of associated activities, which reinforced their central function, and contributed to the total involvement of the individual member. At Surrey St., a sick and funeral society was begun in 1867, by William Milner, a table blade grinder, and Henry Woodcock, a pen blade forger.[3] The intention of this was to keep the senior scholars involved in the institute and to prevent them seeking out their local friendly society in the nearest public house.[4] The society was open to the 'sober, honest, industrious, and orderly', between 17 and 35 years of age. Contributions were from 1/4 and 2/- per month, according to age. Benefits for sickness and illness were paid on a sliding scale, and members were eligible for benefit only after a minimum of six months. The society followed the practice of ordinary friendly societies in attempting to direct the social behaviour of the membership.[5] No benefit was payable if injury was sustained through 'fighting, wrestling or immoral conduct'. Members were not allowed on the streets after 6.pm. in winter and 8pm. in summer, without leave of the treasurer, from fear of the dangers of the public house and the street corner. Fines were levied if members swore, or conducted themselves improperly, and expulsion was the penalty for theft, forgery or felony.[6] It was also hoped to encourage habits of sobriety by the establishment of a Temperance society. This was proposed in 1871, and agreed to in the following year, on the grounds that drink was 'the greatest curse in Christendom'.[7] A lodge of the temperance order, the Good Templars, was considered at the same time, but

1. Thompson, op.cit., p.3.
2. loc.cit.
3. S.S.I. Rules of the Sick and Funeral Society, 1911, N.R.100.
4. Annual Report 1867, in S.S.I. N.R.76.
5. See below, Chapter 25.
6. S.S.I., Rules, etc.
7. Quarterly Report 7 April 1872, in S.S.I. N.R.77.

was taken no further, as it was argued that this could provide nothing for the reclamation of fallen man than the community at Surrey St. could not already supply.[1]

The Methodist institutes strove to recruit students into membership of their chapels. The Surrey St. Institute believed itself to be successful in this respect. In 1860, half of the students attending bible classes were church members. Twenty were tract distributors, seven had become lay preachers, and two had joined the ministry.[2] After the institute was opened to a wider public in 1863, increasing numbers of students were from outside Methodism. In 1866, 150 of the 360 students were connected with the chapel, and 96 with other churches. Almost a third had no religious affiliation.[3] Certainly, the majority of church and sunday school officers and local preachers at Surrey St. were produced by the institute.[4] Similarly, the Church of England Institute gave the first training to several future clergymen.[5] However, these examples may have been drawn from students who were already religious, and it is not clear to what extent the propaganda of the institutes led to a heightened religious consciousness among the membership, who were attending primarily for reasons of secular advancement.

Nevertheless, institutes such as Surrey St. were convinced that recruitment to the ministry was clear evidence of the extent of their usefulness. Complacency was occasionally evident in their attitudes to the social behaviour of young working class members. The committee of Surrey St. observed in 1864 that

> 'after a short connexion with this institute an
> improvement in the outward appearance and physiognomy
> of the students is manifest even to the casual
> observer, the result of the exercise of the mental
> faculties of the new social circumstances by which
> they are surrounded.'   6.

In terms of their contribution to the educational needs of the young artisans, the institutes clearly fulfilled a need, especially with regard to elementary

1. Minutes of Bible Class committee meeting 9 December 1871, S.S.I. N.R.83
2. Annual Report 1860, in S.S.I. N.R.76.
3. Annual Report 1866, ibid.
4. Annual Report 1868, ibid.
5. Undated cutting, Newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, S.Cl. vol.45.
6. Report for soiree 1864, S.S.I. N.R.76.

education. The high enrolments for these classes clearly reflected this.
The advanced curricula attempted by Surrey St. and the Church of England
Institute is also impressive. The range of subjects offered, in combination
with the low fees, undoubtedly provided the basic education of many self-
improving working men. The need for literacy, and the stimulation of advanced
study, thus brought several generations of working people into close contact
with the values of respectability.

Nevertheless, the nature of the demand was changing after 1870. This
is shown by the changing pattern of attendances. Classes in religious
instruction became increasingly less popular. At Surrey St., the annual
registration for bible classes was between 150 and 200 from 1866 to 1886, but
attendances were low: only 80 out of 200 attended in 1871.[1] Three years
later, average attendance at the young women's bible class had declined to
less than 3. Between 1873 and 1875, it was estimated that there had been
a two fifths loss in attendance in two years, due to changing demands among
the members. The committee expressed their concern at this, declaring

> 'our difficulties are become great, we are hemmed in by
> perplexities, defeat confronts us and numerical decay
> holds high carnival amongst us.' 2.

Significantly, enrolments for the week day evening classes were also
declining. In 1870, the 'meagre attendance' of students was deplored.[3]
Although registrations reached a peak of 522 in 1877, they fell rapidly after
this date. It was said of the evening classes in 1884 that 'a few plodding
earnest students and not large numbers have been their characteristic'.[4]
Attendance was generally less than half the registration.

Attempts by the churches to provide adult education and moral training
for the workforce thus achieved only a mixed success. The failure of the
Methodist institutes is perhaps the most obvious. Firstly, the need for
elementary education diminished rapidly after 1870, and the institutes were

1. Figures from annual reports, S.S.I., N.R.76, N.R.77, N.R.78.
2. Minutes of quarterly meeting 3 October 1875, S.S.I. N.R.77.
3. Minutes of committee meeting 15 October 1870, S.S.I., N.R.83.
4. Annual Report 1884, S.S.I., N.R.78.

deprived of a role in which they had been able to make a considerable contribution. Secondly, they were unable to respond to the new demands for vocational scientific and technical education which came from working men, foremen and artisans in the 1880's. Advanced training in specialised subjects such as metallurgy and mechanical engineering could not easily be provided by the churches, who lacked the money to provide laboratory facilities and suitably qualified teachers. The ultimate emphasis of the Surrey St. Institute was the religious and moral training of young adults, and to this end, there was a heavy reliance of teachers who were chapel members. Even although government reports were generally favourable into the 1880's, the prevailing picture is of essentially amateur education, provided by coal merchants, drapers and shop-keepers in their spare time. Such men, however impeccable their Christian morality, were scarely suited to meet the demands for specialised scientific and technical education in this decade.

Another reason for the failure of the Methodist institutes is in part the emergence of a massive and increasingly secular working class society by the end of the nineteenth century, distinguished by a loss of deference to the social ideals of the middle classes. The decline of the denominational institutes therefore must be set against the fundamental weakness of the churches in late Victorian society. Simultaneously, the expansion of working class facilities meant that religion had lost its monopoly of organised recreation. Furthermore, the dominance of the churches in the propagation of the values necessary to self-help was removed by the expansion of elementary education in the board schools. The young working class elite of the 1880's had already received a substantial measure of social indoctrination in state schools. Thus the frankly propagandist basis of church institutes may have alienated many who had received a measure of social training in their child-hood, and had learned to divorce the educational process from the orbit of the churches.

Nevertheless, not every denominational attempt at adult education ended in failure. The Church of England Educational Institute, the Y.M.C.A. and

the Quaker adult school survived into the twentieth century. Perhaps the crucial reason for this was their ability to come to terms with and to exploit the new trends in secular recreation. The excellent facilities provided by the Y.M.C.A. in particular, overrode the essentially didactic function of the association. Thus only institutions which were prepared to supplement sermons with sport could continue to attract the attentions of the young working classes by the end of the nineteenth century.

In general, despite the institutional activity of the churches, the nineteenth century was not a religious age. In the late eighteenth century, the churches had clearly failed to provide for the spiritual needs of the expanding urban population. At the end of the ninetbenth century, there were more people than ever outside the orbit of the churches. Although religious worship was an important aspect of middle class culture, few working people sustained a permanent relationship with the churches.

Nevertheless, religion is the key to the understanding of middle class values, and the relationship of the middle class with the working class. Its strength was far greater than any numerical quantification will admit. For the middle class employer, religion allowed the justification of material success in religious terms. Church and chapel in Sheffield had a long tradition of democratic participation, and for many self-made men, a role in the affairs of church and chapel was parallel to success in business, as well as the recognition of public status. Religion thus legitimised the power relationships of capitalism. Popular culture, which appeared to threaten the prosperity and stability of the social order, was condemned as sinful, and the righteousness of the elect was affirmed.

For the working man or the small entrepreneur, trying to make sense of the city in a period of rapid and traumatic social and economic change, religion gave protection against chaos. The emotions of the insecure were manipulated and released by the conversion experience. The churches provided not only spiritual consolation, but new values and relationships. The recreational and counter-attractive role of the churches were especially

important, because they insulated the convert from temptation, and involved him in collective activities. The approval of the class or the chapel community were essential for maintaining the allegiance of the individual.

The churches began to play an increasingly public role as the century progressed. Evangelism brought the message of religion into the slums of nineteenth century Sheffield. The churches participated in charitable work, and put forward faith as the answer to poverty. Educational ventures such as the sunday schools, and adult institutes brought the churches into a wider contact with the working classes. These enabled the churches to use education to recruit new members, and also to harness their resources to the moral training of the workforce. Deference, diligence, punctuality and sobriety were some of the values transmitted by the churches in their educational work: thus the economic ideal was sanctified in the name of religion, and in the interest of capitalism.

Of course, some forms of religious experience, especially Methodism, had a dual role to play. There is a close link between religious revivalism and political radicalism. The involvement in the chapel fostered class consciousness, as well as giving valuable experience of public speaking and organising. In Sheffield there is some evidence of a relationship between the Methodist sects and political radicalism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, there is a need for more evidence before this aspect of religious involvement can be given more weight.

Ultimately, the most important achievement of religion was the assimilation of the rootless and discontented within the working class into a relationship with the middle class and their value system in church and chapel. Arguably, key sections of the working class were diverted away from direct political action into ambitions which were individualist, other-worldly and materialist in their perspectives. The social relationships and activities of church and chapel were duplicated in other areas of reformism, and the religious ethic was the fundamental rationale behind middle class ideology.

Part Two

Education

11.   Introduction

        The years between 1780 and 1900 saw in England the construction

of an educational system ad hoc in its philosophy, often patchy in its

achievements, but increasingly designed to fulfill the economic and social

needs of a complex industrial society.   The educational history of this

country has been well researched.[1]   By the late eighteenth century, some

long standing and often degenerate foundation and a scattering of private

academies already existed, chiefly for the children of the middle classes.

Charity schools and dame schools of varying quality provided ineffectually

for the children of the poor.

        In practice, education was already established on class lines.

The nineteenth century saw a plethora of educational provision.   Sunday

schools, national schools, mechanics' institutes, workingmen's colleges,

public schools, board schools, higher grade schools, technical schools,

extension lectures and ultimately university colleges all contributed to the

institutional complexity of education in this century.   This was accompanied

by the advent of trained teachers and an inspectorate, destined to become a

new profession in English society, as well as the growth of an educational

administration, at local and at national level.[2]

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1.   See inter alia W.H.G. Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English
        Education, Cambridge, 1964; Thomas Kelly, A History of Adult
        Education in Great Britain, Liverpool, 1962; Malcolm Seabourne, The
        English School, Its Architecture and Organisation, 1370-1870,
        London, 1971; M.G. Jones, The Charity School Movement - A Study
        of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action, Cambridge, 1938;
        David Salmon, The Education of the Poor in the Eighteenth Century,
        London, 1908

2.   See inter alia Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader - A
        Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900, Chicago, 1957;
        Charles Birchenough, Education in Evolution - Church, State,
        Society and Popular Education 1800- 1870, London, 1971; John McLeish,
        Evangelical Religion and Popular Education - A Study of Ideas and
        Social Movements in the Early Nineteenth Century, London, 1965;
        R.K. Webb, The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848 - Literacy
        and Social Tension, London, 1955

This was not achieved without tension. Although traditionally the responsibility of the churches, education became increasingly a matter of state control, and the struggle for power between state and church was vigorously fought out in parliament and in the local community. State intervention helped to maintain the steady increase in literacy; through its support of elementary and technical education after 1870, it began to tailor educational provision to the demands of a highly complex industrialised society and world power.

For the purposes of this study, the most important development in educational provision in the nineteenth century was the growth of facilities for the education of the working class. Education for the workers was primarily a tool forthe maintenance of social order. At the root of the expansion of provision, lay an awareness of the problems and needs of industrial society, as perceived by the middle classes. The increasing population, and the concentration of people in the cities, could in no way be catered for by the educational machinery of the eighteenth century.

The concept of education as a means of social control was related closely to the idea that the children of the working classes should receive an education appropriate to their station in life, a philosophy which was canonised in mid-Victorian educational policy, most notably in the three parliamentary reports of 1859-1868. The Newcastle Commission, the Clarendon Commission and the Taunton Commission together defined the limitations of the elementary education of the working class child, and established distinctive types of secondary education for the children of the aristocracy, the mercantile and commercial classes, and exceptionally, the skilled working class.[1]

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1. Brian Simon, Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1918, London, 1965, p. 97. G. Duncan Mitchell, 'Education, Ideology and Social Change', in ed. George K. Zollschan and Walter Hirsch, Explorations in Social Change, London, 1964 pp. 778-797; P.W. Musgrave 'A Model for the Analysis of the Development of the English Educational System from 1860', in ed. Musgrave, Sociology, History and Education - A Reader, London, 1970 pp. 15-29

Thus it has been rightly suggested that educational provision during the nineteenth century was in no way a response to popular demand from below; day schools and mechanics' institutes

> 'were not the people's institutions, but rather instruments
> for shaping society according to dominant middle-class
> views. It was an education designed primarily to strengthen
> the social fabric, rather than provide cultural or emotional
> enrichment for the individual; and it was conceived of almost
> exclusively in literary terms'. 1

Furthermore, the growth of literacy among key sections of the working class also brought with it the freedom of independent thought; anxieties about the spread of radical and unorthodox opinions was a major stimulus to the middle class educational movement. [2]

The idea that the working classes should receive an education suitable for their station in life was already explicit in the educational developments of the eighteenth century. With the acceleration of industrial change, and the new problems inherent in rapid urbanisation, the need for a disciplined and deferential workforce received a great impetus. The values of social quietism and submission inherent in the Bible were the basis of the elementary education of the working class child. If such children were to be given the privilege of literacy, then it was essential that reading and writing were taught in a strongly moral context. Thus the lessons of deference, diligence and thrift were ultimately as important as the alphabet. This attitude towards the working class child was extraordinarily resilient: it will be seen that it formed the basic philosophy of the sunday school movement, and was incorporated into the board schools a hundred years later.

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1.   J.F.C. Harrison, <u>Learning and Living 1790-1960 - A Study in the</u>
      <u>History of the English Adult Education Movement</u>, London 1961,
      p. 40
2.   <u>Ibid</u>., p. 43

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, economic need, and the requirements of local industry for literate and technically trained artisans gave a new impetus to the education of working class children. This functional aspect of education was reinforced by the awareness of foreign competition, and the undoubted superiority of commercial rivals in scientific and technical training. Scientific and technical training was scarcely the means by which the working classes could achieve equality, however: it was not intended that the technically proficient artisan should rise out of his class, but that he should be a more competent and innovative workman. The concept of the educational ladder theoretically enabled a gifted child to rise at least to secondary level; however, the educational system rarely permitted such mobility. Middle and working class children were still educated separately at the end of the century, and the inhibitions of class prevented the creation of skilled technically trained workforce in sufficient numbers.

Thus the moral education of the sunday school and the technical education of the Mechanics' Institute or the Higher Grade School both ultimately aimed at social control through role education. Some workingmen, influenced by Owenite philosophies, strove for a new type of education, essentially humanist in its basis, intended as an intellectual tool for the realisation of the whole person. For many working class leaders, education was a vital instrument in the struggle for social and political emancipation. However, it has been suggested that the working classes had no educational ideology of their own; educational developments under the influence of Owenism and Chartism in the 1840's comprised a short-lived independent working class educational tradition.[1]

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1.   Harrison, _Learning and Living_ etc., pp. 4-5, 40

In general, however, education was determined by the limitations of class and of social aspiration. The numbers of working class children receiving education increased steadily, especially after 1870. By the end of the century, education had become a mass experience. The experience of the sunday school, the day school or the Mechanics' Institute, fleeting and unsatisfactory as it often was, provided children and adults with the rudiments of literacy, and sometimes some advanced skills. It also provided a point of contact between learner and teacher. In the context of the classroom, the values of discipline and self-control, regularity and industriousness, thrift and sobriety, were disseminated to the present and future workforce, and the working class were taught new ways of relating to each other and to society.

12.   Aspects of illiteracy in Sheffield

The expansion of facilities for the education of children and adults during the nineteenth century resulted from an awareness of the contemporary deficiencies in educational standards and provision. The incidence of illiteracy among the working class was a stimulus to the provision of institutions for the elementary education of the adult worker and his children. The development of educational facilities in Sheffield is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The number and quality of schools provided on an ad hoc and voluntary basis before 1870 had important implications for the level of literacy and numeracy among the working population. In Lancashire, for example, literacy levels arguably declined in the period between 1780 and 1820, when a rapid increase in poulation coincided with a decline in the number of educational foundations.[1] In Sheffield, however, the strength of local evangelicalism led to the proliferation of schools for the working classes from the first decade of the nineteenth century, whilst the steepest period cf population growth was delayed until the 1850's. In addition, a town such as Sheffield, with a high proportion of articulate and politically conscious skilled artisans may have sustained higher levels of literacy than in the cotton towns, where a proletarianised workforce was dominated by the machine, and where children went to work to exploit their earning potential at ten or eleven years of age. In support of this, it has been argued that working class literacy has been seriously underestimated especially in the north of England, where perhaps two thirds or three quarters of the working class could read.[2] Clearly, patterns of literacy varied from region to

1.   Michael Sanderson, 'Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England', Past and Present, 56, 1972, pp. 76-79; see also Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', ibid., 42, 1969, pp. 69-139; Thomas Lacqueur, 'Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England', ibid., 64, 1974, pp. 96-107; R.K. Webb, The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848 - Literacy and Social Tension, London, 1955; Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader - A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900, Chicago, 1957

2.   Webb, op.cit., pp. 22-23

region, and between town and country; the important point is that 'the existence of perhaps a quarter or a third of the working classes who were totally illiterate, and a further percentage whose literacy was only rudimentary, constituted a barrier to the spread of middle class ideology'.[1]

Nevertheless, despite regional differences in literacy levels, it is indisputable that an increasing proportion of the population learned to read and write as the century progressed. Whether or not literacy rates suffered a short-term decline between 1780 and 1820, there was a steady improvement from about 1830 or 1840. The effects of the 1870 Education Act accelerated the upward trend, and the age of mass literacy was a reality by the end of the nineteenth century.

Evidence of literacy levels in Sheffield may be derived from contemporary evidence, and from marriage registers, which demanded a signature or mark from both parties after 1754. Of course, the concept of literacy conceals many imprecisions. Contemporary evidence drawn from Sheffield refers to the ability to read and write, while the marriage registers can only indicate the ability to sign a name. Many working class couples who haltingly wrote their signatures may not have been 'functionally literate' in their daily lives.[2] On the other hand, Mr. Hudson, parish clerk of Sheffield in 1843, thought that many who were able to sign were unable to do so, and chose to make a mark instead, 'on account of the excitement under which they laboured'.[3]

The evidence of marriage registers shows that levels of literacy in Sheffield were not worse than projected national figures. In 1840, 1782 persons of both sexes were married at the parish church. Of chis number, 606 men and 406 women signed, giving a male literacy rate of 68%, and a female literacy rate of 45.4%.[4]

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1. Harrison, _Learning and Living_, etc., pp. 41-42
2. For 'functional literacy' see William S. Gray, _The Teaching of Reading and Writing - An International Survey_, Unesco, 2nd, edition, 1969, p. 24
3. Jelinger C. Symons, _Report on the Trades of Sheffield and the Moral and Physical Condition of the Young Persons Employed in Them_, Sheffield, 1843, p. 16
4. _loc.cit._

The creation of new parishes in Sheffield from the second half of the 1840's makes it possible to be more precise about the relationship between literacy levels and social class. For example, the parish of St. Philip's, formerly a chapel-of-ease to the Parish Church was entirely working class in its composition, stretching from Shalesmoor through the industrial area of the Don Valley and Neepsend to Owlerton.[1] Its inhabitants were drawn extensively from the cutlery and tool trades, and from the building industry, with a high proportion of unskilled labour. Between July 1848 and October 1857, there were 481 marriages with legible signatures. 355 men and 255 women signed, giving a male literacy rate of 74%, and a female literacy rate of 53%.[2] These figures are above the estimated national literacy rates of perhaps 66% for men and 50% for women by 1840, 69% for men in 1850, and 70% for men in 1855.[3] Given the exclusively working class composition of St. Philip's parish, containing several areas of slums, the figures from this parish are not unimpressive. It may be the case that marriage registers from other parishes with a more mixed population would have returned higher rates. A second sample drawn from the same working class parish shows the steady improvements in literacy rates, especially among women in the wake of the 1879 Education Act. Of the 500 marriages which took place in the church between September 1879 and May 1883 80% of men and 72% of women signed their names.[4]

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1. St. Philips was a chapelry district of 25,000 souls, which became a parish under legislation of 1856-57. See Joseph Hunter, Hallamshire, The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York, ex. Alfred Gatty Sheffield, 1862, p. 277
2. St. Philips Marriage Register July 1848-October 1857, S.C.L. PR.10/11
3. Stone, op.cit., pp. 119-120
4. St. Philips Marriage Register 1879-1883, S.C.L., PR 10/18

Thus even in solidly working class parishes, literacy rates in Sheffield could compare favourably with national projections. Nevertheless, it is important that differences in educational standards within the working class should not be obscured. There was after all 'a significant cultural barrier between the respectable, newspaper and Bible-reading class, and the illiterate proletariat at the bottom of the heap.'[1] Individual Sheffield trades showed significant differences in levels of education. Some sources have suggested that about the middle of the nineteenth century, half of the Sheffield workmen were illiterate.[2] On the other hand, literacy among the skilled and superior workmen was often impressive. At the Globe Works in 1852, only 46 of the 269 workmen (17%) were illiterate. Of the 80 men and boys employed at Joseph Rodgers grinding wheel, only 2 could not read, and 4 could not write.3

Investigations by G.C. Holland in the 1840's showed in detail the wide range of literacy among men in the Sheffield trades. His analyses show that it was customary to distinguish between those who could read and write, and those who could read only. It is probable that those who could read enough to make out a tract or a newspaper were part of an unmeasurable class of sub-literates. Generally, the ability to read and write was a characteristic of the 'superior' workman, customarily in union, and commanding good wages. Those trades who were poorly organised, or who were out of union, had a higher proportion of unskilled workers and young apprentices, and literacy levels consequently suffered.

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1.   Stone, op.cit., p. 119
2.   Pollard, History, etc., p. 34; S.P.C.K., Sheffield, Sheffield, 1864, p. 30
3.   S.L.R. 17 January 1852

Craftsmen in the silver plated trades were amongst the élite of the Sheffield artisans by the 1840's. In one of Sheffield's principal factories, it was said that there were not half a dozen who could not read and write.[1] The saw trades also had high levels of literacy. 19 out of 20 could read, and almost this number could write, and there were no boys in the trade who could not do either. All saw grinders were able to read, and 80% of all saw handle makers.[2] In the file trade, figures were also above the norm. 80% of the adults could read, 70% of adults could write, and the apprentices were even higher.[3] Literacy among the edge tool and cutlery trades were generally less good, however. In the edge tool trades, only 20% of adults could read and write.[4] In spring knife manufacture, no more than 50% could read, and only half of these -oderately well. Only 20% could write.[5] Characteristically, the spring knife trades were not in union, had depressed wages, and were generally less provident than men in other trades. 50% of the fork grinders were unable to read, and 33% were unable to write.[6] 50% of the razor blade grinders were wholly illiterate.[7]

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1.   G.C. Holland, The Vital Statistics of Sheffield, Sheffield and London, 1843, p. 156
2.   ibid., pp. 170-172
3.   ibid., p. 187
4.   ibid., p. 178
5.   ibid., p. 182
6.   G.C. Holland, The Mortality, Sufferings and Diseases of Grinders, 1, p. 21; ibid., 3, p. 25

13.   Educational provision 1780-1900

The provision of educational facilities, chiefly for the working

classes, absorbed the attention of many middle class reformers and self-

improving working men in nineteenth century Sheffield.   Sheffield led the

country in educational innovation in more than one case.   The Sunday School

Union of 1812 was copied later by Birmingham and Chester.[1]   The People's

College of 1842 was an inspiration for F.D. Maurice's London Workingmen's

College.[2]   The Sheffield School Board boasted some of the earliest schools

to be constructed, and broke new ground with the country's first higher

grade school.[3]   The commitment to education was wholly consistent with the

strength of Evangelical religion in the town.   Nonconformists allied with

radical working men to form a powerful educational lobby.   The strength of

dissent meant that state plans for education were vigorously debated in the

town from the late 1830's.   The conflict between liberal nonconformists,

sometimes with the support of secularist working men, and the conservative

supporters of church education, enlivened the proceedings of the Sheffield

School Board, and helped to make it one of the most active in the country.

At the same time, Sheffield rose to the challenge of foreign economic rivalry

in the promotion of scientific and technical education, initially through

voluntary effort, and by the speedy implementation of the Technical Instruction

Act.

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1.   See above, Chapter 9
2.   J.F.C. Harrison, A History of the Working Mens College 1854-1954,
          London, 1954, pp. 17, 18, 28, 107
3.   J.H. Bingham, The Period of the Sheffield School Board 1870-1903,
          Sheffield, 1949.   The Board also led the country in the provision
          of special facilities for cookery, and in the training of truants
          and 'defectives'.   It was among the first to start a classified
          system of training for pupil teachers: Bingham, op.cit., p. 28

Such activity, however, was a product of the nineteenth century industrial community. Before 1780, educational provision in Sheffield was small. This was consistent with a much smaller population, and also the lack of a general need for literacy. Indeed, before the Evangelical revival, there was little consciousness of the need to educate the ordinary working man. The oldest surviving school was the endowed Grammar School, which predated its charter of 1604, and was under the close supervision of the Church of England. Closely associated with this was the Free Writing School, opened in 1721 under the terms of an endowment to teach writing and arithmetic to forty poor children free of charge.[1] Also for the education of the poor was the Charity School for boys, began under the auspices of the Parish Church in 1706. Other small charity schools were established in the outlying villages, such as Fulwood, Crookes and Wadsley, generally founded in the early eighteenth century, although William Ronksley's school at Fulwood was a seventeenth century foundation.[2]

Such was the educational provision in 1780. Attention has been drawn to the 'almost furtive nature of Sheffield education between the middle of the seventeenth century and the rebuilding of the Grammar School in 1823.'[3] This underestimates the impact of the expansion which began in the late eighteenth century, although clearly, facilities for more than a rudimentary education were limited until the 1830's. The period after 1780 is characterised by the new concern for the elementary education of the working class child. The emergence of the Sunday School movement in Sheffield has already been described.[4] The strength of evangelicalism in the town also led to

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1.   W.H.G. Armytage, 'Education in Sheffield 1603-1955' in David L. Linton, Sheffield and Its Region, Sheffield, 1956, p. 203
2.   Report of the Royal Commission on Schools (P.P. 1867-68, XXVIII), pp. 532, 537, 540; Armytage, op.cit., p. 203; J.H. Stainton, The Making of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1924, p. 90
3.   Armytage, op.cit., p. 202
4.   See above, chapter 9

the growth of day schools, also predominantly for the children of the working classes. Provision for girls was extended by the Girls' Charity School founded in 1786, and the Industrial School for girls, opened in 1790. Other day schools were begun at Sharrow in 1782, Park in 1789 and Heeley in 1801, usually in conjunction with the churches.[1] Sheffield proved receptive to the educational philosophies of Joseph Lancaster, and the first local school in conjunction with the British and Foreign School Society was opened in 1809. This was followed four years later by the establishment of the National School.

Although such schools were intended for the children of the artisan, many children of prosperous merchants and manufacturers received their education in local day schools, at least until the 1830's. By 1800, attempts were being made to provide such children with an education that went far beyond the basic rudiments. This was catered for by the private academies. The most reputable of these was the Milk St. Academy, which opened in 1802 under the guidance of scientist J.H. Abraham, and offered

> 'Reading, with feeling and propriety; Writing in a
> superior stile (sic); English Grammar, with practical
> application; Arithmetic, enforced by every expedient
> of retention, and the Mathematics, with all necessary
> elucidation'. 2

Prizes such as silver pens and pencils and cabinets of 'elegant books' were a stimulus to achievement.[3] Other establishments offered similar facilities. At Attercliffe Academy, young gentlemen were taught a range of practical skills, such as mensuration, navigation, surveying and book-keeping, as well as classics,

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1. Armytage, op.cit., p. 202; Stainton, op.cit., p. 90; Newspaper Cuttings Relation to Sheffield, S.C.L., vol. 127, p. 111
2. S.I. 23 December 1802; See J.H. Abraham, Juvenile Essays - The first and second half yearly prize compositions of the pupils belonging to the Milk St. Academy, Sheffield, Sheffield 1805; John Austen, 'Notes on Milk St. Academy and its Founder', T.H.A.S. Vii, 1957, pp. 202-05, Armytage, op.cit., p. 205
3. S.I. 17 July 1821

geography, drawing and history.[1] The Sheffield academies played a major

role in the education of the children of the town's commercial and professional

class in the first half of the nineteenth century. About ten private

academies were advertising locally in 1800; in 1833, the number was nearer

sixty.[2]

The need for a specialised education for the children of the middle

and working class had thus been recognised in the early years of the century.

During the 1820's and 1830's, educational provision in Sheffield was charac-

terised by an increasing diversification. Sunday Schools, day schools and

private academies continued to proliferate. New, prestige schools were

established for the education of the commercial middle classes: these were a

response to the needs of the industrial community for a competent managerial

class. In recognition of this need, the Grammar School was rebuilt in 1823-25.

The school fulfilled a useful and practical role, and was considered to be more

like a high class secondary or commercial school, than a conventional grammar

school.[3]

In a superior category were the Anglican Collegiate School, built

in 1835, and the Methodist Wesley College, opened three years later. The

Collegiate School, 'established to provide a thoroughly sound education for the

youth of the upper classes preparatory to the university course or to commercial

pursuits ' had a high state of efficiency in the 1860's.[4] Attempts to conduct

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1.   *Ibid.*, 7 January, 1802
2.   Ian Inkster, 'The Development of a Scientific Community in
     Sheffield 1790-1850', *T.H.A.S.*, X, 1973, p. 127
3.   R.C. on Schools (P.P. 1867-68) XXVIII pp. Part XV) p. 251
4.   R.C. on Schools, (P.P. 1867-68, XXVIII, part XV) p. 251;
     ibid., pp. 667-670, *ibid.*, (Part XVIII), pp. 232-233; Pawson
     and Brailsford, *Illustrated Guide to Sheffield and Neighbourhood*,
     Sheffield, 1862, p. 78

it on the model of a high class public school, with 'a great deal of Latin verse writing' were not always successful, however, for Sheffield proved uncongenial for many of the scholars who came to teach there.[1] At Wesley College, a wide range of scientific and commercial subjects were taught, as well as the classics. These were taught with an emphasis on memory, understanding and judgement, and were intended to provide the necessary training for the elite of the town.[2] However, despite this new provision, local resources for the education of the middle classes were not thought to be adequate, and an unusual proportion of children were educated at public schools elsewhere.[3]

A second development during the 1820's and 1830's was the establishment of educational facilities for adults in Sheffield. A Literary and Philosophic Society was formed in 1822, and a Mechanics' Library in the following year. The Mechanics' Institute was opened in 1832, and the next fifteen years saw several diverse institutions enter the field, with the establishment of adult institutes by the churches, the secular Hall of Science, opened in 1839, and the People's College, begun in 1842.[4] One factor behind these developments was the growing interest of middle class manufacturers and some working men in science.[5] Perhaps more important was the need for social control through education, following the turbulence in the town during the Reform Act agitation of 1832, and the Chartist disturbances of 1839-41.[6] Thus

1. S.O. Addy, Middle Class Education in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1883,
2. S.I. 22 June 1841; Wesley College, Prospectus, Sheffield, 1855;
    R.C. on Schools, (P.P. 1867-68, XXVIII), pp. 662-663
3. R.C. on Schools, (P.P. 1867-68, IX), p. 335
4. See below, Chapter 16
5. Inkster, op.cit., pp .99-133 ; Ian Inkster, 'Science and the
    Mechanics' Institutes, 1820-1850: the case of Sheffield', Annals
    of Science, XXXII, 1975, pp. 451-474
6. John Salt, 'The Creation of the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute -
    Social Pressures and Educational Advance in an Industrial Town',
    Vocational Aspect XVIII, 1966, pp. 143-150

the demands of working men for literacy and self-improvement, fed by Owenite

and Chartist philosophies, combined with middle class fears of secularism

and radicalism to produce a dynamic period of innovation in adult education.

The importance of these institutions in the creation of respectability will

be discussed in detail below.

One result of the political consciousness which Chartism helped to

create was the election of radical working men to the newly established Town

Council.[1]   From the 1830's, Owenite working men and middle class evangelical

reformers kept the issue of education alive.   In June, 1839, 'one of the

most respectable meetings held in Sheffield' supported the National Education

Petition.[2]   In the following decade, alignments and attitudes towards the

vexed question of state control of education became more clear-cut.   Radicals

such as Isaac Ironside, their ideology forged in the Chartist period, argued

for a new wider concept of education, which emphasised the political and social

as well as the moral and intellectual needs of the working classes.   Such a

system should be secular and free, supported by the rates, and state plans

for education received sympathetic support from radicals on the town council.[3]

Nevertheless, local nonconformists rallied to uphold the voluntary system,

unable to envisage provision in which religious and moral training were not

absolutely central.   This fundamental principle was also strengthened by

fears of the undue influence of the clergy, and a resistance to the centrali-

zation of national government.[4]

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1.   Pollard, History of Labour, etc., p. 48
2.   S.M. 8 June 1839
3.   S.R.I. 3 April 1847; ibid., 17 April 1847; J.M. Furness, Record
            of the Municipal Affairs in Sheffield since the Incorporation of
            the Borough 1843-1893, Sheffield, 1893, p. 93
4. .   S.T. 12 April 1851

Arguments about power and control of education continued until the end of the century. By 1870, however, there was clearly a pressing need for a rationalisation of educational provision, especially at elementary level. At no time before 1870 was the educational provision in Sheffield satisfactory. The recognition of this was slow. In 1818, the commissioners enquiring into the education of the working classes asserted that the poor in Sheffield had nearly sufficient means of education.[1] Twenty years later, only 10% of the town's population were receiving an education, outside the middling and superior schools.[2] Nevertheless, this was much better than in other cities: one reason for this may have been the energies with which local reformers were applying themselves to the education of the working classes since 1780, and the proliferation of institutions which had resulted.

Between 1840 and 1870, however, the inadequacy of Sheffield's schools was clearly recognised. Absenteeism was a crucial factor. Jelinger Symonds showed that in 1843, over 12,000 working class children in Sheffield should have been receiving day school education. No more than 8,000 were on the books of the day and infant schools, and of these, over 26% were continually absent. Of those who did attend, only about half could read and one third write adequately. This led Symonds to conclude that two thirds of working class children in Sheffield were growing up in complete ignorance.[3] Samuel Earnshaw believed that within two or three years of leaving school children had forgotten almost everything that they had learned.[4] The problem was not so much that accommodation in Sheffield was deficient, but that parents were failing to recognise the value of education, and were failing to co-operate in sending their children to school. Earnshaw stated succinctly

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1. S.C. appointed to Inquire into the Education of the Poor, Digest of Parochial Returns (P.P. 1819, IX   ) p. 1156
2. The proportion of those receiving an education likely to be useful was 1: 41 in Leeds, 1: 38 in Birmingham, 1:35 in Manchester, S.C. on the Education of the Working Classes, Report and Minutes of Evidence, (P.P. 1838, VII   ), p. viii
3. Symonds, op.cit., p. 9
4. ibid., p. 14; R.C. on Education, Report on Popular Education (P.P. 1861, XXI), pp. 183-191

'large families, domestic difficulties, parental
improvidence, mismanagement, ignorance, drunkenness,
and indifference to their children's welfare, are,
among the poor, the great impediments to the education
of children, and the chief causes of early removal from
school'. 1

By the 1870's, the deficiencies in Sheffield's educational

provision were clearly revealed.   In 1871, there were eighty elementary

schools already in receipt of government grants, and a further fifteen

endowed and denominational schools intending to maintain their financial

independence: these schools provided places for 18,985 and 1,269 children res-

pectively.   The denominational schools were under pressure, accommodating

more than they had places for.   There was also noticeable inefficiency among

the many private adventure and dame schools, often with aged and scarcely

literate teachers.[2]   The School Board estimated that 42,541 children were in

need of elementary education in Sheffield, and the available provision fell

short of this by over 11,000.[3]

The School Board was instrumental in improving facilities for

elementary education in Sheffield.   It also played a crucial role in the

indoctrination of the working class child: this will be discussed in detail

below.[4]   In numerical terms, the record of the Board was impressive.   By

1882, there were over 51,000 children registered in schools, and over 20,000

1.   ibid., p. 187
2.   John F. Moss, Report presented by the Clerk of the Sheffield School
        Board to the Statistical Enquiry Committee, Sheffield, 1871, p.5
3.   ibid., p. 6; Skelton Cole, Education - An Address with Special
        Reference to the Sheffield Central School, Sheffield, 1880, p. 9
        gives slightly different figures: in 1870, there were 39,978 of
        school age, accommodation for 27,780, an enrolment of 21,797, and
        an average attendance of only 12,000
4.   See below, chapter 15

of these were entirely catered for by new provision. In twelve years, twenty-four new schools had been built. Although absenteeism was a problem, attendances had reached 72%.[1] In 1902, the achievement of the Board was the provision of accommodation for over 47,000 pupils in over 47 schools, and the total number of available places in Sheffield had reached nearly 75,000.[2]

The achievement of the other sectors of education in the period 1870-1902 was also impresive. This period involved not only the further expansion of provision, but a firmer definition of the distinction between 'elementary' and 'advanced' education. 'Elementary' or 'fundamental' education became the province of the child, whilst for the adult, an expanding range of educational provision was becoming available. Arguably, the fundamental aim of education was still social control: education in this period was increasingly determined by the need to train the skilled workers needed by local industry in technology and applied science. This process involved subtle changes in existing class attitudes to education and the emergence of the concept of the 'educational ladder', stretching from the gutter to the university. The expansion of education at primary and advanced levels was made possible by the increasing availability of state aid, and the emergence of professionally trained teachers. Despite the expanding demand for advanced scientific and technical education, the older voluntary and denominational institutes , whcih had fulfilled much of the demand in the middle of the century, were unable to compete with new state-aided provision; by the 1890's, the Mechanics' Institute, the People's College and the denominational institutes had closed down.[3]

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1.   Skelton Cole, Sheffield School Board - Statement of the
        Work of the Board, Sheffield, 1882, pp. 3-8
2.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 54
3.   See below, chapters 10, 16

The new phase of higher education in Sheffield was begun by the University Extension lectures, which were held in the town in 1875 and 1876.[1] These were held partly through the initiative of steel manufacturer Mark Firth, who discussed ways of bringing higher education to Sheffield in 1874.[2] The success of University Extension led to the foundation of Firth College, for 'the promotion of the moral, social and intellectual elevation of the masses, as well as the middle and upper classes of this town'.[3] Classes began in 1880, in classics, history, meths and music, chemistry, physics and mechanics, available as daytime and evening classes: the latter were by far the most heavily subscribed.[4]

The function of Firth College was defined as three-fold, encompassing university teaching, technical instruction and popular lectures of interest to all sections of the community.[5] The role of the college was primarily with the first two of these priorities: the latter function was catered for by the Sheffield branch of the Workers' Educational Association, founded in 1906.[6] An early attempt to establish a technical school in 1862

1. Stainton, op.cit., pp. 99-102; Armytage, op.cit., p. 207. For University Extension, in Sheffield and elsewhere, see Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp. 219-245
2. Arthur W. Chapman, The Story of a Modern University - A History of the University of Sheffield, London, 1955, p. 16; S.R.I. 31 March 1875; ibid., 21 October 1879
3. Chapman, op.cit., p. 22
4. ibid., p. 26. There were 89 enrollments for day classes, and 313 for evening classes.
5. Firth College, Sheffield Technical School, Sheffield School of Medicine, Joint Prospectus, Sheffield, 1888-89, p. 5
6. Pollard, History of Labour, etc., p. 196

had failed; however, the new awareness of the importance of technical

education led to the establishment of a department of technology at Firth

College, with financial aid from Sheffield Corporation, and the City and

Guilds of London Institute.[1] A Technical School on a separate site was

opened in 1886. Sheffield industry was in general indifferent to the

need for technical training; the Corporation, however, was in advance of

opinion both locally and nationally, and it was one of the few bodies to

adopt the Technical Instruction Act of 1889, and to raise money for this

purpose.[2] The metallurgy and engineering sections of the Technical School

were of a high standard, although facilities in other subjects such as

chemistry were considered to be inadequate.[3]

The continued progress of technical instruction and of university

teaching in Sheffield were guaranteed by the establishment of University

College in 1897, an amalgamation of Firth College, the Technical School and

the Medical School. The inadequate facilities and insecure finances of the

new University College effectively prevented it from joining either the

Victoria University, or the proposed University of Yorkshire. Efforts to

secure a separate charter in 1905 were successful, however.[4]

The work of the School Board, and the emergence for facilities for

higher education in the city were perhaps the most obvious features of the

period 1870-1900. Those who could take advantage of university provision

were very few, however. Perhaps of equal importance was the ripening of

the idea of secondary education, and the expansion in this type of provision.

The limitations of the Endowed Grammar School had been revealed in the Royal

Commission onSchools in 1867-68.[5] Until 1882, Wesley College, the Grammar

School and the Collegiate School were run as separate institutions. In that

1.   Armytage, op.cit., p. 208;
2.   R.C. on Secondary Education (P.P. 1895, XLVIII), p. 175
3.   loc.cit.
4.   Chapman, op.cit., pp. 177-196; Stainton, op.cit., pp. 112-120
5.   R.C. on Schools, (P.P. 1867-68, XXVIII), pp. 250-251

year, however, the Grammar School and the Collegiate School were amalgamated.[1] In its new form, the Grammar School offered sciences, as well as classics and modern subjects, to about a hundred and fifty boys. However, the attractions of industry meant that the sixth form was negligible. Only a few continued to Firth College, or to the universities, and in 1895, the school was still considered disappointing for the size of Sheffield.[2] a girls' High School was opened in 1878. Although science facilities were poor, this had a superior reputation, and sent several girls each year to university.[3] At the suggestion of Sir Michael Sadler, an attempt was made to raise the standard of secondary education available to boys. Wesley College and the Grammar School were amalgamated, and reopened as King Edward VII's School in 1906.[4]

The expansion of secondary facilities did much to fill the gap between elementary education and the universities, at least for the middle class child. For the working classes, important concessions were made in this direction by the establishment of the Central and Higher Grade School, which sought to give 'deserving and clever pupils' an advanced education, 'irrespective of class'.[5] This type of secondary elementary school had been urged by Mundella as early as May 1871; it should not attempt to provide a classical education, but be 'a school in which a good sound English education could be obtained for boys and girls of the working and poorer middle classes'.[6] There was controversy over such an educational venture, for it was the feeling of many conservatives that higher grade schools went beyond the provisions of the 1870 Act. Nevertheless, a school of this type was opened in 1880 next to Firth College, and the relationship between the two institutions was close. In 1900, the validity of higher grade schools was recognised, and the Central High School applied for formal recognition as a secondary school in 1903.[7]

1. Walton, op.cit., p.212
2. R.C. on Secondary Education, (P.P. 1895, XLIX), p. 350; ibid., (XLVIII) pp. 165-166
3. ibid., (XLVIII), p. 167
4. Stainton, op.cit., pp. 85-6, Armytage, op.cit., p. 206
5. Bingham, op.cit., p. 174   6. ibid., p. 178
7. ibid., pp. 174-189; Stainton, op.cit., pp. 108-109

14.   Educating the Child - The Voluntary Day Schools 1780-1870

        Out of the Evangelical Revival arose a new preoccupation

with the moral and social training of the working class child.   The role of

the Sheffield Sunday Schools in this process has already been described.[1]

Parallel with the growth of the Sunday Schools was the dramatic expansion in

the provision of full-time day school education.   Most important in this

field were the two Charity Schools, the schools attached to the Britis-

and Foreign School Society, the National and associated Church Schools.

Schools of industry, ragged schools, and ulatimately orphanages were also

instituted in this period for the most needy.   The very young, between

three and eight years of age, were accommodated in infant schools.[2]

        The provision of these institutions for the education of the

owrking class child in Sheffield was numerically impressive.   In 1840,

there were 41 day schools, accommodating 5,699 scholars.   21 of these were

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1.   See above, chapter 9
2.   For the voluntary day schools, see Henry Brian Binns, A Century
        of Education - The History of the British and Foreign School
        Society, 1808-1908, London, 1908;   Charles Birchenough,
        A History of Elementary Education, London, 1914; M.G. Jones,
        The Charity School Movement, Cambridge, 1938; David Salmon,
        The Education of the Poor in the Eighteenth Century, London,
        1908; John McLeish, Evangelical Religion and Popular Education -
        A Modern Interpretation, London, 1969; Malcolm Seaborne, The
        English School, its Architecture and Organization, 1370-1879,
        London, 1971; Harold Silver, The Concept of Popular Education -
        A Study of Ideas and Social Movements in the Early Nineteenth
        Century, London, 1965; Mary Sturt, The Education of the People,
        London, 1967; Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader - A
        Social History of the Mas s Reading Public, 1800-1900, Chicaco,
        1957; R.K. Webb, The British Working Class Reader - Literacy and
        Social Tension, London, 1955

run by the Church of England, which had 3,345 pupils.   These were under

the auspices of the National School Society, and included not only the Central

National Schools in Carver Street, but several church schools built in the

1780's, and day schools attached to churches, such as St. Mary's and

St. George's, opened in the 1830's.   Some schools were very big.   The two

Lancasterian schools provided for 1,114 pupils, or a fifth of the town's total

provision .   The remaining children attended 8 endowed day schools, 5

Wesleyan Methodist schools, and 2 small Roman Catholic schools.[1]

Among these schools, the Lancasterian and the Central National

Schools consistently attra cted the greatest numbers.   This was reflected

in the scale of the buildings which they occupied, and was made possible by

the monitorial system of instruction.[2]   The Lancasterian Schools opened in

1809 with 320 children, and numbers had risen to 620 by the end of the first

year.[3]   In the 1840's, enrolments were between 500 and 600, and in the

first thirty years of its existence, it was estimated that no less than

13,000 children had received an education within its doors.[4]   A

Lancasterian infant school, opened in 1832, had 230 children attending in

1841.[5]   The Central National School also accommodated impressive numbers.

In 1840, there were 430 boys and 380 girls at the Carver Street School.[6]

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1.   J.C. Symonds, Report on the Trades of Sheffield, and on the
     Moral and Physical Condition of the Young Persons Employed in
     them, Sheffield, 1843, p. 9.   More than twice the numbers who
     went to day schools attended sunday schools, a total of 12,904.
     Many who went to day school may have attended sunday school too.
2.   Symonds, op.cit., pp. 10-11;   The National Schools on Carver
     Street were purpose built.   The Lancasterian Schools were housed
     in a converted rolling mill.
3.   Sir Thomas Bernard, Extract from an Account of the Free School for
     Boys at Sheffield, London, 1812, p. 173; S.I. 19 June 1809
4.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 11
5.   S.I. 6 November, 1832; Lancasterian Infant School, Tenth Annual
     Report, 1841, p.
6.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 9

The Lancasterian and National Schools together made the greatest accommodation available for working class children in Sheffield, until their closure in the early 1880's. The Sheffield Charity Schools had a rather longer life, remaining under the control of the Board of Education, and surviving well in to the 1930's. The schools were residential, and financial considerations meant that the numbers who could be accommodated were relatively low. The Boys' School was rarely larger than 90, whilst the Girls' School had between 60 and 80 for most of the century.[1] The Charity Schools were important, however, because they represented perhaps the clearest statement of middle class attitudes to working class children and they have been included with the Lancasterian and National Schools for this reason.

All these schools came into existence primarily for the children of the working classes; moreover, some attempt was made to provide specifically for the children of the poor. The Lancasterian and the National Schools accepted recommendations from the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, the Female Friendly Society and the Infirmary, and admitted children whose parents were on parish relief.[2] The Sheffield Charity Schools existed for orphans, or the children of poor widows who were unable to support them.[3] In practice, however, factors existed which limited the type of children who could find accommodation at the schools; children had to be recommended by a subscriber, often in proportion to the size of their subscription. Thus at the Boys' Lancasterian School, subscribers of 1 guinea could recommend one boy each year, and two subscribers of half a guinea, one between them.[4] This procedure of recommendation tended to filter out many of the 'rough' children. Applications were often in excess of places, and it seems likely that the children who were admitted were of

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1. Information from Annual Reports
2. S.I. 19 June 1809; ibid., 2 July 1811; Sheffield National District School Society, Minute Book 1813-22, S.C.L., M.D. 1752 see 8 November 1819
3. Return of Endowed Charities, City of Sheffield (P.P. 1897, LXVII), p. 202
4. S.I. 23 May 1809

'deserving' parents, and from homes already cognisant with the values of
respectability and gratitude. At the Charity Schools, the suitability
of children was rigidly defined: economic factors were partly responsible
for this, for the schools had no fee income, and could only afford to take
a limited number of children. Thus there was no surplus cash to waste on
children who might be intractable or ungrateful. Only children who were
certified to be physically strong, and free from disease and deformity were
considered. Middle class prejudice against illegitimacy meant that no
bastard was admitted.[1] These regulations remained in force throughout the
nineteenth century.

Fees and other payments levied in the Lancasterian and National
Schools also operated to the exclusion of the destitute. The National
Schools were specifically intended for those who could not afford other
schools.[2] However, payments were levied for writing books in 1813. In
1817, this was 6d. per quarter, payable in advance.[3] At the Lancasterian
School, a system of pay tickets was instituted almost from the beginning,
by which some students were required to pay a shilling a quarter, in advance.
This was an attempt to stop absenteeism, and to promote responsibility and
appreciation by the introduction of the concept of payment.[4] The pay ticket

1. SheffieldGirls'Charity School, (hereafter G.C.S.), Annual Report
   1789; Boys' Charity School (hereafter B.C.S.), Report, 1837-1841
2. S.I. 18 May, 1813
3. National School Minute Book, etc., minutes of meetings 21
   December 1813, 18 April 1814, 7 August, 1817
4. S.I. 19 June, 1809

system was inefficient, however, and from 1817, a fee of 6d. per quarter was payable by all.[1] There was considerable insensitivity to the realities of poverty. The pupils at the Lancasterian Schools were expected to come provided with pencils, hatstrings and other extras, 'which even to a poor person are trifles'.[2] At the National Schools, two shillings and sixpence was charged to the girls for their uniform bonnets and buff calico tippets.[3]

Even after the advent of government aid in 1833, the schools still relied heavily upon voluntary sources of income, and fees continued to be charged. In 1843, most National day schools charged 2d. per week, for reading and writing, with an extra penny from those who used copy books. In others, reading and writing was still a penny. It was observed, however, that when the National Schools increased this charge to 2d., there was no material reduction in numbers.[4] At the Roman Catholic day school, however, the children were so poor that the extra penny for using copy books was seldom paid.[5]

It is likely that such payments effectively excluded the children of the poorest, except in a very few schools. Nevertheless, the pressure for places was high. Some day schools, notably the Lancasterian, were considered 'superior in every respect'.[6] At least until the 1840's, the social composition of the schools was surprisingly mixed, for it was the opinion of Jelinger Symonds that 'as many children, not belonging to the working classes, will be found in the common schools, as there are working class children in the middling schools.'[7] At least until the middle of the century, the

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1. Boys Lancasterian Schools, (hereafter B.L.S.), _Annual Report_, 1817
2. _S.I._ 18 June, 1809
3. National School Minute Book, etc., minutes of meetings 21 December 1813, 18 April 1814, 7 August 1817
4. Symonds, _op.cit._, p. 10
5. _ibid._, p. 12
6. _ibid._, p. 11
7. _ibid._, p. 9

children of artisans, mechanics, tradesmen and manufacturers were educated together, and trained in a common social ideology.

The operation of the day schools in Sheffield would have been impossible without the support of people who wished to use education to improve society. The financial and moral support of the middle classes was especially necessary, particularly through subscriptions, and donations, which could form up to three quarters of a school's income.[1] The underlying rationale behind such support was the middle class duty of benevolence, which was an essential part of the charitable impulse.[2] This was well expressed in a sermon for the benefit of the Charity School in 1784; wealth was a gift of God, to be used for the benefit of the poor. Indeed, God allowed the existence of human misery and poverty to allow the rich to be merciful. Such charity reaped both spiritual and material reward, for the benevolent would not only triumph on the day of judgement, but would ensure the future security of society by the disciplining of the working classes.[3] Thus, in the words of M.G. Jones, 'the charitable mob paid its guinea and crowded to the annual charity sermons to hear its generosity extolled, and its investment for the next world approved'.[4]

Voluntary support for day schools was expressed in a variety of ways. The Charity sermons provided an annual device for syphoning off funds into local schools, through collections and donations. They began in the 1780's, and lingered on as a source of income until the middle of the nineteenth century. Such events frequently took place at the more

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1.   George G. Eltringham, 'The Lancasterian Schools in Sheffield', T.H.A.S., V, 1937-43, p. 150; Lancasterian Schools, Annual Reports
2.   M.G. Jones, op.cit.
3.   Rev. P. Cunningham, A Sermon for the Benefit of the Charity School, Sheffield, 1784, passim
4.   Jones, op.cit., p. 12

fashionable Anglican churches, such as St. Paul's or St. James, or at Carver Street Chapel, although the smaller Methodist and Independent Chapels periodically collected modest amounts in this way.[1] The role of giving, and being seen to give, was an important part of becoming established as a respectable member of local society. To be seen at a charity sermon, or to have one's name on a subscription list, could be as important as the actual act of giving, because they constituted a public manifestation of social status.

The support of organised religion for the day schools was also forthcoming, especially in the cases of the National Schools and the Charity Schools, which had the closest relationship with the Church of England. Despite their position of potential rivalry, however, relations between the followers of Lancaster and Bell were generally good, and each often acknowledged the work of the other.[2] The Evangelical nature of the religious community in Sheffield meant that people often supported institutions run by other denomintions. Between 1813 and 1826, the National Schools had 93 trustees and committee members, who were predominantly Anglican. 43 of these were also involved with the Charity Schools, or the Lancasterian Schools, or both, as subscribers of a pound or more, or through actual administrative responsibility.[3] The Lancasterian School, despite its basis of nonconformist support, was firmly interdenominational, and the largest single category of children in the earliest years was Anglican in persuasion.[4]

The Charity Schools depended far more than other schools on voluntary support. Some ways of giving were particularly gratifying. Middle class propensities towards public charity were shown in the insistence on distinctive and anachronistic uniforms for the children.[5]

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1. S.I. 1 February 1808; ibid., 1 August 1820
2. Annual Report, 1818, Alexander B. Bell, Peeps into the Past, Being Passages from the Diary of Thomas Asline Ward, Sheffield, 1909, pp. 182-83
3. Information from Annual Reports
4. S.I. 29 June 1813; Bernard, op.cit., p. 179
5. See below, p.

These were often a condition of legacies, and the Charity Schools sometimes received large amounts of money in this way. Elizabeth Parkin gave £500 in 1766, and London merchant Thomas Hanbey, who is thought to have been educated at the Charity School, gave £3,000 of consolidated bank annuities. This was invested in the Cutlers' Company, and the income used to pay a master's salary, a fee for the annual sermon, and £5 for an annual dinner, the rest to be used for the maintenance of children of the Anglican persuasion.[1] Similar, although smaller benefactions were received by the Girls' School, and this type of support was a valuable addition to income.

Donations and subscriptions were the most regular source of voluntary income for day schools not under the immediate control of the churches. Subscriptions, described by M.G. Jones as 'the irregular drip of conscience money'[2] meant the public recognition of personal benevolence, and also had a practical function. Subscribers not only had the power to recommend children, but had the first choice of them as servants and apprentices. In this, the need for moral and social indoctrination was neatly linked with the middle class preoccupation with material return for cash investment. Subscribers were canvassed, with

> 'the prospect of having their subscriptions
> more than returned to them, in the labours of
> a clean, honest, industrious and religious servant
> whose habits and principles were formed in this
> school, and who was afterwards received into
> their service. Scarcely a greater evil can come
> to a family than an idle, dirty, profligate servant.'[3]

Money was the final arbiter, and if there was competition for the children, the subscriber of the highest amount was often successful.[4]

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1. Joseph Hunter, _Hallamshire, the History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York_, edited Alfred Gatty, Sheffield, 1869, pp. 320-21
2. Jones, op.cit., p. 11
3. _Annual Report_, 1821
4. _Annual Report_, 1789

The subcription list as a mobiliser of middle class capital was in its heyday in the first half of the nineteenth century. Subscriptions to the schools declined seriously in the Victorian period, however. Even in the 1820's, subscriptions began to fall off through deaths and removals.[1] The growth of a consumer society, and of other opportunities for investment, meant that the middle classes had other ways in which to advertise their wealth. The advent of the principal of direct state aid undermined the propensity for giving. The effects of inflation were also felt, for subscriptions were made in the same units of money as in the 1780's. Inflation hit the Charity Schools particularly hard, for clothes and board, as well as education, had to be found. Per capita costs were rising at the same time. Weekly costs per head at the Charity Schools were 4/6d. in 1864. but had risen to 6/7d. in 1886. By 1896, the declining annual income was insufficient to meet ordinary expenditure.[2]

Middle class participation went further than financial aid, however. The schools were organised by an active organizational structure of trustees and committees. These not only supervised the running of the institutions, but solicited subscriptions. Other committee functions were especially gratifying: the Boys' Lancasterian School had a biannual examination conducted by 'five or six gentlemen', lasting almost seven hours.[3] Such activities were attractive, especially for women with leisure; indeed, the proportion of women who subscribed to the Charity School increased from 8% in 1787, to 43% in 1894.[4] The numbrs involved in supervising the running of the schools was often high. The Girls' Lancasterian School in 1817 had a treasurer and two secretaries, as well as a general committee of 74 ladies, with three sub-committees for admissions, daily and occasional visiting.[5]

1.   B.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1824
2.   G.L.S., _Annual Reports_, 1849-53; ibid., 1863-64, also 1886, 1896. Government grants were not received until 1898.
3.   S.I., 19 June, 1809
4.   G.C.S., _Annual Report_, 1787; _ibid._, 1894
5.   G.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1817

The subscription lists and the names of trustees are a major index of middle class involvement in the Sheffield voluntary schools. The Charity Schools had 151 trustees between 1781 and 1900. 65 were merchants or merchant-manufacturers, 23 clergy, and 11 solicitors. 53 of these individuals were in one or more positions of authority inSheffield: the list includes 20 Justices of the Peace, 3 Knights, 16 Master Cutlers, 17 Town Trustees, and 5 Mayors and Lord Mayors.[1]

Patterns of support are clearly indicated by subscription lists. The Charity, National and Lancasterian Schools all received support from the landed aristocracy. Between 1809 and 1828, the Lancasterian Schools received donations of between £20 and £200 from Sir Sitwell Sitwell, Lord Viscount Milton, Earl Fitzwilliam and the Duke of Norfolk.[2] Aristocratic support tended to be most fulsome in the early years, but was often withdrawn: The Duke of Norfolk stopped his subscription to the Charity Schools, whcih was equal to the cost of supporting two boys, by 1861.[3] Clerical subscribers were also prominent in the early years, although the numbers who gave steadily declined in the second half of the century: clergymen accounted for 18% of the subscribers to the Girls' Charity School in 1853-58, but only 2% in 1894.[4]

Clearly, the Sheffield day schools received patronage and financial support from among the wealthiest of the community. The distribution of subscriptions shows a fuller picture of the basis of support, however.

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1.   Taken from Annual Reports. The occupations of 134 have been traced from the directories: there were 43 manufacturers, 22 merchant-manufacturers, 11 solicitors, 8 merchants, 4 bankers, 4 drapers, 2 colliery proprietors, 1 doctor and 15 gentlemen. Many are described as having more than one occupation, but it is clear that the bulk of support came from the employing class.
2.   B.L.S., Annual Reports
3.   B.C.S., Annual Report, 1859-61
4.   G.C.S., Annual Reports 1853-54 ; ibid., 1894

The reports of the Boys' and Girls' Charity School, analysed at decennial intervals from 1787 to 1897, show that most people gave less than £1 until the 1850's: from 1808, the biggest category was between 10/- and 19/11d. In the second half of the century, most gave between £1 and £2, and there was a small number of donations of up to 5 guineas.[1]

Sources do not permit a similar analysis of the Lancasterian or the National Schools. Between 1815 and 1826, however, it is possible to analyse patterns of support through subscriptions; the evidence seems to show that during specific periods, support for the schools may in fact have been broader based. 60% gave less than £1 to the National Schools in these years. 80% gave less than £1 to the Girls' Lancasterian School, and in some years, over half the subscribers gave between 5/- and 9/11d.[2] This may indicate a degree of financial backing from the 'respectable' working class. Certainly, in the first two decades of the century, cash aid came from friendly societies and sick clubs, such as the £8.15.0d. given to the Boys' Lancasterian School in 1815.[3] At least until the 1820's, it seems that artisans and small tradesmen subscribed a modest amount to the schools; beyond this time, it is likely that subscribing to voluntary societies became an increasingly middle class activity, and that working men turned to chapels or to political organisations for their expression of the reformist impulse.

The Sheffield day schools nevertheless represented attitudes and values which were arguably middle class. The clearest statement of their philosophy was made at the end of the eighteenth century, and during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the voluntary

1.   From Annual Reports
2.   B.L.S., Annual Reports, 1815-26; G.L.S., Annual Reports, 1817-26; National Schools, Annual Reports, 1815-26
3.   B.L.S., Annual Report, 1816; The Friendly Societies also supported the National Schools; S.I. 26 July 1814; ibid., 18 July 1815

day schools was part of the revitalised evangelical consciousness which characterised these years.   The social values which created these institutions were those which also determined the Sunday School movement, and underlay much of the social and religious thinking of the period.[1]

The underlying rationale behind the extension of day school education was fear of the working classes.   Characteristically, this was expressed in religious and social terms.   Man was considered unequal in attributes and capacities, and was degraded below the level of brute creation if the senses were allowed to rule uncurbed.[2]   This diagnosis of the human condition was applied principally to the urban working classes.   Lack of knowledge was the cause of harm, for without it, there could only be 'useless or mischievious activity, or... enervating indolence'.   Ignorance of good led to knowledge of evil, and the practice of evil in crime would swiftly ensue.[3]   This idea was expressed in striking metaphor by the committee of the Boys' Lancasterian School in 1817: without education, the poor

'forming as they do, the mass of the people,
instead of acting beneficially as the salt
of the earth, would become a putrid body,
the exhalations from which would be
offensive to God and destructive to man'.[4]

Without education, the working classes were inherently evil and vicious, and the existence of depravity had constantly to be rooted out. This was the stock response to popular culture; hence the committee of the Girls' Charity School complained that new admissions were rude and ignorant,

'having contracted many bad habits in thinking
and doing which it is extremely difficult to
eradicate, and possessing very little sense of
moral obligation and duty'. 5

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1.   See above, chapter 9
2.   S.I. 4 April 1809
3.   Ibid., 16 June 1812
4.   B.L.S., Annual Report, 1817
5.   G.C.S., Annual Report, 1858-59

This propensity to identify the poor as a social and religious problem was strengthened by the periodic popular disturbances in Sheffield in these years.[1] Supporters of the National Schools argued that there had never been such bold and blasphemous attempts to pervert the religious and political principles of the poor, and that 'infidelity, combined with disaffection, is lifting up its head with unusual boldness and effrontery'.[2] The obvious solution was thought to be education: in 1813, Rev. Sutton attributed local unrest to 'the want of instruction among the deluded inhabitants'.[3]

As with the Sunday School movement, the supporters of the Sheffield day schools focussed upon the particular need to educate the working class child. It was argued that as later life was governed by the instruction received in youth, the principles of useful knowledge should be implanted in childhood.[4] Local factors made this more urgent: Sheffield children were often at work at ten years of age, and in any case, suffered from the indifference and the bad example of their parents.[5] It was soon recognised that girls were as much in need of attention as boys. An education for girls was especially important, because of the power of women to influence the family and the rising generation, as wives, daughters and mothers, and the onus upon them to keep a clean and respectable home, and to teach their children the virtues of industry, sobriety and neatness.[6] It was increasingly important to teach even tiny children, to safeguard them from vicious parental influence, to nip infant vices in the bud, and to free parents to go out to work. Separate infant schools were set up to this end by the Lancasterian School, and by the Church of England.[7]

1.   Donnelly, op.cit., passim
2.   National Schools, Annual Report, 1820
3.   S.I. 18 May 1813
4.   National Schools, Annual Report, 1820
5.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 3; National Schools, Annual Report, 1823
6.   S.I. 21 June 1814
7.   Sheffield Lancasterian School, Report of Meeting held to Establish Infant School, Sheffield 1830; Symonds, op.cit., pp. 10-11

For these reasons, education was considered to be an urgent

necessity for the working class child, both for individual redemption,

and in terms of the security and stability of society.   The concept of

education to this end was restricted aiming merely to instill

> 'such knowledge and habits to guide them
> through life, in their proper stations,
> as good men, good subjects, and good
> Christians, or in other words, to promote
> their temporal and spiritual welfare'. 1

In common with the Sunday Schools, they were intended for the inculcation

of the children of the working classes with a basic literacy, sufficient to

fulfill their station in life, within the context of the values of diligence,

regularity, order, sobriety and godliness.

Characteristically, both the diagnosis of contemporary ills,

and the prescription for their cure, were defined in religious terms.   Only

religion could produce permanent happiness:

> 'this, therefore, in Education, ought to
> be the first and last great object...
> this, and this only, to the end of life,
> produced employment both for the body and
> the mind, comforts us in all our afflictions,
> adds to all our pleasures, and makes us
> better members of society'.2

The need for religion was seen not with reference to abstract theology,

but in terms of social relationships and behaviour.   This was the social

philosophy in which the concept of duty to God was inseparable from duty

to man.   Religion was thus used to inculcate specific social values, which

were both derived from and given sanction by the religious ethic.   In this

was the fabric of society to be preserved.

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1.   S.I. 18 May, 1813
2.   Ibid., 4 April, 1809

The function of the day school was not simply utilitarian, however. It also had an important role to play for its middle class benefactors. The spirit of philanthropy and the duty of charity had been aroused. Supporters of the Girls' Charity School were urged to behave with particular mercy 'towards the poor and friendless orphans, that are now silently pleading before you their helpless youth, innocence and poverty.'[1] Helping the poor had complex implications, for it not only relieved the conscience of the wealthy, allowing them to feel the luxury of mercy and compassion, but enabled the newly rich to advertise their status and to emphasise the distinction between themselves and the poor. In the nineteenth century, charity for its own sake became less important: the concern with the menace of working class culture and the need to train faithful servants and docile, diligent apprentices brought a new urgency to the duty of giving.

The inculcation of the children of the working classes with the values appropriate to their station was to be achieved through religious, moral and secular education. Religious and moral education were of crucial importance in this process: although day schools went much further than Sunday Schools in the provision of elementary education, secular instruction was essentially subordinate to the pervasive religious and moral indoctrination.[2]

The religious emphasis was shared by all the day schools. The National Schools had the strongest denominational connexions, and taught the principles and doctrines of the Established Church.[3] The Charity Schools, despite their close links withthe Church, were open to all,[4] and the

1.   Cunningham, op.cit., p. 7
2.   See especially, Altick, op.cit., pp. 33-35; Jones, op.cit., pp. 73-83; McLeish, op.cit., pp. 46-48. 88-93; Birchenough, op.cit., pp. 42-45, 242-253
3.   S.I. 18 May 1813
4.   B.C.S., Annual Report, 1837-41; ibid., 1841-46; G.C.S., Annual Report, 1849-53

Lancasterian Schools considered themselves to be interdenominational and nonsectarian.[1] Nevertheless, whether denominational or nonsectarian, religion played a substantial part in the conduct of the schools. This is clear from the weight given to prayers and hymns, and the high proportion of the teaching which was directly religious in content. Prayers were an important part of the daily routine at the Charity School, which also made use of hymns and psalms, some of which were specially written.[2] The National Schools were conducted along similar lines: at Carver Street, Jelinger Symonds observed that the school invariably opened and concluded with prayer, and a hymn and verse were also sung. This was also the case with the Methodist day schools, such as Red Hill and Brunswick.[3] Religious influence was not confined to this, however. Some schools had direct religious instruction. Charity School children were required to learn the catechism and the explanation in the late eighteenth century.[4] The Bible and testament were in general use in all the schools for reading and spelling, not only for propaganda, but for reasons of economy. At the Lancasterian Schools, the Bible was described as 'the foundation stone of the super-structure of education here'.[5] It was virtually the sole book used for many

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1.   B.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1824
2.   Edward Goodwin, _Poor Girls' Primer_, Sheffield, 1787, specially
          written for the Sheffield Girls' School, contains hymns and
          prayers.
3.   Symonds, _op.cit._, pp. 10-12
4.   B.C.S., _Annual Report_, 1787-88
5.   B.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1816

years, and its predominance was also an indication of the schools' nonsectarian
background.[1]   The Bible was also used for prizes and rewards, and children
were encouraged to subscribe for their own.[2]   At the Lancasterian Schools,
Bible classes were held for older scholars, and there was also pressure upon
the children to attend church;   there were weekly enquiries as to whether
children had been to church or sunday school, and the answers revealed an app-
arently impressive picture of religious devotion.[3]   Charity school children,
and often those from the National schools, were often taken in procession
to church on Sundays.[4]

Direct religious instruction thus played an important role in the
voluntary schools.   The distinction between religious and secular
instruction was in some ways unreal: underlying both was the common
purpose of moral and social indoctrination.   Specific social values were
introduced into the teaching: these were derived from and given sanction
by religion.   The Poor Girls' Primer, written for the Girls' Charity
School by Rev. Edward Goodwin in 1787 shows supremely how simple lessons
in the rudiments of education could be controlled and determined by moral
imperatives.[5]   The primer contained eighteen basic lessons for repetition,
and seven illustrative stories from the Bible,concluding with the 'History
of Anne Goodwill', a parable of secular virtues.   The underlying emphasis
is on the values of goodness, truth and honesty: several of the lessons
relate specifically to social conduct:

1.   loc.cit.; G.L.S. Annual Report 1817.   Bibles were often
        donated - see B.L.S., Annual Report, 1824
2.   ibid., 1809
3.   ibid., 1816; ibid., 1817; G.L.S. Annual Report, 1819
4.   G.A. Hampshire, 'Sheffield Boys' Charity School, later called
        the Sheffield Boys' Bluecoat School, and a description of Life
        as Known to one Pupil during the Scrooge period of 1917-1923',
        unpublished ms. S.C.L., p. 16
5.   Goodwin's primer is discussed in Jones, op.cit., p. 75;
        Birchenough, op.cit., p. 190

> 'Keep your Cloaths clean.
> Wash your Hands, and Face.
> Comb your Head.
> Tye your Shoes'.
>
> 'Learn to spin Wool, and Line.
> Learn to sew Shifts and Shirts and Caps.
> Learn to knit hose.
> Learn to bake, and brew, and wash.
> Learn to clean Rooms, and Pots and Pans'.
>
> 'Do no wrong.
> It is a Sin to steal a Pin.
> Swear not at all, nor make a Bawl.
> Use no bad Words.
> Live in Peace with all as much as you can'. 1

Two ideas are cleverly juxtaposed: the first lesson is on 'goodness' -

'Be a good Girl, and God will love you and bless you'. This is followed

by a succession of lessons which suggest that 'goodness', far from being

an abstract religious virtue, is in fact a matter of cleanliness, domestic

proficiency, honesty, tranquility and thankfulness to one's benefactors.

This was reinforced by several simple selected biblical stories.

'Rebekah' is an example of diligence, courtesy, hospitality and consideration.

The story of Lydia urges

> 'be thankful to those who are set over you and
> instruct you; and endeavour to requite them,
> at least, by being obedient to their Commands,
> diligent in your Business, and obliging in your
> Behaviour'. 2

The nature of good servants is a preoccupation of many of the stories, with

special emphasis on the values of obedience, 'not purloining, but shewing

all good Fidelity'. Servants are low in status, but will be cared for by

God and given heavenly rewards if sober, diligent and obedient. This theme

is developed into something of an ultimatum - salvation is impossible for the

poor, unless they adopt the values and life-style which the middle classes

ordain for them. This ideology is at its most potent when used in con-

junction with the sanction of religion.

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1.   Goodwin, op.cit., pp. 3-4
2.   ibid., p. 18

Sometimes, however, the religious content could be omitted from lessons when the children's attention could be held by an anecdote or story, such as the 'History of Anne Goodwill': Anne comes from a happy family in which the values of diligence, honesty and cleanliness prevail. The reward for such conduct is the approval of the employer. Anne is taken on as a dairy maid by the local squire, and because of her hard work, cleanliness, good humour and obliging nature is promoted to the position of cook. Her good conduct has positive rewards: her fidelity and bravery when the house is attacked by thieves leads to a cash reward and an advance in wages, and she progresses to be housekeeper, where the prize for such a long period of model behaviour is that she learns to write, and is trusted enough to exercise a limited authority over the servants under her. Material comfort and respectability are the ultimate goals. She marries a decent young farmer, who is placed upon one of her employer's farms with all the necessary stock, and proceeds to bring up a family in mutual industry, frugality and affection.[1]

The Poor Girls' Primer is thus a clear statement of the preoccupations of school committees with the moral training of the working classes. Its themes were reiterated during the nineteenth century. The popular disturbances in the period 1790-1830 led to a continual reassertion of the need for discipline. At the Boys' Lancasterian School, civil duties, defined as 'obedience to parents - respect to superiors - reverence to authorities - and honour to the King' were taught explicitly and repeatedly.[2] Upon this structure of religion and subjection, specific social values were superimposed. In order to be good members of civil and religious society, cleanliness,

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1.   ibid., pp. 25-36
2.   B.L.S., Annual Report, 1817

industry, honesty, loyalty and prudence were urged.[1] The need for

tidiness, 'a place for everything and everything in its place', was

also stressed, which was particularly necessary for girls from disorganised

home background who were destined for domestic service.[2]

The preoccupation with moral training influenced every part of the

schools' relationship with their children. A policy of segregation from

harmful contacts was pursued, although probably this had more chance of

success in the residential Charity Schools. Traditionally, Charity School

Children played in a section of the Parish Churchyard adjacent to the

School. This was justified by the trustees, as the children were under the

eyes of the public, and any misdeeds might be reported.[3] By 1829, the

church wardens had stopped this, and blocked the long-standing right of way

to the church. For a short time, the children played in the streets, but

significantly, this was blamed for a drop in subscriptions.[4] Segregation

was made possible again by the construction of a covered playground, given

by manufacturer Samuel Roberts. This was on top of the existing

building, and drew praise, because of the reduced danger of accidents, and

of 'contamination from depraved characters without'.[5] With the conventional

day school, the protection of the children was more difficult. The

Lancasterian School more than once incurred debts over this, as in 1843,

when a piece of land adjoining the playground was bought, to avoid the

establishment of a beer shop and skittle-yard.[6]

1.   ibid., 1818
2.   G.L.S., Annual Report, 1819
3.   B.C.S., Annual Report, 1817
4.   A. Jowett, 'Classic Sheffield', Hermes, 13 June 1936, p.
5.   B.C.S., Annual Report, 1829-37
6.   ibid., 1881

A sense of identity, as recipients of charity, and of gratitude to their benefactors, was promoted in the Charity Schools by uniforms. All pupils wore a distinctive dress: the boys 'an old-fashioned garb of a blue cloth coat, buttoned up the front and cut away into tails behind, with yellow braid and brass buttons, green corduroy trousers, white bands and a blue muffin cap'. The girls wore a plain blue uniform, with 'leghorn hats, printed linen tippets, check aprons for weekdays, and white ones for Sundays'.[1] It was common, however, for persons leaving legacies to the schools to insist upon some differentiation in the dress of students upported by their foundations. Those boys endowed by Elizabeth Parkin wore green. The boys on Hanbey's foundation supported by the bequest of Sir H.E. Watson had his initials embroidered on their sleeves.[2] Girls on particular foundations were distinguished by different coloured ribbons.[3] Thus, not only were Charity School children as a whole picked out by their dress, as objects of middle class benevolence, but some benefactors were able to use their superior wealth to insist that specific children should be dressed differently, as a monument to their philanthropy. Such a regime could not be imposed by the other day schools, although the National School insisted on buff calico tippets and bonnets for its girls in the early days.[4]

Conformity to the principles of the schools was enforced by a system of reward and punishments. These were general throughout the schools, but were especially developed in those of Lancaster, where small numbrs of teachers and large numbers of children made control difficult. Generally, at least until the middle of the century, the schools solved these problems by the use of the monitorial system.[5] Rewards were essential to the success

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1. B.L.S., _Annual Report,_ 1843
2. Boys on the Watson foundation continued to wear distinctive dress until 1927. Hunter, _op.cit.,_ p. 321; Endowed Charities, _op.cit.,_ p. 203
3. _loc.cit._
4. National School Minute Book, etc., minutes of meeting of April 18, 1814
5. See below, p.278.

of this.   Books, principally the Bible, were given to deserving pupils.

Such prizes were designed to arouse exertion and emulation, as well as to

fulfill propaganda purposes.   They were the means by which 'useful maxims'

could reach not only the scholars, but parents and friends who might read

them.[1]   The best boys at the Lancasterian School were allowed to use the

library, stocked with 'select and entertaining books', expressly for this

purpose.[2]   The Lancasterian Schools developed especially sophisticated

systems of rewards.   An order of merit was established in 1814, to 'excite

emulation, to reward industry, and to promote improvement'.[3]   This was

given for repeating the rules of the school, tables of multiplication and weight

and measure, and the commandments, in conjunction with a good character at

home and at school.[4]   In the Charity Schools, rewards were also given for

good conduct: in the Boy's School, this took the form of cash between 1807

and 1830, and books after this date.[5]   At the Lancasterian Schools, monitors

often received special benefits, such as clothes or dinners.[6]   In general,

the reward system showed an acute grasp of the children's psychology.   The

kudos of receiving public acclaim, and a small prize, and the disgrace of

losing a position of merit, must have been important for the children,

most of whom were under ten years old.

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1.   B.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1812
2.   _ibid._, 1817
3.   _S.I._ 21 June 1814.   Also see Binns, _op.cit._, p. 17
4.   B.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1814
5.   B.C.S., _Annual Reports_
6.   G.L.S., _Annual Report_, 1820

By the same token, punishments were often invoked. Humiliation was the key factor in this. At the Lancasterian School, it was alleged that transgressors were placed in a cage, and hauled up to the ceiling.[1] At the Charity Schools, punishment for misdemeanours was set against the general background of the principles of subordination to physical hardship- In 1841, it was said that corporal punishment had been totally banished, but it seems that the cane was widely used.[2]

The encouragement of thrift was an important principle in the day schools. This was particularly the case in the Charity Schools. According to the report to the Charity Commissioners in 1897, the boys were encouraged to place any pocket money in the Yorkshire Penny Bank, sometimes taking as much as £20 with them when they left.[3] At the annual Hanbey's feast, the boys supported by this foundation took round collection plates, and divided the money between them. This was then banked in their own names, jointly with the treasurer of the school, to prevent their parents withdrawing it for their own use. The cash was then made available to the boy at the start of his working life, and this could be a substantial amount.[4] The experience of ex-Charity School pupil G.A. Hampshire, however, was that his money was taken from him, and was not returned, because his widowed mother was in receipt of an allowance from the Poor Law Guardians.[5]

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1. _S.D.T._ 22 September 1938
2. B.C.S., _Annual Report_, 1841; violence against the boys occurred even in the twentieth century. In 1922, a governor of the school was retired early for the infliction of punishment on the boys with a cane filled with lead. Hampshire, _op.cit._, p. 19
3. Endowed Charities, _op.cit._, p. 203
4. _S.R.I._ 3 November, 1917
5. Hampshire, _op.cit._, p. 26

The Charity Schools also developed a method of aftercare, in order to maintain their influence on the children, once they were in employment. As early as 1792, girls on leaving were allowed to take their existing school clothes, as well as new gowns, aprons, caps, shoes and stockings, to the value of £1.2.4d.[1] This remained standard practice throughout the nineteenth century. Boys were also given an outfit, although the cap and waistcoat had to be provided by parents or guardians.[2] This practice allowed servants and apprentices to go to their new jobs clean and decent; thus charity children entered the homes of the middle classes as a convincing advertisement of the good wrought by the schools, and the net of obligation to their benefactors was tightened further. Clothes, and sometimes books, were used as an inducement for children to remain with their employrs. In 1829, boys were given a Bible, a prayer book, and Samuel Roberts's moral tract Tom and Charles, if they stayed in the same position three years, and received a good testimonial.[3] This was also the custom at the National Schools, where religious books were given to children who had remained four years in employment, and had testimonials of exemplary conduct, especially in regard to 'honesty, industry, and the due observance of the Sabbath Day'.[4] It was usual for girls who remained in service one year to be given a new gown. Sometimes these gifts were a source of trouble. It was important that a servant girl, particularly one who had received her education through charity, should be dressed as such. In 1880, a local press report mistakenly described the dresses given to deserving girls as silk, instead of stuff. A number of subscriptions were

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1. G.C.S., Annual Report, 1792
2. Article by an old boy, South Yorkshire Notes and Queries, II, n.d. p. 117
3. B.C.S., Annual Report,1826-29
4. National District Society, Annual Report, 1815

withdrawn, and the trustees of the school put great effort into pointing out the error.[1] Sometimes, cash was given to the girls, usually a guinea.[2] Obviously, gifts such as clothes or money were attractive, but in their attempts to encourage regularity, placed the ex-pupil in a position of potential exploitation. Other means of after care were the holding of social teas. These provided servant girls with a free meal, and for the ladies' committee of the Charity School, the conviction of a job well done.

The education given to working class children in the Sheffield day schools was determined by moral and utiliterian considerations. This was stated succinctly by the committee of the Lancasterian Schools in 1827, who argued that the education given to the children, 'especially such as relate to this world, must be limited by the station and rank of life in which children are born and placed'.[3] This was the single most important constraint upon the type of education available in the schools. Local occupational opportunities imposed further limitations. It was realistic that boys should anticipate employment in the local trades, while girls were restricted by sex as well as by class to domestic service. Thus working class children required a minimum of formal education, and a maximum of moral indoctrination to fulfill such positions in commerce or domestic service. However, money for teaching purposes was continually jeopardised by the voluntary nature of the schools' income. The Lancasterian Schools received government aid in 1865, but the Girls' Charity School remained entirely self-supporting until 1898.[4] For reasons of efficiency, the monitorial system was widely used, at least until the 1850's. This imposed overwhelming limitations upon the range and

1. G.C.S., Annual Report, 1880
2. ibid., 1888

3. B.L.S., Annual Report, 1827.
4. Endowed Charities, op.cit., p. 265; G.C.S., Annual Report, 1897; ibid., 1898

quality of the teaching.

These factors combined to limit the secular education which was available to little more than the rudiments of literacy, for most of the nineteenth century. In line with contemporary educational philosophy, the education offered to girls in the late eighteenth century at the Charity School was restricted to English, and the principles of religion according to the catechism. Practical training was given in knitting, needlework, spinning and weaving. Occasionally, girls worked at cleaning, sewing, laundry and general housework in the school, thus gaining desirable practical experience, and presumably, saving the trustees a considerable outlay on servants.[1] The syllabus at the Girls' Lancastrian School was comparable. In 1817, spelling, reading and writing, using the Bible and testament, was varied with sewing and knitting. Garments made were sold, or sometimes offered to the town's charities.[2] At the National Schools, girls spent two hours a day knitting, and one full morning a week in repairing their own clothes.[3]

The range of subjects available to girls did not alter radically during the century. At the Charity Schools in the late 1850's, there was still a simple syllabus of reading, writing, easy sums, knitting, sewing, patching and darning.[4] In the 1840's, the Lancasterian Girls' School taught reading, arithmetic, scriptural geography and the Bible.[5] In 1894, the trustees of the Charity School expressed the wish to bring the education of girls into line with modern requirements: the reason for this was to enable the school 'to retain its position in the public estimation', or, to attract more subscriptions, rather than the intellectual development of the girls.

1.   G.C.S., Annual Report, 1788; ibid., 1789 and 1792
2.   G.L.S., Annual Report, 1817; ibid., 1818
3.   S.I. 28 June, 1814
4.   G.C.S., Annual Report, 1858-59
5.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 10

The additional subjects suggested as suitable were cookery, finer laundry work and dressmaking, hardly revealing a change in philosophy for the earlier practice.[1] Thus the idea that working class girls were fit only for the minimum education with a dominant emphasis on domestic skills, was maintained at least until the end of the nineteenth century.

The education available for boys was broader based, but nevertheless, circumscribed by the concept of social class. At the end of the eighteenth century, Charity School boys were taught the alphabet, testament, Bible, dictionary, repeated the catechism and the explanation, did writing and 'accompts'. Music and singing were also taught.[2] Industrial work such as spinning had been part of the curriculum in the early eighteenth century, but this had died out. Probably it was realised that this type of work, whcih characterised so many of the early charity schools,[3] was irrelevant to the needs of boys who were expected to go into the Sheffield tool and cutlery trades. The subjects offered to boys grew increasingly diverse. In the 1830's, reading, accounts, including algebra, decimals, fractions, and inverse proportions were taught, as well as English, grammar and the catechism.[4] The National and the Lancasterian Schools offered a wider range of subjects by the middle of the century. The National School at Carver Street, taught their boys reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar, also history, geography and scriptural geography.[5] In addition to this, the Lancasterian School offered linear, zoological and landscape drawing, and singing.[6] At the end of the century, the syllabus at the Charity School was still limited by functional considerations; typing and shorthand were eventually added, to aid boys seeking clerical positions in city firms.[7] Furthermore, at this time the boys were expected to play an increasing role in the running of the

1.   G.C.S., _Annual Report_, 1894
2.   B.C.S., _Annual Report_, 1777-78
3.   Jones, _op.cit._, _passim_
4.   B.C.S., _Annual Report_,1830
5.   Symonds, _op.cit._, p. 10
6.   _ibid._, p. 11
7.   B.C.S., _Annual Report_, 1908-10

institution, under a particularly spartan governor; duties included, in addition to school work, washing, baking, helping with meals and gardening.[1]

The way in which teaching was carried out was wholly consistent with the concern for discipline, and the subordination of the children. The monitorial system, or variations upon this, became general in Sheffield, and was observed by Jelinger Symonds in the 1840's.[2] By the 1850's, however, developments within the teaching profession meant the gradual replacement of monitors with pupil teachers and assistants. The educational philosophy of Joseph Lancaster was well received in Sheffield: following a lecture by Lancaster in 1809, the establishment of a school was immediately set in motion.[3] The recommendations of Lancaster and Bell, or a combination of the two, were widely followed in other Sheffield day schools, such as the Wesleyan schools at Red Hill and Brunswick, and the Roman Catholic School.[4] The Charity School, despite reservations about the details of the system, seem to have followed suit.[5]

The educational philosophies of Lancaster and Bell combined the social values of middle class reformers vis-à-vis the working class, with the contemporary Benthamite preoccupation with efficency and cheapness. The Committee of the Boys' Lancasterian School asserted confidently in 1816 that their plans

> 'were calculated to give the greatest quantity
> of useful instruction to the greatest number
> of children at the smallest expense, of any
> system which the wit of man had previously
> devised.' 6

Similar claims were made by the advocates of the National Schools.[7] The monitorial system was a rational response to the new concern with the education

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1.   Hampshire, op.cit.
2.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 10. For the monitorial system, see Binns, op.cit., p. 18; Birchenough, op.cit., pp. 36-38, 244-245; Attick op.cit., p. 146
3.   S.I. 21 September, 1809
4.   Symonds, op.cit., pp. 11-12
5.   See J. Houle, 'Strictures on Mr. Lancaster's plan of Education', in S.I. 25 April 1809; ibid., 2 May 1809; G.R. Batho, Teaching Unit for History, IV, University of Sheffield Institute of Education Sheffield, 1958, p. 23
6.   B.L.S., Annual Report, 1816
7.   S.I. 14 January, 1812

of large numbers of unruly working class children, in the context of financial

limitations, and the shortage of capable teachers. The fundamental charac-

teristics of the system were learning by rote, and the use of children in the

teaching process. To this end, many of the Sheffield schools were set out

formally, with a platform at one end, a brick floor sloping upwards, and

desks and benches arranged according to the system in use. At the

Lancasterian schools, the walls and floor around the room were laid out with

the characteristic cards and semi-circular drafts.[1] The manoeuvres of the

children on an order from the platform were a matter of some importance, for

it trained them to be regular, obedient and attentive, in the larger schools

giving the impression of a well-disciplined regiment.[2] In the most formal

schools, this was achieved through the denial of the opportunity for indi-

vidual thought and self-expression, and the propensity for intelligent questioninj

The monitors, drawn from the older pupils, received instruction from the master,

and in turn taught the children, in groups of four to ten. Most children, at

some stage in their education, came under the direct attention of the master

himself. A degree of learning by rote was fundamental to the system, although

in 1817, the committee of the Girls' Lancasterian School were allegedly

anxious to avoid making memory 'a mere magazine of words, without the

association of correspondent thoughts and feelings.'[5] In some of the better

schools, special efforts were made to attract the attention of the children,

and to promote observation.[5] At Brunswick, interrogative techniques were

used individually and collectively at every stage of learning, to ensure that

1.   Bernard, op.cit., pp. 175-176; Symonds, op.cit., p. 11
2.   Bernard, op.cit., p. 176
3.   Altick, op.cit., pp. 150-52
4.   G.L.S., Annual Report, 1817
5.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 11

each child had a thorough understanding of what he had learned.[1]   Although

the Bible was in common currency as a text book, the children of the

Lancasterian School were not entirely divoced from reading, for a library

was in existence by 1817; this was restricted to monitors, but contained

books drawn from the sciences, arts, history and biography.[2]   Many of the

books would no doubt have been propagandist.   However, access to a library,

and the occasional gift of books may have played a significant part in the

inculcation of reading habits for some working class children.

The proliferation of day schools before 1870, the continuity

of their existence, and the number of children who passed through them

suggests that they were in a position to exert a considerable influence upon

the values and standards of the working class community.   This particularly

applies to the first half of the nineteenth century, for after this,

voluntary provision was unable to make any headway against the increase in

population; their inability to meet the new demand of the period after 1870

meant that many of the most influential schools, such as the Lancasterian

and National Schools, had reached the end of the road by the 1880's.

Nevertheless, these institutions undoubtedly had some part to play

in influencing the opportunities and expectations of the working classes in

Sheffield.   There are some important parallels with the sunday school

movement.[3]   Compacency was an attitude common to both.   Patrons and

supporters of the local day schools had an unshakeable conviction as to the

usefulness of their efforts, a belief not wholly to be explained by the need

to encourage subscriptions.

Although the links with the churches were much looser than

was the case with the sunday schools, promoters of day school education

1.   ibid., p. 12
2.   B.L.S., Annual Report 1817; ibid., 1818
3.   See above, chapter 9

occasionally asserted that there had been considerable success in inducing

children to attend religious worship.   The committee of the Boys' Lancasterian

School concluded in 1816 that it would be difficult to find any group of

people in the locality who were more punctual in 'frequenting the public means

of grace'.[1]   The church day schools continued to exert pressure in this

direction, but with no evidence of success.

The beneficial effects of a day school education upon the morals

and manners of the working class child were, however, constantly asserted.

The Lancasterian School claimed responsibility for the

> 'many, many youths, of intelligent countenance
> and sober habits...who are filling up useful and
> respectable stations in the subordinate ranks of
> life, with credit and comfort to themselves and
> their friends'. [2]

Few young delinquents in the town were thought to have come into contact with

a Lancasterian education.[3]   Physical appearance and demeanour were seized

upon as evidence of improvement, and it was felt that even the poorest

children became cleaner and more decent after a few months at the school.[4]

This preoccupation continued throughout the century.   The neat and modest

attire of ex-Charity School girls at a social tea in 1853 was regarded as

proof of the success of a Charity School education.[5]   In 1886, the trustees

of the school were in no doubt that their girls had acquired not only the necessary

habits of punctuality, tidiness and personal neatness, but a respectful

obedience to authority.[6]   Although the fundamental aim of the day schools

was the production of efficient servants and workpeople, the ultimate

testimony to the success of a moral education was held to be the example

of some former pupils, who rose to be some of Sheffield's most prominent

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1.   B.L.S., *Annual Report*, 1816; Bernard, *op.cit.*, pp. 179-180
2.   B.L.S. *Annual Report*, 1820
3.   *ibid.*, 1825
4.   G.L.S., *Annual Report*, 1821
5.   G.C.S., *Annual Report*, 1849-53
6.   *ibid.*, 1886

citizens.[1] This attitude tends to cut across the idea that children should be educated to be good and obedient servants, and no more: although it was important that working class boys should know their place, enhanced status was a fair reward for hard work and thrifty dealing.

The inadequacies of many of the school, particularly in relation to educational standards, was revealed by Jelinger Symonds in 1843.[2] In general, local social and economic factors which affected the success of the sunday schools also affected the day schools.[3] Child labour, the prevalence of high wages, and the economic independence of young workers, and the indifference of working class parents all took their toll. Despite occasional high enrollments, absenteeism was a constant reality. In the early years of the Lancasterian School, there was a registration of 840, but 730 was the highest number known to attend.[4] The investigations of Symonds reinforced this picture. At Red Hill Wesleyan Day School, formerly among the best in Sheffield, only half the 150 pupils attended.[5] Even at Brunswick Wesleyan Day School, which was highly praised by Symonds, attendance at the boys' school was only three quarters of the enrollment, and at the girls' school, considerably less.[6] Habits of regular, daily attendance were alien to the working class child, who was periodically required to help at home, take its share of earning the family income, or simply preferred to play truant.[7] Economic factors also severely limited the length of time that children were able to stay at school. Pupils at the Charity Schools customarily stayed six years,[8] but at the Lancasterian Schools, two years or less was normal. At Red Hill in 1843, the average duration of a child's education was only eight months.[9]

1.   B.C.S., Annual Report, 1826-29
2.   Symonds, op.cit., passim
3.   See.above, chapter 9
4.   B.L.S., Annual Report, 1815
5.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 11
6.   ibid., p. 12
7.   Attendance was also a problem for the Sheffield School Board.
        See below, Chapter 15.
8.   G.C.S., Annual Report, 1886
9.   G.L.S., Annual Report, 1820; Symonds, op.cit., p. 11.

Length of schooling, however, was no guarantee of an effective
education. At Red Hill, the upper classes had been at school for an average
of three and a third years, but were seriously deficient in scriptural
knowledge, elementary arithmetic and spelling.[1] Symonds was critical of
the educational standards at many of the schools, where the children were
slow to learn, and had little understanding of the lessons. The responsibility
for this was laid squarely upon the teachers. For many years, Sheffield
schools had been in difficulties in this respect. The National Schools had
a very rapid turnover of teachers in its early years.[2] At the Lancasterian
School, one of the very early recruits was so incompetent that Lancaster
himself described him as a 'mere hireling...a stupid overgrown cabbage of a
thing.'[3] Salaries in many of the schools were low. The teachers had
generally been chosen from the monitors, and only a handful in the larger
schools had any experience.[4] This was reflected in poor teaching techniques:
although the Sheffield schools were in the process of change in the 1840's,
there was a heavy dependence on the monitorial system, and sometimes very
large classes. There was also a reluctance to introduce improvements, such
as galleries, for the proper conduct of simultaneous instruction. In some
of the worst schools, such as the church school at Grimesthorpe, the
prevalence of learning by rote meant that the children had no comprehension
of the content or importance of their lessons. In other schools, such as
Red Hill, disorder and ill-discipline among the children upheld the failure
of moral as well as secular instruction.[5]

Nevertheless, the Sheffield day schools in the 1840's were in the
process of change, and very great improvements had been made in some of the
schools. Both the National School at Carver Street and the Lancasterian

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1. Symonds, op.cit., p. 12
2. National School Minute Book, etc., passim
3. Quoted in Henry Brian Binns, op.cit., p. 46; also see Altick, op.cit.,
    p. 34
4. Symonds, op.cit., p. 10
5. ibid., p. 11

Schools achieved a good standard, under competent and professional masters. Brunswick Wesleyan School was also praised as among the best in Sheffield: the children were described as proficient and intelligent, with the emphasis on understanding at every stage of the learning process.[1]   In general, it may be that the monitorial system, despite its disadvantages, could work reasonably well, given good quality teachers, and a continuous attendance by the children.   The system in practice proved flexible.   Some masters spent a considerable time in instructing the monitors, and despite the mechanised appearance of the system, some children did get individual attention. The system of rewards and prizes, and the high ratio of monitors to pupils, which was often 1:4, may have helped the more able to progress.

Thus whilst generations of poor children failed to gain anything from their experience at school, some children, with the encouragement of a good teacher and sympathetic parents were able to extract from the voluntary day schools a rudimentary education, and a system of social values sufficient to equip him for security and respectability as a working man, or even to provide the basis for self-advancement.

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1.   ibid., p. 12

15.   Educating the Child - The School Board 1870-1900

The continuing concern with the education of the working class
child, and the recognition of the inability of the voluntary schools to do
this work effectively, heralded the era of state education.   Middle class
opinion in Sheffield responded quickly to the Education Act of 1870, and
the first School Board was elected in the November of that year.   Under
the powers of compulsory attendance made possible by the Act, thousands
of working class children in Sheffield were able for the first time to
receive an elementary education.   Furthermore, the system of regularly
elected School Boards brought participation in educational provision to a
wider cross-section of the community: the different attitudes to working
class education were discussed far more publicly than had been possible
under the old system.

The composition of the first Sheffield School Board was overwhelm-
ingly middle class, dominated by local celebrities steel merchants
Sir John Brown and Mark Firth, and with a solid core of employers, such as
Skelton Cole, draper, Charles Wardlow, steel manufacturer, and Henry Wilson,

gentleman and snuff manufacturer.[1] The extension of the franchise in 1867 had given working class political consciousness new scope and energy: in Sheffield, some working men increasingly argued the right to have their candidates on the School Board. Despite problems of time and money, working class candidates put themselves up for election, and one or two working men served on most boards from 1876 until 1902, with the exception of the years 1888-1893. If state education was to be the means bringing the masses 'to understand their identity of interest with capital',[2] articulate representatives of the working class increasingly sought the right to supervise or to mitigate that process.

Nevertheless, traditions of paternalism died hard, and all the School Boards were overwhelmingly middle class in composition. Despite this homogeneity of interest in one respect there were fundamental conflicts of interest, in others which were often acrimonious. The schism between dissenter and churchman, Liberal and Conservative, emerged

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1.   Others were Michael Ellison, estate agent, William Cobby, railway agent, Thomas Moore, brewer, Charles Doncaster, steel merchant, William Fisher, merchant-manufacturer, Richard Holden, cattle dealer, James Crossland, soap manufacturer, Alfred Allott, accountant, Robert Eadon, saw manufacturer; see J.H. Bingham, The Period of the Sheffield School Board 1870-1903, Sheffield, 1949, p. 3; John Brown (1816-1896) began as an apprentice in a cutlery firm, and later set up as a manufacturer. He embarked upon the production of heavy steel in an unprecedented scale, opening the Atlas Works in 1864, and was instrumental in the rolling of armour plate for military purposes. He was Mayor in 1861 and 1862, Master Cutler in 1865 and 1866, and was knighted in 1867. He was also a Church Burgess and Town Trustee, Chairman of the Board of Guardians 1873-1893 and of the School Board 1870-1879. He was conservative in politics and an Anglican, and endowed All Saints' Church. Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc., pp. 161-164. Mark Firth (1819-1880) was the son of a steel melter, and started in business with his father and brother. His business success was connected with the expansion of the steel industry, and he became one of Sheffield's most prominent manufacturers. He was Master Cutler three times between 1867-1869 and Mayor in 1874. He was an active Liberal, and a New Connexion Methodist. His interest in education and philanthropy are reflected in his gifts of Firth Park, Firth's Almshouses and Firth College, and he inaugurated the first University Extension lectures in the City. See Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc., pp. 79-82

2.   Brian Simon, Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1918, London, 1965, p. 12

out of deep rooted attitudes to society and to religion, and often cut across the relationships of class. There were initial wishes to avoid factionalism, but the divisions were increasingly hardened by the growth of party politics at local level.[1] By the early 1880's, sectarian divisions based upon political and religious lines were acknowledged: 'speaking generally, the whole of the Liberals were Nonconformists, and the Conservatives Church of England and Roman Catholic'.[2] Thus nonconformist supporters of non-denominational education, reluctant to finance church schools out of the rates, aligned themselves in opposition to Tory and clerical elements, who were committed to maintaining the existing church schools. Tory reservations about the Education Act, and their wish for economy and retrenchment in the building of state schools, conflicted with Liberal enthusiasms for educational innovation and progressive expansion.[3]

Attitudes to the working classes, and the role which they should play in the community, provided one of the major flash-points in the history of the School Board. There was a consensus of agreement among middle class members over the urgent need for improvements in educational provision. One of the chief arguments was the need for a literate and technically competent workforce: without these, Sheffield could not hold her own commercially.[4] The effects of the depressions in the 1880's and 1890's, particularly on the steel industry, gave credence to the threats of foreign competition;[5] the recognition of the need to trade English artisans in

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1. For example, the attitude of Sir John Brown, S.D.T. 17 November, 1870; S.R.I. 14 November 1882
2. ibid., 16 May 1885
3. For building policy, see Bingham, op.cit., pp. 37-39; S.R.I. 4 November 1879 ibid., 11 November 1879
4. ibid., 15 November 1879, 11 November 1897
5. Pollard, History of Labour in Sheffield, Liverpool, 1959, pp. 126-127, 203

the skills of commercial competitors was the impetus behind the development of technical education in Sheffield, as well as the vigorous expansion of the system of elementary education.[1]   An awareness of foreign competition led School Board officials John Moss and H.J. Wilson to visit Germany and Switzerland in 1879; particularly impressive to the Sheffield representatives were the German 'real-schools', which gave practical instruction to the artisan, and an education in advance of that which was available in England.[2]

Characteristically, the prosperity and the security of the nation was inextricably linked with the welfare of the working classes.   Ignorance was still seen as the inseparable companion of pauperism and crime;[3]   the education of the poor was an urgent social necessity.   There were disagreements between conservative and liberal elements, however, over the fundamental questions of equality of opportunity.   The Conservatives wished to provide the working classes, and especially the poor, with an education suitable for their station in life.   It was impossible to give to all the advantages of wealth and leisure: education should therefore reconcile the working man with his lot, and the daily toil would be made sweeter by the enjoyment of the national achievements in literature and history.[4]   The Conservatives took the position of the self-appointed champions of the poor, who, it was alleged, were subsidising schools attended by middle class children.   Conservatives on the Board remained implacably opposed to the extension of the curriculum in the elementary schools, arguing the impracticality and the wastefulness of an advanced education for the children of the masses.[5]   Education should thus be varied and competitive in nature, and ultimately determined by social

1.   See chapter 16
2.   Skelton Cole, Education – An Address with Reference to the Sheffield Central School, Sheffield, 1880, pp. 21-28; J.F. Moss, Notes on National Education in Continental Europe, Sheffield, 1873, passim
3.   S.D.T. 25 November, 1870
4.   ibid., 10 November 1897
5.   ibid., 16 November 1891

class, with middle class children remaining in the fee paying private schools

The concept of free education was also opposed until the legislation of 1891,

on moral and economic grounds.   Conservatives believed that working men

preferred to pay a small fee for their children: in any case, payment was

conducive to the virtue of gratitude.[1]   Free education could only

be considered in cases of acute poverty, for it was preferable that such

children be educated at the public cost, than remain in ignorance.   In such

cases, education was to be of the simplest nature, and payment enforced upon

all parents who were considered able to pay.[2]

Against this restrictive philosophy of education, the Liberal

arguments appeared progressive.   The most notable aspect of Liberal policy

was the idea of an advanced education for some working class children.

This was given practical expression in 1876, with the proposal for a Central

School with a higher department for 'deserving and clever pupils from the

other schools of the town...irrespective of class'.[3]   The Central School,

opened as the country's first 'higher grade School', in1880, helped to

fill the gap between the elementary schools, and the higher education provided

by Firth College.   Liberal policy hereafter embraced the policy of an

'educational ladder', to allow working class children access to the highest

facilities of education available.[4]   The concept of higher grade schools,

innovatory in that they lay outside the specific provisions of the 1870 Act,

was vigorously resisted by Conservative and Church elements.   They condemned

the additional burden upon the rates, some of which was born by the working

classes, which went to provide an advanced education at the Central School,

often for middle class children, at fees which undercut the existing middle

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1.   S.R.I. 28 October, 1885
2.   S.D.T. 21 November 1879
3.   Liberal A.J. Mundella had pressed this proposal as early as May
            1871, advocating secondary elementary schools, where the children
            of the working and poorer middle class could receive a 'good,
            sound, English Education'.   Bingham, op.cit., pp. 174, 178 .
4.   S.R.I. 11 November, 1897

class facilities at the Collegiate School, Wesley College and the Grammar School.[1] S.O. Addy argued that the Central School was virtually a middle class school, supported by money 'illegally wrung from the pockets of the ratepayers', whilst the old voluntary foundations were languishing for want of support.[2]

Such were the contrasting attitudes of Conservatives and Liberals to the problem of how to educate the working classes. Ultimately, however, their disagreements were more apparent than real. There were more fundamenta-differences between middle class attitudes to mass education, and the priorities identified by some of the working classes themselves. Many of the ideas put forward by working class candidates could not be endorsed by the middle class majority on the Board.

From its inception, the School Board placed itself in the tradition of paternalist government by men of leisure and property, in the interests of the community as a whole.[3] Some candidates, such as Dr. Beaumont, who contested Ecclesall Ward in 1870, were fundamentally opposed to the election of working men.[4] The denominationalist Education Union, and the unsectarian Education League both wished to nominate their own candidates in 1870, to limit the turmoil and expense of the contest.[5] This was firmly resisted by former grinder John Wilson, and others, who formed a Representative Committee

1. S.D.T. 9 November 1882
2. S.O. Addy, Middle Class Education in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1883
3. S.D.T. 18 November 1870
4. S.R.I. 16 November 1870
5. ibid., 11 November 1870

to ensure that the voters themselves should decide upon the nomination of candidates.[1] This was a victory for popular politics, and was endorsed by a number of the wards.[2] Nevertheless, there were very real obstacles against working men on the Board. Working class candidates came forward at every election, but few were successful. Polling hours were inconvenient for many, particularly those employed in steel, away at Neepsend or Brightside. Suggestions that polls should be kept open in the evenings were almost unanimously resisted by middle class members of the Board, apparently because of the difficulties of voting by candlelight, and the danger to lady voters.[3] Not until 1885 were working men successful in pressing for a Saturday election, and there was still considerable resistance to this.[4] Although a small number of working class candidates were gradually returned, the system continued to favour the wealthy. Few working men could afford to give unpaid service to the School Board. The Methodist steel melter, William Rolley, the candidate of the Sheffield Trades Council in 1873, was forced to resign his seat for this reason.[5]

Relations between middle and working class representatives both on and off the School Board was generally not easy. Some working men implicitly supported the paternalism of the Board, and, like William Rolley, considered it a great favour to be allowed such responsibility.[6] Such men for often Methodists, and were taken under the wing of the Liberal interest, for example

1. ibid., 12 November 1870
2. ibid., 16 November 1870
3. ibid., 24 October 1873; Bingham, op.cit., p. 11
4. A concession was made in 1879, when the polls were kept open until 7.00 p.m. S.R.I. 19 November 1879; Bingham, op.cit., p. 21
5. S.R.I., 21 February 1879; in 1870, William Dronfield had to withdraw as an unsectarian candidate, because School Board meetings clashed with working hours; ibid., 26 November 1870
6. ibid., 7 November, 1873

the Primitive Methodist Henry Adams who sat on the Board between 1882-84 and 1888-96, and supported the Liberal line of free education without an increase in the rates.[1] From 1885, the Sheffield Labour Association put their support behind the Liberals, in the interests of free schools, and the best education for the poor.[2] In 1894, britannia metalsmith Charles Hobson was elected for the Liberals, with the backing of the Sheffield Labour Association, and the Trades Council, of which he was the first chairman. His programme appeared radical, for he advocated education as a means of removing social injustice, and that men should be aware of the rights of labour, as well as its privileges.[3] Nevertheless, he was a virtual pawn of the Liberals, and in the same year, backed down from fighting the Attercliffe by-election with I.L.P. support, after objection from the Liberals.[4]

The link with such men as Hobson and Rolley was important for the Liberals. The respectable working man was not only a useful ally, but had to be saved from the clutches of Labourism. The Conservatives, however, failed to establish a formal relationship with the working classes. Individualists such as 'plain John Wilson, grinder' endorsed Conservative policies against free education, but although he had the sympathies of Sir John Brown, stayed firmly outside the denominational camp. During the election of 1882, the conservative Sheffield Daily Telegraph was careful to exclude references to John Wilson's speeches or meetings.[5]

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1. ibid., 3 November 1888. The support of Trades Council candidates for Liberals was usual, even on Labour questions: Sidney Pollard, 'The New Unionism and the Formation of the Labour Party', Sidney Pollard et al, Sheffield Trades and Labour Council 1858--1958, Sheffield, 1958, p. 45
2. S.R.I., 3 November 1885
3. S.D.T., 12 November 1894, 16 November 1894
4. Pollard , History of Labour, etc., p. 198; Joyce Brown 'Attercliffe, 1894: How One Local Liberal Party Failed to meet the Challenge of Labour', The Journal of British Studies, XIV, 1975, pp. 48-77
5. Reports of the School Board Meeting to the Rate Payers of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1882, S.R.I., 17 November, 1876; For Wilson, see Stainton,op.cit., pp. 282-284

From 1879, working class candidates emerged whose social attitudes and educational policies put them outside any Lib-Lab alliance. Jonathan Taylor, the son of a Chartist from Holmfirth, contested the election in 1879 to the irritation of both sides, but was elected with over 13,000 votes.[1] Taylor consistently stood as an 'advocate of Free Schools and strict economy'.[2] This was strongly opposed by the Conservatives, as free education would mean the closure of the voluntary schools, and by the Liberals, who wished to pump money into the educational sector, including the construction of expensive School Board offices. He was also opposed by John Wilson, who upheld freedom of choice in education.[3] Taylor, and other radicals such as J.E. Austin also opposed the expensive and oppressive bureaucracy of School Board officials, describing attendance officers as 'a little army of semi-policemen'.[4] Taylor's reputation as a secularist and an athiest also aroused hostility: he initially gave some support to the Liberal interest, but was refused the use of dissenting schoolrooms, and School Board member Mrs. Wycliffe Wilson declined to sit on the same platform with him.[5] Taylor thus remained excluded from party alignments for, as he himself commented, 'it would not be the proper thing for a dangerous man to ally himself with a number of safe, moderate and respectable people'.[6] By the mid-1890's, others were coming forward who were equally unacceptable to the middle classes. Hope Allan, nominated by the unlikely team of High Church Anglican Father Ommanney, and socialist eccentric Edward Carpenter, unsuccessfully contested the 1897 election as socialist candidate.[7]

1.　　　S.D.T. 6 November 1879; S.R.I. 21 November 1879; for Wilson, see Stainton, op.cit., pp. 346-347
2.　　　S.R.I. 4 November 1879
3.　　　ibid., 6 October, 1885
4.　　　ibid., 4 November, 1879
5.　　　ibid., 12 November 1879
6.　　　ibid., 3 November 1888
7.　　　ibid., 10 November 1897

By 1900, there were signs that Liberals and Conservatives were closing ranks, at least partly because of the threat of Labour. Alleging that another School Board election had been provoked only by Taylor, both sides argued that the old points of difference had become very much less, and that relations between the two interests were harmonious.[1] Although fundamental differences had existed over the question of religious education, Liberals and Conservatives ultimately shared many attitudes to the working class. In 1891 H.J. Wilson, perhaps Sheffield's most prominent Liberal politician of the period, urged industrial day schools for the children of the very poor, with high walls, a large gate, and very cheap food, 'to make them feel they were not in too happy a place',[2] and to avoid the future support of prisons and workhouses. Others who espoused the Liberal cause were even more insensitive to working class culture: F.E. Smith thought that the limits of a working class child's education should be to write and read well, and 'to be able in reading to avoid stupid mistakes with respect to the misplacing of aspirates'. He strongly opposed providing the children of the poor with free breakfasts, for parents ought to feel it a privilege to provide for their children, and 'people would be demanding to be taken to the seaside next'.[3] His outspoken suggestion that perhaps working men were not equal to the burgesses in intelligence led to embarrassment among the Liberals, and in 1876, Smith was replaced by William Rolley as Liberal candidate.[4]

Despite the seemingly progressive implications of the 'educational ladder', even the Liberal protagonists of this idea were forced to hedge it around with reservations. Essentially, the further education offered to selected working class children by the higher grade schools was simply to fit them for their position. The limitations of this type of education were stated succinctly by Skelton Cole in 1882 :

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1.   ibid., 10 November, 1900, 13 November, 1900
2.   S.D.T., 12 November, 1891
3.   S.R.I., 16 November, 1897
4.   ibid., 18 November, 1876

'our general aim is not to life our
young people out of their own sphere,
but to lay the foundation for the intelligent
future pursuit of technical knowledge and
skill, which will enable them so to deal with
the difficulties of their trade, so that they
may compete successfully with every similar
class of workmen in any part of the world'.1

To this end, the Board was assured that only children of extraordinary ability
could be eligible, only 'the few - the very few - of exceptional ability and
perseverance'.2   It was estimated that only 5% or 6% of the children between
the fifth and seventh grades in Sheffield could be given this extra education.
The need for a nucleus of technically trained artisans was ultimately more
important than any duty to give the working classes as a whole an advanced
education: a higher grade education for the children of the working man was a
privilege which had to be earned: that this should be the fundamental right of
all was denied.   By the same token, although Liberals such as H.J. Wilson
professed commitment to free education, there was a general reluctance to
burden the rate-payers with costs inherent in the mass remission of fees.3
The best that could be done was to give working class children 'the best
possible education, in the brightest most cheerful schools at the lowest
cost'.4   Such platitudes became stock liberal expressions.

Thus, in order to be politically acceptable, the concept of the
'educational ladder' had to be qualified by restrictions which made a mockery
of its social idealism, and indeed, prevented the country from getting the
skilled technicians which it needed.   Despite the changes in its political
balance, the School Board over a period of thirty years pursued a consistent
policy in relation to the training of the working class child.   Through its
aegis, more children than ever had been possible before were trained to know
their place.   The acceptance of community responsibility for the mass

1.   Skelton Cole, Sheffield School Board - A Statement of the Work
        of the Board, Sheffield, 1882, pp. 20-21; S.R.I. 3 November, 1882
2.   Cole, Education - An Address, etc., p. 36; Cole, Sheffield School
        Board, etc., p. 17
3.   S.R.I. 23 October, 1885
4.   S.D.T. 9 November, 1882

education of children in 1870 allowed the values of respectability to be
imposed on a great scale: by 1902, accommodation had been provided for
47,110 children in the newly built Board Schools.   Counting the voluntary
provision there were 74,326 places available for local children in the
Sheffield schools.   A total of 47 schools had been built by the Board,
at a total cost of £723,341.[1]

The School Board was thus in a position to have a critical effect
upon the training and education of the working class child.   This was achieved
through the nature of the curriculum, and the rigid code of moral and social
discipline which was enforced.

The secular curriculum proposed for use in the Board Schools in 1871
was substantially similar to that already in operation in the voluntary schools.
The basic subjects taught were writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography,
history, music and drawing.   Drill was important, for physical health, as well
as for discipline.   Although supplemented by reading from graduated lesson
books, 'reading and explanation of the Bible' was still central to the
children's education.   The tradition established by the Charity Schools was
carried on in the instruction of girls in plain needlework and cutting out.[2]

Religious instruction was a central, but nonetheless controversial,
part of the curriculum.   Under the terms of the 1870 Act, there was to be
no distinctive denominational teaching, and this was vigorously upheld by
local nonconformists.[3]   A close watch was kept upon religious education;
until 1885 the Board's own inspectors examined children in religious knowledge,
and after this, Anglican and dissenting ministers took responsibility for
religious education.   Generally, the quality of religious teaching was high,
and board school children compared well with those from denominational schools
in this respect.[4]

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1.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 54
2.   ibid., p. 117
3.   ibid., pp. 160-161
4.   ibid., pp. 162-164

The scope of the secular curriculum was not radically altered during the operation of the Board. Gradually, the possibility of doing advanced subjects was recognised. The controversial Higher Grade School attempted a full range of subjects, both as day and evening classes: these included ancient and modern languages, mathematics, literature, physiology, geography and botany. The concept of sex discrimination was applied, however, even for the most able. In the 1890's, girls studied geography and physiology instead of chemistry. This was felt to be more popular with parents, as well as enabling more boys to attend chemistry classes.[1] Under the rules of the Science and Art Department, other subjects of relevance to local industry were taught. These included mineralogy, metallurgy, mining and machine construction. Some teacher training was available for scholars of special ability, who passed competitive exams.[2] In 1898, the principle of advanced instruction for older children was ratified by the establishment of six local higher grade schools, along similar lines.[3]

Nevertheless, in the ordinary schools, improvements in the range of subjects offered to working class children were slow. The addition of elementary science was considered in 1883, but initially, science was restricted to the Central School. Lack of facilities was a recurring problem: the laboratory in the higher grade school held only 32. In 1889, a laboratory was set up in the Crofts School and demonstrators employed, but science was extended to the voluntary schools only in 1900.[4] Meanwhile, there was a heavy emphasis upon domestic subjects. Girls were tained in cookery and needlework, in addition to sewing. As had been the practice in some Sheffield schools for the poor, nearly a hundred years previously,[5]

1.   _ibid._, p. 187
2.   _ibid._, pp. 174-175, 180
3.   _ibid._, p. 119
4.   _ibid._, p. 129
5.   See above, chapter 14

the finished garments were offered first to the parents. Repairs on family

clothing were also undertaken, providing such articles were 'scrupulously

clean'.   The extent of domestic instruction increased, and in 1883, there

were nine schools which were centres for cookery instruction.[1]   There was

little scope for promoting wider mental cultivation, although this was

beginning to improve in the 1880's, with the establishment of a lending

library at the Central School.[2]   In the 1890's, visits to museums were

organised;   in addition, many suburban board schools had a dual role as

district public libraries.[3]

A fundamental aspect of the work of the schools was the attempt to

enforce habits of morality and decency in social behaviour.   This became

especially necessary, as children from the slums began to join those from

respectable working class backgrounds.   The values of punctuality were

constantly and emphatically invoked.   This was an attempt to change the

ingrained habits and the flexible rhythms still found in popular culture.

Local feasts and fairs, still being held in the working class districts of

Grimesthorpe, Attercliffe and Darnall in the 1870's, were local public

holidays, and were a constant problem for the School Board.[4]   In addition,

regular daily attendance was an alient idea where children could be a vital

supplement to family earnings, particularly in years of depression; children

also had traditional domestic roles, such as baby minding or shopping.

Poverty also created problems.   Absence through sickness was a frequent

result of the nutritional inadequacies of the urban working class diet.[5]

The lack of clothing and shoes kept many of the poorest children away.

Anotherfactor was simply the sheer apathy of many working class parents to

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1.   Bingham, op.cit., pp. 123-125.
2.   ibid., p. 182
3.   ibid., pp. 142-143
4.   ibid., p. 67
5.   John Burnett, Plenty and Want - A Social History of Diet from
         1815 to the Present Day, paperback edition, 1968, pp. 182-186

the advantages of an elementary education.[1]   The work of the Board was
further hindered by anomalies in the law: the bye-laws only exempted from
school children over ten years old who had passed the fourth standard, but the
Factory Acts continued to allow half-time work for children over eight years.[2]

This tradition of absenteeism had constantly impeded the achievements
of the voluntary day schools before 1870.[3]   The apparent inevitability of this
was enshrinked in the frequent assumption that one sixth of the children would
be permanently absent.[4]   An attempt to overthrow working class habits of
irregularity was incorporated into the Education Act, which empowered local
boards to pass bye-laws to enforce compulsion.   Regular, punctual, comulsory
attendance for working class children provided a vital training for the
demands of industrial and commercial employment.   Reasons of efficiency were
also vital.   The Board Schools could only be built with a heavy capital
outlay for the rates, and there was little point in building new schools if
the existing ones were under-utilised.   Moreover, absenteeism meant the
loss of valuable government grants.   In the words of Skelton Cole, chairman
of the Board in 1880, 'increase the average attendance and you reduce the
cost.'[5]

Under the Sheffield bye laws, the parents of children between the
ages of five and thirteen years were required to send them to school, or face
a penalty.   The borough was divided into eight, and school attendance officers
appointed, with the authority to enforce attendance, and to hear appeals.[6]
Initially fees of 2d. per week for infants and 4d. for boys and girls had
been established, but this proved prohibitive for poor families, and some
schools such as the old Ragged School in the Crofts were made entirely free.[7]

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1.   S.R.I., 3 November, 1882
2.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 62
3.   See above, Chapter 14
4.   ibid., p. 58
5.   Cole, Education - An Address, etc., p. 10; Cole, Sheffield School
         Board, etc., p. 7
6.   Bingham, op.cit., pp. 57-58
7.   ibid., p. 75

The fees of poor children were to be paid by the Board, or the Poor Law authorities; however, a wish to save parents from the degrading stigma of pauperism, as well as the unco-operativeness of the Poor Law Guardians, led to the whole of this cost falling upon the Board.[1] Absenteeism could also be countered in other ways, by adroitly timing the three week summer holiday to coincide with the Attercliffe feast, which had led to the collapse of attendance figures in the schools in Attercliffe, Carbrook, Newhall, Darnall, Park and Grimesthorpe.[2]

The scale of the absenteeism facing the Board was often daunting. In 1873, 40,000 handbills were distributed, drawing attention to compulsory attendance, but in the following year, the extent of absenteeism was such that over 84,000 special visits were necessary. These resulted in the serving of 2,345 notices, and 774 summonses. The problem was not restricted to the poor - the Board found that of those who were summonsed, no less than 610 were described as skilled workmen, earning good wages.[3] There were cases of parents deceiving the attendance officers with forged medical certificates, and there is no doubt that the activities of Jonathan Taylor's 'little army of semi-policemen' were hotly resented.[4] The keenness of these officers to enforce attendances was stimulated by a bonus system, equal to a pound every six months in 1887.[5] Cash incentives were also given to the children. Those under eleven years of age who had made at least 350 attendances a year for the past two years were allowed a remission of fees, up to 6d. per week.[6] The Board also attempted to close some of the legal loop holes which allowed children to escape. A petition was sent to W.E. Foster in 1874, but excusal was still possible until the Education Act of 1894. In the meantime, exemption certificates had to be granted, but only very small numbers of children were permitted to enter full time employment.[7]

1.   ibid., p. 80
2.   ibid., p. 91
3.   ibid., p. 68
4.   ibid., p. 63. See above p293
5.   ibid., p. 78
6.   ibid., p. 73
7.   ibid., p. 62; in 1880, 842 exemption certificates were requested. 373 boys and 133 girls were awarded them, but only 36 of these were allowed full time employment; ibid., p. 75

On a daily basis, punctuality in attendance was enforced by a rigid set of rules. Detailed rules existed for the opening and closing of the morning and afternoon sessions, involving a daily total of four roll calls: the teachers had to enter the exact times the children arrived and departed in a book, independent of the central record of attendances.[1] By 1884, a sophisticated system of rewards and certificates for punctual attendance had evolved. The maximum which could be gained was 4/-, for four first class attendance certificates in a year. These were publicly awarded in front of parents and friends, and could be withheld for gross misconduct.[2] Punctuality and regularity were not the only values the schools tried to instil: among the specific duties vested in the teachers were instructions to 'bring up the children in habits of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness', and also to impress upon them the importance of general social behaviour, defined as 'cheerful obedience to duty...consideration and respect for others, and...honour and truthfulness in word and act'.[3] Parents were urged to see that children came to school neat and clean. The relationship between the sexes was carefully supervised; when special classes for pupil teacher were held at the Central Higher School in 1895. the girls were dismissed five minutes ahead of the boys.[4] In such attempts to control social behaviour, and in the system of rewards and fines, the School Board was the direct descendent of the tradition established by the voluntary day schools in the early years of the century.[5]

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1. School Board, Regulation for the Management of Schools, Sheffield, 1884, pp. 5-6
2. ibid., pp. 12-13
3. ibid., p. 9
4. Bingham, op.cit., p. 187
5. See above, chapter 14

Thrift and prudence in the handling of money were important lessons to be learned, because they could sometimes avert the worst of the hardships endemic in working class life. The importance of thrift was recognised by the School Board, and a Savings Bank, to be run in conjunction with the Sheffield and Hallamshire Savings Bank, was established in 1877.[1] Sums deposited were between 1d. and £1, and when £1 had been accumulated, this was deposited in the Sheffield and Hallamshire Savings Bank, in the child's name.[2] Branch savings banks spread throughout the schools; there were 29 in 1882.[3] A reserve fund was built up out of one third of the interest allowed on deposits; two thirds of this was paid to the teachers who ran the banks, as an incentive to further efforts.. The fund could be used in other wasy: in 1891, £5 was put aside to be spent on prizes for the best essays on thrift, by children who were already depositors. A total of 308 essays were submitted, and twenty prizes of 5/- banked in the prize winner's accounts. This scheme was repeated several times in the 1890's. Essays were usually required on the practical problems of economic management, such as how a child earning 12/- per week could best use it in relation to clothing, food and leisure.[4] The fund encouraged some children to contribute between them annual amounts of up to £10,000, but economic need was such at eight ninths of this was usually withdrawn.[5] Responsibility with money was also encouraged by the nature of the fee system. Before 1891, fees were usually remitted in cases of acute poverty, but where possible, these had to be paid in advance. Children who could pay thirteen weeks in advance were excused payment for one of these weeks. Where fees were paid on a week to week basis, these still had to be brought in advance, so there was less chance of parents being in debt to the Board.[6]

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1.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 138
2.   Regulations, etc., p. 22
3.   Cole, Sheffield School Board, etc., p. 14
4.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 139
5.   ibid., p. 140
6.   Regulations, etc., pp. 6-7

Another aspect of this concern for the moral training of the child was the attitude to drink, gambling and demoralising literature. Petitions deploring the latter were sent to both houses of parliament in 1876, expressing serious apprehension at the increased circulation of 'impure and vicious' publications.[1] By the 1870's, the Board could scarcely ignore the temperance issue, which was becoming increasingly central to nonconformist politics. However, the attitude to drink was modified by the relative strengths of churchmen and dissenters on the Board at any one time. There was also a reluctance to allow outside pressure groups, such as the temperance lobby, to influence its policy and work.

The attitude of the Sunday Board towards drink was therefore ambivalent, although there is evidence of a more sympathetic consideration by the 1890's. The Anglicans argued that taxes from drink were used for educational purposes: brewers Thomas Moore and S.B. Ward represented the denominational interest on the Board between 1870-1878, and 1882-1891, and drink was therefore useful to the nonconformists as a stick to beat their opponents. Indeed, by the 1890's most Liberal candidates in School Board electins regarded temperance as central to their campaigns.[2] In 1894, the Board was urged to sign a memorial calling attention to the excessive numbers of pubs in Sheffield, but declined to do this. The conservatives drew attention to the need to compensate and protect the interests of the publicans, and felt tht the School Board had no right to deal with such questions.[3] On other occasions the Liberals were able to influence the Board into decisive action: in 1881, it petitioned the Town Council about the proximity of the Compass Inn to the Central Schools, arguing that the

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1.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 14; S.R.I. 12 May 1876
2.   S.D.T., 12 November, 1891
3.   ibid., 19 October 1894; ibid., 13 November 1894

existence of a pub in the neighbourhood was an especial danger to older

pupils attending evening classes.[1]   The contrast between Liberal and

Conservative attitudes over the drink issue was highlighted by the Beatrice

Bingley case, which became an issue in the election of 1882.   On the

recommendation of Quaker steel merchant Charles Doncaster and Wesleyan

minister Samuel Burrows, the school management committee refused to accept

Beatrice Bingley, the daughter of a publican in Carbrook, as a candidate

for pupil teacher, unless she removed to lodgings away from the pub, with a

respectable person approved by the committee.   This was fought by

conservative solicitor Alfred Taylor, who argued that many pubs were entirely

respectable, and by John Wilson, who took the view that parents were the best

custodians of their children.[2]   The Liberals got their way, however, which

meant that the Licensed Victuallers' Association rallied behind brewer

S.B. Ward in the election of that year.[3]

However, despite the Liberal zeal for the temperance cause, the

School Board, even when dominated by nonconformists felt reluctant to allow

outside temperance interests to influence its work.   No doubt one reason

was the fine political balance between Conservative and Liberal: thus in

1884, a Board with a nonconformist majority declined to sign a petition

requesting the prevention of the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sundays.

Further petition s were rejected by predominantly Anglican Boards in 1885

and 1887.   In the following year, a proposal that a Band of Hope lecturer

should give ten scientific lectures on temperance in the schools was refused.

By 1889, however, these were allowed, provided that they were optional, took

place after school, and were not repeated more than once a year in the same

department.[4]   In 1890, the National Temperance League circularised the

Sheffield pupil teachers about a temperance competition, and were allowed to

1.   Bingham, op.cit., p. 180
2.   ibid., p. 94; S.R.I. 17 February 1882; ibid., 17 March, 1882
3.   S.R.I., 22 November, 1882
4.   Bingham, op.cit., p.134

use a room in the Central School for an examination.[1]   Temperance lecturer

Joseph Addision began a series of 25 lectures in the Sheffield schools in the

following year, which reached over 4,000 scholars.   1,166 children wrote

essays about the lectures, and over half of these were given certificates of

merit or prizes.   Nevertheless, the Anglican dominated Board refused

Addison's request to become a teacher of temperance at a nominal salary,

although School Boards in Hull and Manchester had responded favourably to a

similar request.[2]

The domination of the Board by Conservatives throughout the 1890's

and the continued pressure from groups such as the Social Questions League,[3]

meant that the temperance issue continued to be controversial.   In 1898, the

Board relented in the face of a joint deputation by the Band of Hope Union,

the Sheffield Temperance Association, the United Kingdom Alliance, and

the Independent Order of Good Templars, urging temperance teaching within

school hours.   In 1901, the Board agreed, after a year of discussion, to

petition parliament in favour of the prohibition of the sale of intoxicants

to children under 16 years of age.   Although many conservatives retained

their fundamental reservations about temperance, some individuals took a

strong stand in its favour.   The Anglican clergyman W.R. Pym had edited

Gough's temperance orations.   Readings from this were given to standard V

upwards, in place of the ordinary reading lesson, and scholars were examined

on it twice yearly.[4]

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1.   ibid., p. 100
2.   ibid., pp. 135-136
3.   For the Social Questions League, see below, chapter 20
4.   ibid., pp. 137-138

The aggressive policies of the School Board, particularly with respect to attendance, and the supervision of teachers, had measurable practical results. From 1879-1881, the average annual percentage who passed in reading, writing and arithmetic rose from 91% to 94% for reading, remained at 86% for writing, and rose from 87% to 89% for arithmetic. This was significantly better than the national figures, which for the same period rose from 87% to 89% for reading, remained at 80% for writing, and rose from 73% to 75% for arithmetic.[1]

Regular and intensive teaching thus enabled an impressive number of children to acquire a familiarity with the elementary education deemed suitable for working class children. The School Board enabled many children to leave school at thirteen years with enough education to see them through their daily lives.[2] Only a minority could hope to achieve anything more. The Central Higher School was able to give 500 children from standards V to IX the advantages of an advanced training in some subjects. The numbers of children who attended was often substantial: in the first session of the school, more than 200 boys and 100 girls were studying advanced geography, history grammar and literature. Similar numbers of boys also enrolled for mechanics and chemistry.[3] The existence of the Higher Grade School, and its links with Firth College and the Technical School theoretically enabled children to progress naturally to a higher level of study. It is not clear how many actually did so – despite the existence of the 'educational ladder', the children of the poor were disadvantaged at very stage through language, culture and environment. The Royal Commission on Secondary Education in

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1.   ibid., p. 150. The figures are rounded to the nearest unit.
2.   In Sheffield there was a steady increase in children who reached the top 3 grades, and the proportion was in advance of the national average. Cole, Sheffield School Board, etc., p. 13
3.   Bingham, op.cit., p.180

1895, whilst recognising the enormous importance of the Higher Grade School, also acknowledged that its secondary facilities were practically out of reach of the poorer population of Sheffield.[1] Thus it was the children of the superior tradesmen and the poorer middle class who made most practical ' use of higher grade education.

It was not possible for the School Board to have achieved practical equality of opportunity in education by 1902. The inculcation of moral and social discipline made headway, however; there was after all an established consensus of opinion as to how respectable working class children ought to behave, whilst attempts to promote the 'educational ladder' had to combat not only middle class prejudice, but the realities of social and economic deprivation.

The emphasis on regular and punctual attendance, enforced upon reluctant working class families by the attentions of the Board's officials, resulted in an impressive improvement. This has been described as the gradual creation of a new social habit.[2] During the period of the Board, average attendances increased more than five fold, from 12,000 to 63,309; this should be set against the figures for Sheffield's population, which almost doubled in the same period.[3] The increase in average attendance was so impressive, that only four other cities showed as large a percentage rise as Sheffield.[4] Concessionary fees for the poor, and the work of the School Attendance Officers, meant that attendances in the Board Schools were generally higher than in the voluntary schools, 74% as against 69% in1881, and 79% as against 74% in 1884.[5] The efforts of the Board to cut down on

1. R.C. on Secondary Education, (P.P. 1895, XLVIII), p. 178
2. Bingham, op.cit., p. 61
3. ibid., p. 28
4. ibid., p. 74
5. ibid., p. 78

half time education were also successful, and the general trend was downward.   329 children were allowed half time concessions in 1877, and in 1897 this had fallen to 82.   In general, the greater regularity was reflected in figures for average attendance as a percentage of registrations: this rose from 70% in 1877 to 80% in 1887, reaching 85% ten years later, and levelling off at 87% in 1902.[1]

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1.   ibid., p. 87

16.   Educating the Adult - 1820-1880

Concern for the educational and moral welfare of the

Sheffield artisan resulted in the establishment of a variety of new insti-

tutions after 1820.   In 1823, the Mechanics' Library was founded, followed

by the Mechanics' Institute in 1832.   An Owenite Hall of Science was

established in 1839, and the People's College in 1842.   The 1830's and

1840's also saw the expansion of denominational efforts in the field of

adult education: these have already been discussed.[1]

Taken collectively, these institutions represent a response by

manufacturers, artisans and tradespeople to a complex of juxtaposed and

interacting causes.   Firstly, there is little doubt that one of the factors

that possibly stimulated, and certainly sustained the Mechanics' Library and

the Mechanics' Institute was the intense interest in all things scientific

by some manufacturers and working men, who were part of Sheffield's

'scientific community'.   Secondly, for many working class men and women these

institutions provided the first steps towards literacy, and the broadening

of intellectual horizons which accompanied the emergence of working class

political consciousness.   Some middle class promoters of adult education

were moved by genuinely humanist motives.   It is arguable, however, that

the strongest factor in the establishment of facilities for adult education

was the consideration of social control.   One aspect of this is the concern

for the softening of the revolutionary or anti-establishment instincts of

some sections of the working classes, which were strongly expressed in the

political upheavals of the 1830's and 1840's; through education, the ignorance,

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1.   See above, chapter 10

vice and criminality of popular culture were to be replaced with the values

of diligence, sobriety and political conformity. Secondly, the pace of

economic change in the Industrial Revolution had been met with an awareness

of the acute need for a disciplined and trained workforce, trustworthy,

and technically proficient artisans who could supervise the machine of

industrial progress. The development of secular adult education institutions

in Sheffield will be considered primarily, although not exclusively, from this

point of view.[1]

The expansion of commercial activity in the town, and the growth of

an elite of merchants and manufacturers in the late eighteenth century, had

already established a network of societies for those aspiring to an interest

in literature and culture. Among the earliest of these was the Sheffield

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1. The phenomenon of Mechanics' Institutes has attracted widespread discussion in recent years: the arguments put forward for the development of Mechanics' Institutes are relevant for the development of adult education in general during these formative years. See especially J.F.C. Harrison, Learning and Living, 1790-1960, London, 1961; Mabel Tylecote, The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851, Manchester, 1957, pp. 18-20; Harold Silver, The Concept of Popular Education, London, 1965, pp. 216-217; Brian Simon, Studies in the History of Education, London, 1960; Thomas Kelly, A History of Adult Education in Great Britain, Liverpool, 1962, pp. 115-130; Kelly, 'The Origin of Mechanics' Institutes', British Journal of Educational Studies, I, 1952-53, pp. 17-27; Edward Royle, "Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes', Historical Journal XIV, 1971, pp. 303-320. For scientific and technical training, see Gordon W. Roderick and Michael D. Stephens, 'British Artisan Scientific and Technical Education in the Early Nineteenth Century', Annals of Science, XXIX, 1972, pp. 87-98, and Roderick and Stephens, 'Science, the Working Classes and the Mechanics' Institutes,' ibid., pp. 349-360. For the 'scientific community' in Sheffield, see Ian Inkster, 'The Development of a Scientific Community in Sheffield, 1790-1850', T.H.A.S., X, 1973, pp. 99-131; Inkster, 'Scientific Instruction for Youth in the Industrial Revolution – The Informal Network in Sheffield', The Vocational Aspect of Education, XXV, 1973, pp. 91-98; Inkster, 'Science and the Mechanics' Institutes 1820-1850 – The Case of Sheffield', Annals of Science XXXII, 1975, pp. 431-474.

Subscription Library, founded by Unitarian minister John Dickenson in 1771 with

47 subscribers, and surviving, despite mismanagement, until 1907.[1] An exclusive

Book Society was also begun by Unitarians in 1806, and was still in existence in

the twentieth century.[2] A short-lived Society for the Promotion of Useful

Kkowledge held fortnightly meetings when papers were given, on medical topics,

between 1804 and 1805.[3] A Shakespeare Club, formed in response to attacks on

the theatre by Evangelical minister Thomas Best, attracted support from some of

the most respected citizens in the town.[4] The Book Society was acknowledged to

be a parent of the Literary and Philosophic Society, which was founded in 1822.

However, it was the philosophy of the Society for the Promotion of Useful

Knowledge, with its commitment to literary and philosophical research embracing

every department of human knowledge, (excepting politics and religion), which

was expressed and applied by the Lit. and Phil.[5]

The Literary and Philosophic Society, with its library of

scientific and literary works, and its regular lectures on archaeology,

phrenology, geology and other scientific subjects, made an important contri-

bution to the mental cultivation of 'polite' society in Sheffield, smarting

under Byron's sneer of 'classic Sheffield' in English Bards and Scottish

Reviewers, and conscious that Literary and Philosophic societies existed

already in most principal towns.[6] The Society represented the insti-

tutionalization of a popular interest in science, stimulated by the itinerant

1.   Pawson & Brailsford, Illustrated Guide to Sheffield, Sheffield, 1862,
      reprinted 1971, p.77; W.S. Porter, Sheffield Literary and Philosophic
      Society - A Centenary Retrospect 1822-1922, Sheffield, 1922, p.4;
      G.D. Jennet, 'Thomas Asline Ward, His Life and Achievements', unpublished
      M.A., University of Sheffield, 1954, p.44; Sara E. Joynes, The Sheffield
      Library 1771-1907, Library History, II, 1971, pp. 91-116
2. • Jennet, op.cit., pp. 7-8; Sheffield Book Society Minute Book 1806-1944,
      S.C.L., MD 2221; Porter, op.cit., p.5
3.   Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge, Minute Book, 1804-1805,
      S.C.L., S.L.P.S.216; Porter, op.cit., p.6
4.   Jennet, op.cit., pp.10-11; Porter, op.cit., p.3; A Member of the Club,
      Proceedings of the Sheffield Shakespeare Club from its Commencement in
      1819 to January 1829, Sheffield, 1829
5.   S.P.U.K. Minute Book, etc.; Porter, op.cit., pp. 5-6
6.   Proceedings of a Public Meeting for the Prupose of Establishing a Literary
      and Philosophic Society, Sheffield, 1822; Literary and Philosophic Society
      Minutes, 6 Volumes, 1822-1934; S.C.L., S.L.P.S. 192-194; Holland, op.cit.,
      pp. 239-246; for Literary and Philosophic Societies elsewhere, see above,
      chapter 2.

science lecturers who visited Sheffield in increasing numbers from the 1780's.[1]
Despite the interest of artisans in natural philosophy and other aspects of
science, the Lit. and Phil. was effectively a middle class institution,
dominated for many years by wealthy men such as Thomas Asline Ward, James
Montgomery, Samuel Bailey and Dr. Arnold James Knight, the giants of
Sheffield's middle class culture in the first four decades of the nineteenth
century.   The Society also received a solid backing from some manufacturers,
and from the churches, the medical profession and the law.[2]

Societies such as the Lit. and Phil., with their cultural, literary
and recreational activities thus presented a milieu for the growing numbers of
tradesmen, manufacturers and professional men who were coming to regard
themselves as 'middle class'.   It will be seen that the new generation of
educational facilities which came into existence with the establishment of the
Mechanics' Library in some ways continued the traditions of the earlier
cultural societies, and in turn, laid the basis for a broadly defined adult
education in Sheffield.   In other ways, particularly their concern for the
moral and intellectual condition and capacities of the artisan and labouring
classes, the new institutions represented a new and wider social function.

The Mechanics' Library, the Mechanics' Institute, the Hall of Science
and the People's College had a number of factors in common.   An obvious
similarity was their operation outside the orbit of the churches, although
there was an affinity with the denominational institutes, both in ideology
and function.[3]   Secondly, there was the closest possible relationship
between their establishment, and patterns of popular unrest, especially the

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1.   Inkster, T.H.A.S., pp. 100-102; Inkster, Vocational Aspect,
        pp. 91-92
2.   Porter, op.cit., p. 9.   The Respectability of the Lit. and Phil.
        was such that radical Ebenezer Elliott was considered dangerously
        subversive, and was refused admission in 1839
3.   See above, chapter 10

reform riots of 1831-32, and the Chartist disturbances of 1838-42; this
will be discussed in detail below.   Nevertheless, there were important
differences in the philosophies of the new institutions, and in the sort
of men who were involved in them; despite the strength of middle class
paternalism, the self-determination inherent in the emerging working class
consciousness brought involvement to the small tradesman and artisan.   Thus
it will be argued that the Mechanics' Library and the Mechanics' Institute
were fired by an ideology that was essentially conservatory, and was effectively
dominated by the middle classes.   In contrast, the People's College and
Sheffield's short-lived Hall of Science saw the genuine involvement of working
men in adult education.   Both sprang from the individualism and the creativity
of their founders, R.S. Bayley and Isaac Ironside, and were largely sustained
by the personal loyalty of their members.

Although conventional wisdom rightly is sceptical about the
effectiveness of these institutions   inmeeting the vast educational needs
of the nineteenth century,[1]   the numbers who enrolled in Sheffield gave the
impression of thriving and vigorous activity for a significant part of the
century.   Enrolments at the Mechanics' Institute never again hit the peak
of 700, achieved in 1833, although there was a registration of 533 in 1842,
when the Institute's library was opened.   For most of the 1840's and 1850's,
numbers were between 300 and 400, despite occasional bad years.   In the
autumn of 1874, there were still over 300; even in 1882, when the Mechanics'
Institute was seriously threatened by the opening of Firth College, 223 men
and 37 women enrolled.[2]   The Mechanics' Library showed similar buoyancy.

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1.   See _inter alia_, Kelly, _A History_, etc., pp. 112-115; Silver,
          op.cit., pp. 210-226; Tylecote, _op.cit._, pp. 18-20; Inkster,
          Annals of Science, etc., pp. 451-452; Roderick and Stephens,
          ibid., 1972, pp. 359-360; Royle, _op.cit._, pp. 305-306;
          Harrison, _Learning and Living_, etc., pp. 66-67, 73, 129-130
2.   Figures from Holland, _op.cit._, p. 235; Mechanics' Institute
          Minutes, 6 volumes, 1832-1890, S.C.L., M.D. 231

In 1826, there were 522 members and apprentices, and in 1839, total membership had gone up to 743. This figure does not seem to have been rivalled again, but membership in 1853 was still 583. Before the absorption of the Library into the Free Library in 1861, there were still 600 books issued each week.[1] There are no figures available for the Hall of Science; the People's College had high registrations through much of the century. 630 including 120 women enrolled in 1850. Although the College gradually declined after this, there were still 250 students including 30 women in 1863.[2] Of course, these figures relate to initial enrollments; absenteeism was often high, and the numbers of effective students could have been up to a third below the registrations. Nevertheless, it is clear that the institutions were operating at maximum capacity for much of the century.

In their concern for social harmony, and the creation of a civilised workforce, it is arguable that all the institutions, with the exception of the Hall of Science, were fired by an ideology that was overwhelmingly 'middle class'. Writing in the early 1840's, G.C. Holland observed the extensive middle class involvement in the Mechanics' Library and the Mechanics' Institute.[3] These needs qualifying. In the Mechanics'

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1. Figures from J. Taylor, 'A Nineteenth Century Experiment in Adult Education: Sheffield Mechanics' Library and Sheffield Mechanics' Institute', Adult Education, December 1938, pp. 161-162; Holland, op.cit., p. 238; Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library, Minutes, 1823-1838, S.C.L., M.D. 187
2. Figures from Annual Reports
3. Holland, op.cit., pp. 232-238. For patterns of middle class support for Mechanics' Institutes, see C.M. Turner, 'Political, Religious and Occupational Support in the Early Mechanics' Institutes,' Vocational Aspect, XX, 1968, pp. 65-70; Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp. 58-62, 67-69

Institute, there was clearly a sizeable nucleus of skilled and manual workers who might on grounds of occupation be regarded as 'working class'. In 1835, there were at the Institute 35 clerks and warehousemen, 60 masons, joiners, shoemakers and tailors, 40 engravers, etchers and painters, and 150 employed in the cutlery trades.[1] It is reasonable to assume that many of these would fall into the category of 'working class'. Membership fell into three categories, honorary members, members and apprentices. Between 1833 and 1842, the category of apprentices was never less than 125, as in 1838, when there were also 114 honorary members and 194 members.[2] A strong body of apprentices would have contributed to the working class nature of the Institute's membership.[3] Indeed, between 1840 and 1842, apprentices had become the biggest category: in 1842, there were 235 apprentices, 114 honorary members and 184 members. Membership of the Institute, at an annual cost of eight shillings, would have included tradesmen, and a number of working men. Nevertheless, the number of artisans steadily declined. In 1847, Isaac Ironside alleged that there were only eight subscribing mechanics, out of a population of 120,000.[4]

In the Mechanics' Library, there is clearer evidence of the involvement of working men. Holland analysed the Library's membership in three categories, honorary subscribers, subscribers 'in good circumstances' and

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1. Mechanics' Institute, Minutes, I, 2 November 1835; G.P. Jones, Report on the Development of Adult Education in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1832, p. 13.
2. Holland, op.cit., p. 235
3. Royle, op.cit., p. 314
4. S.I. 14 Nanuary 1847; S.R.I. 16 January 1847

apprentices for the years 1824-1835; in this final year, there were 41

honorary members, 505 subscribers 'in good circumstances' and 205

apprentices.[1] Thus, although Holland observed how many 'highly

respectable families' had become subscribers to take advantage of the

Library's facilities, there was an increasing dependence upon young men of

the working class for steady membership.[2]

Undoubtedly, the prominent position occupied by the middle classes

in the Institute and the Library is a reflection of their cultural and

recreational needs, and the lack of facilities for them, especially before

the opening of the Athenaeum.[3] There is a significant degree of correlation

between the membership of the Literary and Philosophic Society and the

Mechanics' Institute. Of the 61 members of the Institute who served on

its committee between 1832 and 1838, 30 were also involved in the Lit. and

Phil. This included the élite of Sheffield's scientific, professional and

commercial society in the 1830's - James Montgomery and Robert Holland, men

of letters, dissenting ministers Nathaniel Philipps and R.S. Bayley,

manufacturers Thomas Asline Ward and William Ibbotson, optician Alfred Chadburn

and medical men Charles Favell, and Arnold James Knight.[4] Thus the Mechanics'

Institute and the Literary and Philosophic Society were patronised by the same

sort of individual, wealthy men with the leisure to pursue their interests in

literature, philosophy and the natural sciences. The relationship of the

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1. Holland, op.cit., p. 238
2. ibid., p. 236
3. For the Athenaeum, see below, p.357; Pawson and Brailsford,
   op.cit., pp. 74-75
4. Mechanics' Institute committee members from Minutes, vols. I and II;
   Literary and Philosophic Society membership from Porter, op.cit.,
   p. 83 ff; Minutes, I.

Mechanics' Library with these institutions is less intimate. Of the 77

members who served on the committee of the Library between 1823 and 1838,

only 22 were similarly involved in the Mechanics' Institute, and only 15

had any connexion with the Literary and Philosophic Society.[1]

Given the voluntary nature of these institutions, and their need

for sustained financial aid, their work could scarcely have been possible

without middle class involvement. Both the Mechanics' Library and the

Mechanics' Institute had honorary members. Terms for this in the Mechanics'

Institute were a donation of five guineas, or a subscription of half a

guinea. Those at the Mechanics' Library were slightly lower.[2] Honorary

subscribers to the Library stabilized at between 40 and 50 in the 1830's

and 1840's. The Institute attracted more of this type of member, the

number reaching 127 in 1837.[3] Normal subscriptions to the Institute and

Library were 8 shillings and six shillings respectively, paid quarterly in

advance.[4] Those who could afford to subscribe 6 shillings to the Mechanics'

Library were regarded by Holland as 'subscribers in good circumstances'.

The numbers in this group rose steadily in the early years of the Library,

outnumbering the apprentices at least twice over.[5] Although workmen would

only have been excluded in times of bad trade, the buoyancy and numbers of

honorary and subscribing members contributed to the middle class image of

the library.

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1.   Mechanics' Library committee members from Minutes 1823-1838
2.   Regulations of the Sheffield Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library,
      Sheffield, 1824; Additional Rules and Regulations, Sheffield, 1824;
      Rules of the Sheffield Mechanics' Institution, Sheffield, 1833
3.   Holland, op.cit., p. 235
4.   Mechanics' Library, Regulations, etc; Mechanics' Institute, Rules, etc.
5.   Holland, op.cit., p. 238

Middle class manufacturers and professional men played a vital role in establishing the public respectability of the Institute and Library, especially in the early days. Nevertheless, Chartists and radical working men such as Isaac Ironside, Michael Beal, and Richard Otley were active on the Institute's committee after about 1836, and also in the Library; this involvement caused considerable tension within both institutions. Despite middle class dominance, both institutions had relatively humble origins. The initial suggestion for a Mechanics' Library came from William Atkins, a japanner from Portmahon, who had appreciated the benefits of the library at the Lancasterian School, where his son had been a pupil.[1] This was taken up by Thomas Asline Ward in the columns of the Sheffield Independent in August 1823.[2] Two months later, there was another request for a library, from a group of mechanics. The scheme could only come into being when the middle classes took up the initiative, however. A petition to the Master Cutler in the December of that year was signed by 51 leading inhabitants. These included the Anglican clergy Sutton and Best, Dissenting ministers Boden, Larom and Phillipps, and Methodists Docker and Everett.[3] There was support from men of letters, and of medicine, notably James Montgomery, Samuel Bailey, Dr. Brown, Dr. Younge and Dr. Knight. Thomas Asline Ward, Thomas Newbould, Thomas Dunn and Joseph Read represented the industrial interest.[4] Men drawn from this group dominated the Library's first committee, and went on to solicit support from the aristocracy and the gentry, including the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Fitzwilliam and George Sitwell.[5] Nevertheless,

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1.   Mechanics' Library (hereafter M.L.), Minutes, etc., p. 2, B.L.S. Annual Report, 1824
2.   S.Ind., 30 August 1823
3.   For religious support for Mechanics' Institutes, see Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp. 175-180
4.   M.L., Minutes, p. 9
5.   ibid., pp. 21-22

the working men who had pioneered the idea of a Mechanics' Library still had a part to play.   Attempts to enrol artisan subscribers through banks and newspaper offices met with no success, until a working man pointed out that few mechanics would have the presumption to enter such places.   In any case, many were too frightened to put their names on any list, but would have been glad to read the books.   Subsequent attempts to promote the Library through the manufactories resulted in over 140 supporters.[1]

The establishment of the Mechanics' Institute was brought about in a similar way.   The initial committee consited of printers John Bridgeford and Timothy Scott, instrument maker Thomas Ellis and three others, later with the assistance of Isaac Ironside and William Atkins.[2]   The gentlemen of the town were then appealed to, and Robert Leader headed a deputation to the Master Cutler, armed with a petition signed by the leading inhabitants. Significantly, the apprentices' signatures were left off.[3]   Heavyweights such as James Montgomery, A.J. Knight and Thomas Asline Ward dominated public meetings to discuss the new institution.[4]   Some working men were represented on the initial committee of the Institute, notably William Atkins, Roger Brown, a slater, and Thomas Fewsdale, a joiner.   Isaac Ironside also appeared, but the committee was effectively dominated by the professions, and some of the major employers of labour in the town.   Nonconformity was represented by Revs. Phillipps, Smith and Allin.   There were two solicitors, R.J. Gainsford

1.   ibid., p.17; also see Letter from a mechanic, S.I. 6 January 1824
2.   Mechanics' Institute (hereafter M.I.), Minutes, I, pp. 6-8
3.   ibid., pp. 14-15
4.   Proceedings of a Public Meeting for the Purpose of Establishing a Mechanics' Institute, Sheffield, 1832; S.I. 23 October 1832; ibid., 27 November, 1832

and Edward Bramley, and a medical man, Charles Favell, as well as merchant-manufacturer of table knives, George Dalton, and Henry Ibbotson of the Globe Works.[1]   This committee was responsible for bringing the Institute into being, and for fund-raising: a donation of £100 from the Duke of Norfolk set the seal of approval on the new venture.

Thus although working men were involved at the inception, and at critical stages in the development of the Institute and Library, the active patronage of a middle class élite, and of the aristocracy and the gentry, was essential for the promotion and the financial survival of these institutions. Their middle class basis was reflected in the nature of the cultural and educational provision, and ultimately impeded the close relationship with the working classes originally envisaged by their founders: this will be discussed in detail below.

The People's College, and the short-lived Hall of Science encompassed a different sort of social relationship.   These institutions sprang not from the suggestions of a group of working men, quickly exploited by influential reformers, but from the personal vision of two men.   Rev. R.S. Bayley was the founder and the guiding influence over the People's College, from its inception until his departure from Sheffield six years later.[2]   This arose from his dissatisfaction with the Mechanics' Institute, which he saw as committed solely

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1.   M.I., Minutes, I, p. 95
2.   The loyalty to the ideals established by Bayley was such that a
        group of working men continued the College in 1848.   G.C. Moore-
        Smith, The Story of the People's College, Sheffield, Sheffield,
        1912.   See also J.F.C. Harrison, A History of the Working Men's
        College 1854-1954, London, 1954, pp. 17, 19, 28, 107; M.E. Sadler,
        Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere, 2nd edition,
        Manchester 1908, pp. 32-34; Kelly, A History, etc., pp. 182-184; An
        Old Student, (John Derby), 'The Founder of the First People's College'.
        unpub. ms. S.U.L., People's College Collection, box. 1.

to material advancement, lacking a co-ordinating principle, and essentially 'a piecemeal affair of technical demonstrations and elementary skills'.[1] The first People's College was essentially Bayley's personal creation: in the College's first year, all the classes except drawing, singing and French depended upon him.   He presided at nearly 1500 sitting of the College in that first year and never missed a single evening. session.[2]   Former pupil James Moorhouse, later Bishop of Manchester, wrote 'I cared for the People's College mainly because he was its Principal...Without him, indeed, the People's College would, I think, have little intellectual value for me'.[3]   Similarly, Isaac Ironside dominated the Hall of Science to the extent that Robert Owen described him as 'the person more publicly connected with it than any other member'.[4]

Both the People's College and the Hall of Science were ideologically committed to involving working men in their daily life, and were run on a democratic basis.   Isaac Ironside's relationship with middle class patronage in the Mechanics' Institute and Mechanics' Library had become strained to breaking point, and under his influence, the Hall of Science 'was deliberatley kept in the mainstream of that complex movement whereby the lower classes sought unaided to work out their own salvation'.[5]   Charac- teristically, the educational work carried out at the Hall of Science was re-established under the title of 'Workers' Educational Institute' in November 1847.[6]   The reputation of the Hall of Science for socialism and infidelity, and its relative isolation from the mainstream of educational work in Sheffield, effectively averted any danger of middle class interference, and the Hall of Science lived and died as a working class venture.

1.   W.H.G. Armytage, 'Forerunners of Firth College-the Sheffield People's College', University Gazette, February, 1950, p. 2; R.S. Bayley, The People's College Journal, 1846-47, II, pp. 21, 27; Moore Smith, op.cit., pp. 4-5

2.   R.S. Bayley, First Annual Report of the Students of the People's College, Sheffield, 1843

3.   Letter from James Moorhouse to John Derby, 22 November 1911, S.U.L., P.C.Coll. Box 1

4.   Paper 1246, Robert Owen's Correspondence, Co-operative Union Library, Manchester, quoted by John Salt, 'The Sheffield Hall of Science', Vocational Aspect, XXV, 1972, p. 133

5.   ibid., p. 138

6   S.R.I. 13 November 1847

The People's College also won little sympathy from local education-alists.[1] The early classes, aimed at working men, had to be self-supporting, and subscriptions were not forthcoming until the College had been established at least two years.[2] During Bayley's period, the fees of 4 shillings per quarter for Tuesday lectures, and sixpence per week for classes were not significantly lower than those of the Mechanics' Institute.[3] However, the vitality and resilience of its working class students was shown in 1848, when 16 of its members took over the college, and established it as a self-supporting and self-governing institution.[4] The College was reopened as the 'intellectual home' of the youth of the town, and the fees lowered in order to meet the limited needs of working men.[5]

Despite its protestations of sturdy independence, however, the People's College found itself ultimately courting the backing of the middle classes of Sheffield. The committee of working men who succeeded Bayley in 1848 sought aid indiscriminately from 'mayors and ex-mayors, master cutlers and ex-master cutlers, magistrates and officials of all sorts likely and unlikely.'[6] The College came under the protection of wealthy surgeon Wilson Overend, who had also been a member of the Literary and Philosophic

1. There was 'little or no countenance from the wealthy friends of Education in Sheffield'. Bayley, First Annual Report, etc., Moore Smith, op.cit., p. 34
2. Moore Smith, op.cit., p. 25
3. ibid., p. 13
4. ibid., p. 41; Derby, op.cit., p, 19
5. To the Young Men and Women of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1848
6. S.D.T. 1 March 1898; Moore Smith, op.cit., p. 42

Society, and on the committee of the Mechanics' Institute.   Local clergymen

and employers began to attend events at the College, which received

benevolent patronage from the Hon. George Wentworth Fitzwilliam M.P., and

others.[1]   Edward Smith also encouraged the new venture.[2]

Nevertheless, the officers of the College and their committee

were consistently drawn from men of modest means.   Of the first committee

of twelve, only seven names could be traced with any certainty in the trade

directories.   These included the president, Thomas Rowbotham, and James

Anderson, both shoemakers, Isaac Jackson, brushmaker, John Lister, joiner,

William Badger, scissor manufacturer and Alexander Joseph Denial, steel-

maker.[3]   Five of the original committee were still running the college in

1863.   Thomas Rowbotham was by then master of the college: others of the

1863 committee who could be traced were a bootmaker, butcher, saddler and

instrument manufacturer.[4]

Thus even in institutions run by working men, and proud of their

independence, there was a need for middle class money and patronage.   This

was noticeably lacking during Bayley's time, and by 1848, the College was

in serious decline.[5]   The Hall of Science, as an on-going educational

venture, had also failed by 1848.   The reasons for the failure of working

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1.   People's College (hereafter P.C.), Annual Report, 1851; S.T., 25
        October 1851
2.   See Annual Reports, especially after 1850
3.   P.C., Annual Report, 1849; William White, General Directory of the
        Town and Borough of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1849
4.   P.C., Annual Report, 1863; William White, General Directory of the
        Town, Borough and Parish of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1860; Francis
        White, General Commercial Directory and Topography of the Borough
        of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1861
5.   Bayley's time at the People's College was marred by conflicts with
        individuals in the town, who accused him of causing a run on one
        of Sheffield's private banks, and with his congregation at Howard
        Street Independent Chapel, see Derby, op.cit., pp. 18-19, from which
        he resigned in 1846 after an affair with a local school teacher.
        Armytage, op.cit., pp. 2-3; Odom, Hallamshire Worthies,etc. pp.
        185-186

men to respond to the opportunities for education and self-determination which were held out to them in the late 1840's are complex; nevertheless, it is significant that the People's College survived into the 1850s and beyond with the support and patronage of some middle class individuals.

It is important to examine the attitudes and ideology of the promoters of adult education in Sheffield in this period. There was the widest possible spectrum between the middle class patrons of the Mechanics' Institute, who wished to use education to discipline the workforce in the interests of commercial prosperity and social harmony, and the working men who followed Isaac Ironside into the Hall of Science in the 1840's, in pursuit of the enlightenment held out to them by the philosophies of Robert Owen. Nevertheless, it will be argued that some of these differences appear to be reconciled in their attitudes to working class culture.

The characteristic middle class diagnoses and prescriptions, already formulated through evangelical religion, and reflected in the voluntary day schools and the sunday school movement, were expressed in the establishment of the Mechanics' Library and Mechanics' Institute. Popular culture was defined in terms of ignorance and vice: this tendency reflected the usual proclivity to condemn all working class culture as evil, but also perhaps reflected an accurate picture of the occasional behaviour of a portion of Sheffield's working classes. Thus the ignorance of the local workmen, whose knowledge was described by a mechanic as 'little more than the circumference of an anvil', was thought to lead to dissipation.[1] The image of the Sheffield workman, ruining his health by three days' hard exertion, and spending his leisure in gross and brutal intoxication was at no time more vital: Dr. Knight, in urging the establishment of the Mechanics' Institute, painted a picture of working class life, with poverty, filth, disease and crime resulting from the misuse of leisure.[2]

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1. S.I. 30 December 1823
2. ibid., Proceedings...for...Establishing a Mechanics' Institute, etc., p. 17

By the 1820's, however, thirty years of intermittent radical
activity in the town had conditioned middle class opinion to rationalise
ignorance and vice increasingly in terms of social disaffection.   In 1823,
Rev. Thomas Smith, in supporting the claims of a Mechanics' Library, argued how
ignorance, desperation and credulity made the poor the prey of 'artful
demagogues', and led men to 'treasons, stratagems and spoils'; at the same
time, a former apprentice, now a mechanic, spoke of working class antagonisms
against social superiors, and against the administrators of justice,
'construing the most impartial acts of the magistrates into downright
cruelty and oppression', through want of a proper knowledge.[1]

The quickening tempo of political developments in Sheffield in the
early 1830's strengthened fears of popular violence, and arguably was the
immediate stimulus to the hasty formation of the Mechanics' Institute, after
eight years' desultory discussion.[2]   Dr. Knight, one of the chief protagonists
of the Institute, related social unrest to the daily realities of life for
many working men: a man who failed to earn a living wage, even after six days'
labour, was a danger to society,

> 'savage, and reckless of consequences, with a
> settled conviction that whatever change may take
> place, to him at least it must be for the better,
> he is ever ready to engage in any wild or lawless
> enterprise'.3

A further period of prolonged violence in Sheffield in the late
1830's and early 1840's perpetuated the fears of working class riot and disorder.
Educationalists and propagandists such as Bayley and Ironside were influenced

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1.   S.I. 30 December 1823
2.   M.L., Minutes, I, p.117;   John Salt, 'The Creation of the Sheffield
         Mechanics' Institute - Social Pressures and Educational Advance in
         an Industrial Town', Vocational Aspect, XVIII, 1966, pp. 143-149
3.   Proceedings, etc., p. 16

by Owenite socialism, and the desire for a new moral world. The Owenite influence, expressed in the People's College, and in the Hall of Science, was reflected in the philosophy that man should be trained to think: the awakening of this power, and the knowledge of truth, would unfailingly make man behave in a way which was rational, moral and for the public good.[1] Through his People's College Journal, published between 1846 and 1847, Bayley developed his concern for the potentialities of the individual man or woman, and their right to an education worthy of the divinity of man's nature.

Nevertheless, Bayley, Sheffield's most creative and prolific educational propagandist in the 1840's, shared many of the stock attitudes to popular culture. He argued that the illiterate ragged children who roamed the streets of the town would naturally grow into the 'pests of society'. He deplored the leisure habits of the elder youth of the town, and described how each evening, 'notorious hoardes' were rapidly being educated 'in every art of vice and mischief' in the public houses, the theatre and the brothel. These young people would

> 'produce a supply of puerile criminals,
> prostitutes, boxers, dog-fighters, race
> runners, pigeon fanciers---these in a few
> years, become parents, tenants, masters,
> joruneymen; and reissue their own image,
> doubly odious'.2

Despite his awareness of the injustices to labour under capitalism, Bayley feared physical force, and was critical of Chartism, regretting the propensity of some artisans

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1.   R.S. Bayley, The People's College Journal, V, 1846-7, p.72; John Salt, Vocational Aspect, XXV, p. 134
2.   People's College Journal, I, p.9

'to answer their employer with the
infernal machine; and by the curt
and terrible fuze and blast, give
utterance to the wrath of years,
and while they effect the ruin of
the master, precipitate their own'.[1]

In a similar way, socialist and democrat Isaac Ironside was

astringent in his criticisms of the class from which he had sprung.   He

condemned the unproductive habits of the Sheffield workmen, who spent their

leisure in pubs, among clouds of tobacco smoke, playing dominoes, or

discussing the merits of dogs and prize fighters.[2]   Thus the Owenite

revulsion at the wasted potential of working men, and the destructive

environment in which many of them lived caused Bayley and Ironside, self-

styled champions of the working classes, to express themselves in the language

of the conventional middle class reformers.

Of course, one by-product of the ignorance of the Sheffield artisan

was the practical limitation which this imposed upon the efficiency and

expansion of the Sheffield trades.   The need to train artisans in applied

science was constantly reiterated by the founders of the Mechanics' Institute.[3]

Hopefully, a scientific training might lead a humble apprentice to advance

local manufacture by the invention of improved machinery.   Manufacturer

Thomas Asline Ward argued that it would be treason to the interests of Sheffield

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1.   Ibid., p. 12.   Bayley shared many ideals of moral force Chartists.
       William Lovett's Address to the Working Classes on the Subject of
       National Education in 1837 is said to have influenced him.   See Sadler,
       op.cit., pp. 34-35
2.   Proceedings, etc., p. 16.
3.   John Bridgeford, To the Members of the Sheffield Mechanics' Library
       and the Inhabitants of the Town Generally, Sheffield, 1832, p.1;
       Proceedings, etc., passim; Roderick and Stephens, Annals of Science,
       1972 pp. 88-91; Roderick and Stephens, ibid., pp. 350-351; Kelly,
       A History, etc., pp. 116; Harrison, Learning and Living, etc. pp. 62-74

if its mechanics were not shown how best to exploit the natural resources of the town: invention, mechanical knowledge and the ability to utilise modern improvements would save the economy time, labour and money.[1] As early as 1833, Sheffield industry, particularly the cutlery and edge tool trades, was beginning to feel competition in those markets in whcih it had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly. There was already an uncomfortable awareness of the superiority of educational facilities on the continent, and what this might imply.[2] Indeed, within twenty years, the United States, as well as Europe, had become a threat to Sheffield's cutlery markets.[3]

The conventional fears of working class vice and ignorance, given a new urgency by the political activities of some artisans, and the desire for a literate and competent workforce were thus key attitudes which underlay the growth of institutionalised facilities for adult education. The relationship between these ideas was close. The growing use of machinery and steam power in the workshops, the attempts at union organization in the local trades, and the vulnerability of Sheffield products in world market all created anxieties. The solution appeared to lie in the provision of a type of education which would reconcile class with class, and contribute to the creation of a more skilful, inventive, reliable and co-operative workforce.[4]

The panacea was thus to be knowledge. The power of literacy was stated succinctly by a local mecahnic, who urged the need for a Mechanics' Library in order to exploit the interest of some workmen in reading, for

1.   Proceedings, etc., pp. 3-4
2.   S.Ind., 16 November 1833; M.I., Minutes, I, 28 April 1834;
        Salt, Vocational Aspect, XVIII, p. 144; also see S.C. on Manufactures
        Commerce and Shipping Report (P.P. 1833, VI)
3.   Report of the Proceedings of the Soiree held in Connexion with
        Sheffield Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library, Sheffield, 1853, p.13
4.   Salt, Vocational Aspect, XVIII, p. 145

'those of them who possess and cultivate
this inclination are in general the most
industrious, temperate and peaceful
members of that part of the community to
which they belong'. 1

However, the last shots in the battle about working class education which

had impeded the progress of the sunday school movement were not quite ended.[2]

The Methodist minister Thomas Allin, in his introductory lecture to the

Mechanics' Institute in 1833 argued that knowledge was essential to the

continuing progress of Christianity as well as the increased social usefulness

of the individual: sensuous and vicious pursuits would give way to intellectual

pleasures, habits of rational thought and reflection, and ultimately,

contentment and tranquility.[3] This was immediately rebutted by Anglican

manufacturer, philanthropist and polemicist Samuel Roberts, who argued that

the education of the working class should be selective, and in any case,

limited to the rudiments of literacy. Education could only distract the

working man from his proper concern and duties, and Roberts added with

feeling:

'There are few occurrences in a town like
this, that I should dread more than the
assembling of a large number of young men
in the evening in one place, for any
purpose'. 4

In addition, some evangelical ministers such as Thomas Best, had strong

reservations about the reading of secular and literary works on Sundays,

which should be devoted to prayers and self-improvement.[5]

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1.   S.I. 30 December 1823
2.   See above, Chapter 14
3.   Rev. Thomas Allin, Mechanics' Institutes Defended on Christian
        Principles, Sheffield, 1833; Harrison, Learning and Living, etc.,
        p.176
4.   Samuel Roberts, Wisdom, its Nature and Effects - A Letter to the
        Rev. Thomas Allin on the Subject of the Sheffield Mechanics'
        Institution, Sheffield, Sheffield, 1833
5.   S.I. 30 December, 1823

This was a minority view, however.   There were few in Sheffield by the 1830's who denied the urgent moral, social and economic necessity of educating the artisan.   A consensus opinion was that of George Wilkinson of Broom Hall, manufacturer and teacher at the Mechanics' Institute: drawing his imagery from the local trades, he argued that knowledge could never be evil, for,

> 'as well it might be said that the best-
> tempered and best polished steel instruments
> are more dangerous than those of a grosser
> kind - the effect must certainly depend upon
> the use that is made of them'.   1

Ultimately, this was the view which prevailed.   In 1847, the mayor of Sheffield declared with common sense resignation:

> 'there is less danger in a little learning,
> even if it comprises the comparatively simple
> arts of reading and writing, than in sheer
> and solid ignorance, just as a little light
> is better than total darkness'.2

Educationalists such as R.S. Bayley had no doubts of the advantages of knowledge. Bayley argued that knowledge not only contributed to the formation of a person's character, but created self-reliance, self-confidence and a strengthened judgement, 'whcih were the great elements of future success in life, and tended to make a man fit for any station'.[3]

Arguments in support of knowledge and reading were not unqualified however.   Knowledge should be 'useful' above all.   Founders of the Mechanics' Library condemned the tendencies of some artisans to read too widely, a habit which led to corruption, and alienation from the family hearth, by spending too much time and money on books.[4]   Indiscriminate reading was a dangerous

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1.   M.I., Minutes, I, 4 November 1833; M.I., Annual Report, Sheffield, 1833
2.   S.R.I. 16 January 1847; S.T. 25 October 1851
3.   Bayley, First Annual Report
4.   S.I. 30 December 1823

trend. Edward Smith pointed out in 1853 that people <u>would</u> read, and if they did not have good books, they would read bad ones; the Mechanics' Lsbrary thus adopted a firmly conservatory role, and not only opposed the cheap circulating libraries, but also the whole concept of rate-supported public libraries.[1]

Such attitudes to education carried the implication of the innate inferiority of the working classes. R.S. Bayley disagreed: humble position was determined only by outward circumstances, and there was no such thing as upper or lower in mind. His concern for the potentialities of the individual made him contemptuous of those evangelicals who would restrict the educational opportunities of the working classes to 'a little learning', or 'an education adapted to the educational requirements of the working man'.[2]

Such liberal humanism, and indeed the whole philosophy of the People's College in the 1840's, did not win the sympathies of the other reformers, however. For them, the priority in the education of the working classes was the maintenance and support of the social order, rather than its radical alteration. The middle class domination of the Mechanics' Institute, and the strictly utilitarian concept of the purpose, meant that the education offered to its artisans and apprentices was fumdanetally limited in potential. The founders of the Institute argued that the reconciliation of the classes in the interests of social order was a prime necessity. John Bridgeford, the printer and editor of the <u>Sheffield Iris</u>, urged the need to bring people from various walks of life into communication with each other, and to implant 'juster conceptions of each other's character than could possibly be acquired

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1. <u>S.T.</u> 1 October 1853; <u>Report...of the Mechanics' Library Soiree</u>, etc., p.7.
2. <u>People's College Journal</u>, V, 1846-47, pp. 71-72

in the common intercourse of life'.[1] Samuel Ellis and Paul Rogers observed

how the old social relationships had given way to upheaval and alienation,

under the influence of popular ignorance and aristocratic pride: in reality,

they argued, the real interests of all classes stood or fell together.[2]

Education was thus the means of welding the bonds of society together.

Hopefully, knowledge and thought would lead to the formation of 'just and

correct opinions'. Samuel Bailey saw clearly the political implications

of such a process: the more people who had knowledge, the stronger their

attachments to institutions calculated for their good. Knowledge, above

all, would enable a man to appreciate the benefits of a good government

and to become among its best, most rational and consistent supporters.[3]

Education was thus unassailably for the common good: as late as 1867,

its advantages were still expressed in the language of Benthamism, as

conducive to 'the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number'.[4]

Middle class opinion in Sheffield was unable to come to terms with

the egalitarian implications of the extension of education, however. The

leaders of the Mechanics' Institute and the Mechanics' Library had firm

ideas about what exactly was meant by the 'elevation of the people'. The

position of polemicists Thomas Allin and Samuel Roberts in the controversy

over education in 1833 was closer than it had appeared. Allin urged education

for all, not the favoured minority; yet he argued that the class distinctions

of civil society, beween rich and poor, master and servant, magistrate and

1.   Bridgeford, op.cit., p. 1.
2.   Report of the Proceedings of the Soirée held by the Members of the Sheffield Mechanics' Institute and Mechanics' Library in honour of Sir A.J. Knight, M.D., Sheffield, 1843, pp. 10-11
3.   Proceedings...for...Establishing a Mechanics' Institute, etc., p.10
4.   S.R.I. 25 January 1867

subject were so deeply entrenched as to withstand any attempts to overthrow them:

> 'these distinctions do exist, and in spite
> either of fraud or force they will exist.
> Levelling schemes may be discussed, but
> (they are) the work of visionaries, as a
> vision they will pass away'. 1

This belief in the natural divisions of society was not so far from the position of Samuel Roberts , who argued that every child who was capable should be given a minimum education, then set to labour in its station of life.[2] The same emphasis was given by Samuel Bayley, speaking in favour of the proposed Athenaeum in 1847. Education was designed not to raise men out of their station, but to raise that station itself. Thus Institutes

> 'are not designed to raise men out of
> the class of workers, in which the great
> mass must remain, but to develop their
> dormant faculties, to elevant them in the
> scale of social and moral excellence.
> They are not to disturb the relations of
> society, but to advance the condition
> of all'.   3

The philosophy of the Mechanics' Institute and the Mechanics' Library was thus committed to the creation of a docile and inventive workforce. This was the thinking which dominated early and mid Victorian adult education in Sheffield, and was shared by the denominational institutes. Knowledge was not only useful, but moral. Under the influence of these institutions, it was hoped that generations of Sheffield artisans would learn not only how to be diligent workmen, but respectable members of the community, discharging the duties of their particular station with efficiency, integrity and honour.[4]

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1.   Allin, op.cit., p. 15
2.   Roberts, op.cit., p. 12
3.   S.R.I. 16 January 1847
4.   Bridgeford, op.cit., p.1

Characteristically, the social behaviour of the artisan at home and at work was the key to the proper fulfillment of his duties and obligations. Charles Favell, writing in support of the Mechanics' Institute in 1836, stressed that the study of 'various interesting and edifying subjects', would reconcile him to the labours of a day's work and make more acceptable the realities of a humble home.[1] Dr. Knight drew attention to the problem of the proper use of leisure and its relationship with work: ideally, the artisan should work in moderation every day, and devote the remainder of his time to intellectual improvement and moral excellence.[2] Gratitude and humility at work would be the results of education; at any rate, instruction 'should not make them impertinent'.[3]

It was the problem of working class recreation that was prominent in the minds of the Institute's founders. The real dangers which beset working men were found not in the workshop, but when work had finished:'it is at this moment that the Institution offers to throw her shield over them, by which the poisoned arrows flying all around will be repelled'.[4] In the absence of 'suitable' recreational facilities for working men, the family assumed a new importance, and was seen by reformers both as a refuge and as a safeguard. The supporters of the Mechanics' Library argued the pleasures of reading at home, as a counterbalance to forbidden enjoyment elsewhere.[5] It became commonplace to urge the responsibility of the artisan towards his domestic relationships and duties. Samuel Roberts linked the affectionate care of the family with the humble service of God.[6] The potential of the

1. Dr. Charles Favell, The Value and Importance of Mechanics' Institutions, Sheffield, 1836, p. 4; Charle s Favell, was physician and honorary secretary to the Infirmary, sometime president of the British Medical Association, and a member of a prominent local medical family. See J.D. Leader and Simeon Snell, Sheffield General Infirmary 1797-1897, Sheffield, 1897, pp. 54-55
2. Proceedings...for...Establishing a Mechanics' Institute, etc., p.16
3. Favell, op.cit., p. 7
4. ibid., p.9. For Mechanics' Institutes and working class leisure see Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp. 76-77
5. Report...of the Mechanics' Library Soiree, etc., p.5
6. Roberts, op.cit., p.13; Proceedings...for...Establishing a Mechanics' Institute, etc., p.17

family as a stabilising force was recognised by R.S. Bayley, who urged that wives should also be educated, for 'the pride, the extravagance, the filthiness the temper, the ignorance (and) the insipidity of the women at home' all contrived to drive the men into the beershops.[1]   Bayley included women at the People's College from the first, and numbers of women consistently availed themselves of the College's facilities.[2]   By 1849, the Mechanics' Institute began to stress the need for women to have a proper idea of household and moral duties: 'on that depends whether or not the home of the working man shall really be a home, or a place from which he will fly to the ale house and gin palace'.[3]

The establishment of adult education facilities in Sheffield coincided and had the closest relationship with the new concern for temperance.[4] Increasingly, reformers were arguing that a working man should be sober, as well as humble, skilful and diligent.   Without education there could only be drunkenness.   Dr. Knight stressed the advantages of education vis-à-vis drinking: no man could get drunk every day for eight shillings a year, but for this sum, he could obtain for himself an education leading to the highest moral and intellectual excellence.[5]   Other doctors, such as Charles Favell, saw education as ultimately more effective than temperance societies in bringing sobriety, for a fundamental improvement in the moral and intellectual character of the people would give a relish for purer enjoyments.[6]   He recognised the social attractions of the pub, but argued that the desire for stimulation, for company and for news could equally be met by interesting lectures, and by newsrooms in the Mechanics' Institute.[7]

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1. _People's College Journal_, V, 1846-47, pp. 69-71
2. See above, p.314
3. _S.T._ 10 November 1849
4. Many of the same people supported the temperance movement and the Mechanics' Institute in the 1830's and 1840's.   Harrison, _Learning and Living_ etc.pp. 77-79
5. _Proceedings...for...Establishing a Mechanics' Institute_, etc.,p.17
6. Favell, _op.cit._, p.4
7. _ibid._, p.5

The expressed ideal of the new institutions was thus the extension of knowledge and social training to the artisan, to fit him for his position in life. In the words of the secretary of the People's College, this would specifically create

> 'better citizens, better in every domestic
> and social relation, more elevated in
> moral character, possessed of sounder
> opinions and more consistent conduct, and
> better able to perform all the duties and
> obligations of civilised life'. 1

This was to be achieved through a specific type of education, with the emphasis upon suitable recreation and moral discipline.

In contrast with the denominational institutes, there was no attempt to provide a religious education: there were no classes on theology, the study of the Bible, or of church history. Indeed, this factor, and the connexion of avowed Chartists with the Mechanics' Institute and Mechanics' Library in the late 1830's led to a strong objection on the part of some churchmen to the 'secular' tone of these institutions; this was a direct stimulus to the founding of the Church of England Instruction Society in 1839.[2]

Nevertheless, although the institutions did not adopt an overtly religious role, they had much in common with the churches in tone and character. Indeed, the Mechanics' Institute endorsed the view that Institutes were secondary or auxiliary churches, chapels-of-ease to the conventional places of worship, and co-operating directly or indirectly with them in pursuit of the same ends.[3] Propaganda derived from the values of Christianity was at all times blended with the education that was offered.[4] The corporate spirit of the nonconformist chapel was consciously reproduced at the People's College under the influence of R.S. Bayley: the pursuit of

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1.   P.C., Annual Report, 1850
2.   S.M. 26 October 1839; see above, Chapter 10
3.   M.I., Annual Report, 1835; M.I., Minute Book, I, 2 November, 1835; Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., p.180
4.   For example, the People's College was committed to the enforcement of Christian morality. P.C., Annual Report, 1851

learning in mutual comradeship gave the People's College a quasi-religious

character. Indeed, the College came dangerously near to a more insti-

tutionalised connection with religion, when Bayley set up a mission room

and held services on the College premises, following his expulsion from

Howard Street Chapel.[1] Nevertheless, when religious questions arose, the

College took a firmly nonsectarian position: 'the only way to reconcile

(the denominations) is to place them on an equal footing: none can complain

of injustice, nor murmur at the superior condition of another'.[2] The

Hall of Science went further in developing a religious character, which

has been recognised as lending special impetus to its work. The attempts

of the Owenites to exert a civilising and humanising ;influence on the

lower classes, and to promote rationality and truth, were conceived as a

religious duty.[3] Secularist lecturer George Holyoake, who was sent to

Sheffield by the Manchester Congress in 1841, was appointed 'social

missionary' at the Hall, with responsibility for a 'diocese'.[4] The Hall

of Science was registered as a place of worship, and was licensed to

solemnise weddings. Hymns were sung at its functions. Isaac Ironside

contested his liability to the Poor Rate in 1840, on the grounds that the Hall

was a religious institution.[5]

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1. Moore Smith, op.cit., p. 12
2. S.T. 1 November 1851
3. Salt, Vocational Aspect, XXV, p. 135
4. George Holyoake, Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life, London, 1892, I, p. 135
5. John Salt, 'Isaac Ironside and Education in the Sheffield Region in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', unpublished M.A. University of Sheffield, 1960, pp. 76-78

The main work of the institutions was thus secular education, in accordance with their declared moral and propagandist purpose. There was a wide variety in the type and quality of instruction offered; the main teaching methods were lectures, classes and debates.[1]

The lecture was the most widely used in the early years, although arguably the least effective. Systematic courses of lectures were the means of instruction envisaged by the founders of the Mechanics' Institute.[2] The way had been paved by the Literary and Philosophic Society, and by the Mechanics' Library, who experimented with occasional lectures between 1828 and 1831.[3] The lecture as a means of instruction was greatly to the tastes of middle class society in Sheffield. However, the great numbers attracted by a good course of popular lectures in the early years indicates a staunch interest on the part of artisans and mechanics. Indeed, a forceful and well-delivered public lecture, quite apart from its value as a means of imparting 'useful' knowledge, had a popular interest and appeal that orthodox classroom instruction could not match.[4] This was recognised by the committee of the Mechanics' Institute, who approached James Montgomery to give the opening lecture.[5] Lectures became a regular feature of the Institute. A sub-committee with responsibility for these was appointed, and lectures initially planned for every Monday evening.[6] During the early years, the Institute managed to arrange a regular number of lectures, and to facilitate this, began a short-lived connexion with the newly-formed West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes in 1837.[7]

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1. For a discussion of teaching techniques in Mechanics' Institutes, see Roderick and Stephens, _Annals of Science_, 1972, p.94; Inkster, _Vocational Aspect_, 1973, p.93; Inkster, _Annals of Science_, p.460; Harrison, _Learning and Living_, etc. pp. 131-133

2. Bridgeford, _op.cit._, p.1

3. Porter, _op.cit._, _passim_; M.L., Minutes, pp. 107-108, 111, 137, 142, 160.

4. Salt, _Vocational Aspect_, 1966, p. 141

5. This was actually delivered by Thomas Allin, M.I., Minutes, I, p. 71.

6. _ibid._, p. 99

7. _ibid._, II, 30 November 1837, 20 December 1837; the Institute split from the W.R.U. in 1839; Harrison, _Learning and Living_, etc., p.127

Nevertheless, the symptoms of decline were evident in the 1840's: in 1842, only three lectures were given.[1] Lack of accommodation was an increasing problem, and lectures were only sporadic during this decade.

During the 1840's and 1850's, the Mechanics' Institute practically abandoned the lecture as a form of instruction and advertisement. The People's College, despite its fundamental commitment to class instruction, managed to maintain a modest programme of monthly lectures for at least ten years after its re-establishment in 1849.[2] The Mechanics' Institute continued to have difficulty with lectures. These were reintroduced as a new feature in 1863, and again at the end of that decade, for 'advertisement and profit'.[3] Audiences were small, however, and there was a 'lukewarmness of the bulk of the people', even when lecturers of national repute appeared, such as Gerald Massey, the poet, Mrs. Clara Lucas Balfour, and local M.P. A.J. Mundella.[4] Want of accommodation long prevented the Institute from expanding its provision. Only after 1876 was there a marked improvement in interest and attendance, which was possibly part of a generalised response in the town to the possibilities opened up by the University Extension lectures.[5] From the late 1870's, there were usually three lectures given each year, on a wide range of subjects, sometimes organised jointly with the Co-operative Movement.[6] From 1881, lectures by the itinerant agent of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes became a regular feature.[7]

1.   M.I. Annual Report, 1842
2.   P.C. Annual Reports
3.   M.I. Minutes, III, 12 May 1863; M.I. Annual Report 1868; ibid., 1870
4.   M.I. Minutes IV, 2 March 1870, 23 March 1874
5.   ibid., 28 March 1877
6.   ibid., 3 April 1878, 30 January 1879
7.   M.I. Minutes, V, 31 March 1882; Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp. 214-215

The vitality of the lecture as a teaching medium thus varied consierably during the history of the Mechanics' Institute. The protagonists of the Institute in 1832 recommended

> 'systematic courses of lectures on Mechanics,
> Chemistry and other branches of Natural or
> Moral Philosophy, and the Useful Arts,
> especially those immediately applicable to
> the local manufactures'. 1

In line with this commitment, science formed a significant proportion of the Institute's lectures. Among the first to be offered were Dr. Holland on 'Functions of Life', William Jackson on 'Functions of Animals', Dr. A.J. Knight on 'Digestion', James Walker on Botany, and a series of lectures on geology by Charles Morton.[2] At the beginning of 1834, a course was planned on electricity, galvanism and megnetism, and there were twenty paid lecturers in science that year.[3] In 1835, the effectiveness of lectures was increased by the expenditure of £59 on apparatus for experiments in chemistry, electricity and pneumatics.[4] Although lectures with demonstrations were generally a popular success, general lectures in science were not a useful way in instructing local artisans in practical subjects; the revival of interest in science in the 1850's tended to concentrate on class instruction.

Despite the early emphasis on science, there were many lectures on miscellaneous topics. Thus as early as 1836, the programme included a Mr. Wimberley, who spoke twice on the 'Minstrelsy of England and Spain', and a Mr. Zaba on 'Poland as an Independent State'.[5] The general and miscellaneous nature of most Mechanics' Institute lectures was condemned by Charles Favell in 1836, but the tendency to allow a multiplicity of general lectures on diffuse and unrelated topics remained a characteristic of the Mechanics' Institute throughout the period.[6] Thus in 1878, the Institute was only able to fofer H. Seebohm on 'Travels in Siberia', F. Curzon on social and physiognomical subjects, and Mr. Bell on 'Thrift'.[7]

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1. Bridgeford, op.cit., p.1
2. M.I. Minutes I, p.138; Inkster, Annals of Science, pp. 458-461
3. M.I. Minutes, I, 7 February 1834, M.I. Annual Report, 1834
4. M.I. Minutes, I, 2 November 1835
5. M.I. Annual Report, 1836   6. Favell, op.cit., p.10
7. M.I. Minutes, IV, 30 January 1879

The Institute lost the opportunity to revitalize its educational work with attention to matters of contemporary urgency by refusing to allow potentially controversial topics to be discussed. This meant that religion were excluded.[1] As early as the autumn of 1832, there was a suggestion that political economy should be permitted. But memories of the violence of the reform riots of that autumn were raw, and the request was overruled.[2] However, the participation of Chartists in the affairs of the Institute, and the wish to involve working men in the discussion of topics which crucially related to their self-determination, put the principle of exclusion under fire. In 1838, the Institute had to deny publicly that it was a seminary of politics, and refuted any links with the Working Men's Association, which had taken rooms in the same building.[3] In a special general meeting the following year, led by moderates John Fowler and Edward Bramley, a resolution formally disallowed political discussion.[4] Although this constantly frustrated its more radical members, some self-styled working men were content to uphold the prohibition.[5] As late as 1876, the Institute was still affirming its non-religious and non-party political nature.[6]

Despite its democratic basis, this principle was also upheld at the People's College. Under the guidance of Bayley, the College sought to give an education which was neither Whig, Tory nor Chartist, but 'based on a comprehensive catholic principle, which shall altogether partizanship.'[7] Discussion of sectarian religion was excluded; in the words of the committee, 'we have thrown away the apple of discord'.[8]

1.   Harrison, _Learning and Living,_ etc., pp. 83, 149-151, 173-174
2.   ibid., I, p. 89
3.   S.I. 5 June, 1838
4.   M.I. Minutes, II, 4 November 1839; M.I. Annual Report, 1839
5.   S.I. 14 January 1847; S.R.I. 16 January 1847
6.   M.I., Minutes, IV, 7 April 1876
7.   S.I. 31 December 1842
8.   S.T. 1 November 1851; P.C., Annual Report, 1851

Such prescriptions were bred out of a fear of becoming a seminary
for working class political consciousness, in the case of the Mechanics'
Institute, or at a practical level at the People's College, out of a desire
to prevent arguments about fundamentals getting in the way of the job in
hand. Nevertheless, the Mechanics' Institute did permit occasional
lectures on social and economic subjects.[1] Topics of direct concern to
working men were often touched upon. This represented an uneasy compromise
with the self-imposed limitation of discussion: opportunities for middle class
reformers to urge their solutions to the pressing contemporary problems could
not be wasted. Popular education was discussed during the 1830's by
various lecturers.[2] There were lectures on political economy in 1836.[3]
Dr. Favell lectured on the social condition of the working classes, and
there were a series on education by J.A.D. Dorsey, culminating in a
discussion of the issues of compulsion and religion in education, and 'whether
is Educational Improvement or Political Excitement the shorter road to an
amelioration of the frequently recurring distress of the Productive Classes.'[4]
These lectures followed local controversy over a National Education petition;[5]
thus the Mechanics' Institute, despite its pronounced aversion to politics,
could not avoid discussion of contemporary political issues, and in fact acted

1. Taylor, op.cit., p. 157
2. M.I., Annual Report, 1833; ibid., 1834; ibid., 1836
3. Taylor, op.cit., p. 157
4. M.I., Annual Report, 1838; M.I., Syllabus of Mr. Dorsey's Lecture, Sheffield, 1838
5. S.I., 10 October 1837, and consecutive issues until 5 December 1837

...

as a platform for the exposition of the views of middle class reformers.

The line between propaganda and politics had indeed become blurred.

Flexibility was also possible with religious topics, in the interests

of countering disaffection.   In 1862, the Institute, anxious to uphold

established religion, engaged Dr. Brindley of Birmingham 'the well known

Controversialist Lecturer against allforms of Infidelity', to give a

course of lectures against secularism.[1]

In contrast, the Hall of Science ignored conventional instruction

by lectures, and entered the field of political and social controversy with

zest.   Ironside's fearless belief in the validity of intellectual enquiry

stimulated lectures and lecture courses on a wide range of political, social

and philosophical subjects.   These included John Finch on 'Temperance',

Lloyd Jones on 'Responsibility", Dr. Watts on 'The Morality of Christianity

and the Morality of Infidelity', and G.H. Holyoake on the 'Advantages and

Disadvantages of Trades Unions'.[2]

The aim of such lectures was not a pedagogic display of learning

but the stimulation of debate, and the fullest discussion was encouraged.

Thus truth and reason were intended to convince the unconverted and

reinforce the loyalties of the Hall's members.   This spirit of fearless enquiry

was also carried forward into debates.[3]   The supporters of the Hall of Science

constantly challenged critics of Owenism to challenge their principles in

public.   In 1839, Lloyd Jones and W. Pallister of Leeds formally debated

topics such as 'The formation of Character', 'The Accountability of Man',

and 'Is Socialism calculated to secure the highest, universal and permanent

happiness of Man?'.[4]   R.S. Bayley also engaged in debates at the Hall,

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1.   S.R.I. 12 October 1862; Ironside clashed with Brindley - see Isaac
        Ironside, Brindley and His Lying Braggadocio, Sheffield, 1840
2.   Salt, Vocational Aspect, XXV, p. 135.   The Hall of Science
        occasionally arranged lectures on contemporary quasi-scientific
        fads, such as mesmerism, hydropathy and phreno-magnetism,
        'illustrated by Experiments on all the recently discovered
        organs', S.I. 31 December 1842
3.   This paragraph is based on the account of the Hall of Science
        debates in Salt, op.cit., p. 135
4.   S.I. 12 March 1839

contesting 'Marriage and Divorce' with socialist Mrs. Emma Martin in 1840.[1]
In 1842, supporters of the Sheffield Free Trade Society were invited to put
their views at a socialist function, and the following year,Ironside
himself chellenged the editor of the conservative Sheffield Mercury to a
public discussion.[2]

The People's College also developed the debate as a teaching medium,
although propaganda was less important than individual development, and the
self-confidence of the student.   To this end, debates were held every two
months, and preparation and research was done by the students.   The topics
were less fundamental than those discussed at the Hall of Science, however,
for the College continued to uphold the exclusion of party politics, and
direct religious teaching.[3]

Despite the lectures in advanced subjects at the Mechanics'
Institute, and the free-ranging discussions at the Hall of Science, the bulk
of the work of the institutions was increasingly undertaken in classes.   At
the Mechanics' Institute, instruction in classes began in January 1833, and
this type of work was maintained until the closure of the Institute in 1890.[4]
Classes were also held at the Hall of Science, and at the People's College.
It was essential to the philosophy of R.S. Bayley that teachers should work
alongside students, without adopting a position of superiority.   This could
only be done with small groups in a class situation.   To promote individual
development, work done by the student was criticised by the class in terms
of style, language and reasoning.[5]

1.   New Moral World, 5 September, 1820
2.   S.I. 15 March 1842;   ibid., 4 November 1843
3.   Moore Smith, op.cit., pp. 17-18
4.   M.I. Minutes, I, p.99, and subsequent volumes
5.   Moore Smith, op.cit., pp. 15-18; Letter from George Wilkin, to
        John Derby, 6 March 1850, S.U.L., P.C. Coll., box 1

Generally, a broad range of subjects was attempted through class instructions, although esoteric subjects such as Hebrew, which was sometimes taught in the denominational institutes, were not attempted. Inevitably, there was a concentration on elementary subjects, for practical reasons. The Mechanics' Institute accepted the necessity of promoting elementary education from the beginning, 'knowing that the lectures and the higher departments of science and literature will be comparatively uselass to the mechanics, unless there is a foundation laid in the rudiments of knowledge.[1] ' Paid teachers were taken on for reading, writing and arithmetic in 1833.[2] The Institute could not afford to maintain a paid staff in these subjects, however, and salaries were cut or withdrawn the following year.[3] The People's College and the Hall of Science also recognised the need for elementary instruction. At the Hall of Science, weekly elementary instruction and mental improvement classes were given, for 1/6d. a quarter.[4] At the People's College in 1849, over half the forty classes were in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and composition.[5] Classes in this subject remained the most numerous through the 1850's and 1860's, made possible with the use of monitors drawn from the superior students.[6] Similarly, at the Mechanics' Institute, the highest numbers were studying elementary subjects. In 1843, there were 50 in writing classes, 43 in arithmetic and 30 in reading.[7]

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1.   M.I. Annual Report, 1833
2.   M.I., Minutes, I, p.121
3.   ibid., October 1834
4.   Salt, Vocational Aspect, XXV, p. 134
5.   P.C., Annual Report, 1849
6.   ibid., 1850-1863
7.   M.I. Minutes, I, p. 121

The needs of the adolescent for instruction in reading and writing, and the difficulty of teaching mixed groups of adults and children effectively, resulted in the establishment of day schools in the Mechanics' Institute, People's College, and the Hall of Science. The Hall of Science pioneered a day school on the Pestalozzian system under George Holyoake in 1841, for children of both sexes, from four years of age.[1] The People's College followed with day classes in 1850, intended as a feeder to the evening classes, and for the training of monitors.[2] Initially, fees were 6d. per week, and up to 130 attended; such numbers prevented children getting individual attention, and the fees were raised to 10/6d. a quarter, which was followed by a drop in numbers to as low as 40.[3] Despite its experimental nature, the People's College day school survived until 1879, outliving the evening classes by several years. At the Mechanics' Institute, the need to provide a day school and to separate boys and adults was recognised as early as 1842.[4] The suggestion was again raised and dropped in 1850, but by the beginning of 1855, it had been resolved to establish day classes for boys and girls, offering reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar, for 8/- a quarter, with extra charged for other subjects.[5] The day school was small, with an average attendance of 20 in 1855, but nevertheless was considered to be prosperous.[6]

Classes in elementary subjects, for adults and children, attracted hgih numbers for several decades. The preoccupation with elementary provision at the Mechanics' Institute meant hat advanced work was neglected. The committee itself admitted in 1853 that the educational opportunities

1.   S.I. 11 May 1841; ibid., 31 December 1842; Holyoake, op.cit., p.135; Salt, Vocational Aspect, XXV, p. 134
2.   P.C., Annual Report, 1850; S.T. 9 November 1850
3.   Moore Smith, op.cit., p. 68
4.   M.I. Minutes, II, 2 December 1842; S.I. 12 November 1842
5.   M.I. Minutes, III, 5 January 1855
6.   ibid., 10 September, 1855

available at the Institute 'hardly exceeded those of a common day school'.[1] Despite the buoyancy of numbers in elementary classes, few every advanced to a higher level. The Institute pointed out in 1855 that 'this exclusive mania' for the elementary department was a major reason why it had failed to become self-supporting.[2] The Institute continued to play a major role in the provision of elementary education in Sheffield well into the era of state education. Demand declined only afrer 1880, when the work of the School Board began to make itself felt.[3]

The elementary classes thus imposed a stranglehold upon the institutions, and effectively diverted funds and energy from more advanced provision. It was possible, however, to .offer classes in other subjects, although standards and success varied considerably. The Mechanics' Institute initially planned classes in drawing, geography and the use of globes, Mathematics, French, Latin, History and Philosophy.[4] However, the range of subjects declined rapidly: in 1843, only geograpy, drawing, and singing were offered as a follow-up to elementary subjects.[5] Advanced classes were more successful at the People's College. In 1849, there were 3 classes in Latin, 2 in French and 1 in German, as well as Geography, mathematics and drawing.[6] However, although individual class occasionally recorded a high enrollment, there was little success with languages: such classes cost extra to run, and public interest was generally low.[7] Charles Favell discouraged the study of Latin and French in the Mechanics' Institute

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1. _S.T._ 23 April 1853
2. M.I. Minutes, III, 10 September 1855
3. _ibid._, V, 30 March 1886, 26 March, 1887
4. _ibid._, I, pp. 88, 97
5. French classes at the Mechanics' Institute cost up to 2/6d. extra in 1833, and ran at a financial loss. By 1836, classes in French and stenography were defunct, and classes in Latin and Natural Philosophy had only 4 or 5 members. A reintroduction of French was recommended in 1850, but attracted only 9 members. M.I. Minutes, I, 6 May 1833, 21 March 1836; _ibid._, III, 2 January, 1850, 31 March, 1851
6. _ibid._, II, 6 November, 1843
7. P.C., _Annual Report_, 1849

because intensive study was required, in return for little practical advantage.[1] Music was much more beneficial, for it reconciled a man with his home, gave amusement, and diverted attention away from politics.[2] As the People's College, however, the concern for learning for its own sake, rather than for material advancement or profit, which survived the departure of R.S. Bayley, meant that a wide range of advanced subjects were offered, and generally did well. Among the subjects available in 1862 were Euclid, Algebra, English Literature, History, Geography, Latin, French German and Italian. French was in a flourishing condition, and conversation classes in French and Italian set up.[3]

The recognition of the need for instruction in applied science led to an expansion of the class provision offered by the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College. One of the main reason for the establishment of the Institute had been to offer a training to local mechanics.[4] Results were not encouraging, however. The lecture was plainly unsuitable as a means of instruction, and although the establishment of an experimental workshop and laboratory had been suggested in 1833, little had been done.[5] Except for occasional lectures, the formal teaching of science was delayed until the 1850's. From this time, however, there was revived recognition of the utility of science. The examination system of the Science and Art Department and the demand for scientific and technical education in the 1850's rescued the Mechanics' Institutes from 'educational bankruptcy...solving at one stroke the thorny problems of finance, incentive and educational conscience'.[6]

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1.   Favell, op.cit., pp. 8-9
2.   S.R.I. 8 November, 1840
3.   P.C., Annual Report, 1863
4.   See above, p. 327
5.   M.I. Minutes, I, 6 May 1833, 16 December 1833, 8 April 1834
6.   Harrison, Learning and Living, etc., pp. 213-214

Science became harnessed to the cause of moral regeneration, for 'no man can pursue science or search for knowledge with single mindedness, without becoming better and more religious'.[1]   In 1853, the Institute began a protracted correspondence with Lyon Playfair over financial aid from the government Science and Art Department.   Help was offered towards teaching apparatus, if lessons and examinations were substituted for lectures.[2] There was a further attempt to bring the Institute under the Science and Art exams in 1858.[3]   Classes began to be introduced in suitable science subjects only in the 1870's: indeed, the organic chemistry class was the largest Science and Art Department class in Sheffield.[4]   There were many obstacles in the way of expansion in this direction, however.   The irregularity of student attendance meant that many were ineligible to sit the government exams, and the government grant was too paltry to pay teachers.   The Science and Art exams were thus delayed until k873, twenty years after the initial discussions.[5]

In contrast, the People's College was in touch with the Science and Art Department by 1853.[6]   Mental discipline was no longer enough - to be really a college for the people, it was felt necessary to include classes that would have a direct bearing upon local industry.   Public lectures in chemistry began, and although few science classes were held, students sat the

1.   S.T. 10 November 1849
2.   M.I. Minutes, III, 16 September, 1853; 29 October 1853, 24 November
        1853, 3 January 1854; S.T. 23 April 1853; M.I., Correspondence from
        Lyon Playfair, Sheffield, 1853
3.   S.D.T. 30 September 1859
4.   M.I. Minutes, III, 5 January 1858, ibid., 2 March 1870
5.   ibid., 13 March 1872, 3 April 1873
6.   P.C., Annual Report, 1853

government exams from 1857, and up to 20 certificates were gained each year.[1] Students could ill afford the financial sacrifice of time off work, however, and the College ceased to send entrants after 1865.[2]

Despite its slow start, the Mechanics' Institute went on to make some contribution to science education in Sheffield. A maximum of nine subjects were offered in 1875, including steam, machine construction, electricity and magnetism.[3] Attendance in science classes was very regular. A laboratory was fitted out in 1882, but the lack of a workshop meant that a pattern making course had to be abandoned.[4] Although some science classes were still successful in the 1880's, the monopoly of science instruction had passed to the Technical School, and the Mechanics' Institute could no longer hope to make a contribution in this direction.

An essential complement to the provision of instruction through classes and lectures was the provision of library facilities. A combination of educational and moral imperative was at work here: it was necessary that students and workmen should have access to books, but also that they read only what was moral or useful.

The wish to control the reading of the artisan was directly responsible for the formation of the Mechanics' Library in 1823. During its forty year existence, the Library consistently maintained a vigorous policy of discrimination in the selection of books. This was made possible by the absolute power of the committee over the choice of works for the Library: any book considered unsuitable for youths or apprentices could be blocked by a two-thirds majority of the committee. An early prescription to be

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1. Sadler, op.cit., p.34; P.C. Annual Report, 1857
2. Moore Smith, op.cit., p. 67
3. M.I. Minutes, IV, 7 April 1876
4. ibid., V, 31 March 1882, 29 March 1883

introduced was the exclusion of any book containing principles subversive to

Christianity.   Novels and plays were also specifically to be excluded.[1]

The principle of exclusion was hotly defended.   In 1845, Samuel

Ellis delivered a public indictment of the habit of novel reading, which he

condemned as mentally and morally injurious.   Correct taste, and the habit

of profitable reading were essential for youth.   To this end, books should

improve intellectual qualities, elevate morality, and impart strength and

vitality to religious feelings.   Novels, however, led to sentimentality

and day dreaming, and the undermining of true values:

> 'What are we to say of works which fritter
> away the distinctions between right and
> wrong, and deceive the unwary into paths of
> vice, by surrounding them with the hall-marks
> of virtue? .....works which treat with
> contempt those admirable qualities - industry,
> frugality and prudence; while they squander
> their praises on extravagance, carelessness
> and folly?...works which alienate the heart
> from domestic and retired duties - which
> convert every quiet home into a prison-
> house, and make the best of parents appear either
> ridiculous or tyrannical?'

The habit of novel reading was linked by Ellis to the biblical sins of

pride, hatred, drunkenness, fornication and adultery, in a style which would

have done justice to an evangelical preacher.[2]

The vehemence of statements such as this was made necessary by the

continual attacks by some members of the Library on the rule of exclusion.

As early as 1826, the refusal of the committee to accept the work of Sir Walter

Scott was vigorously contested.[3]   The radical members of the Library,

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1.   M.L., Minutes, p. 20; M.L., Regulations, etc.
2.   Samuel Ellis, Novel Reading Intellectually and Morally Injurious,
        Sheffield, 1845
3.   M.L. Minutes, p. 76

primarily men with Chartist leanings, kept the issue alive in the 1830's and 1840's. Sheffield's most eminent man of letters, James Montgomery, had to defend the conservative policy of the Library in the autumn of 1831, when working class political feeling in the town was running high. Montgomery upheld the exclusion of novels and plays, and reminded the committee that books had been given by clergy and eminent benefactors solely on this understanding.[1] This deference to middle class supporters was understandable, given the 'many highly respectable families' who subscribed to the Library, and its dependence upon income from this source.[2] In 1839, the influence of Isaac Ironside, Michael Beal and others led to allegations that Shakespeare, and socialist works subversive to Christianity, had been allowed into the Library. The Library resolved to purge itself of this 'junta of infidels', and the exclusion of novels and plays continued.[3]

To men such as Ironside and Beal, committed to the intellectual and moral regeneration of the working classes, the paternalism of the Mechanics' Library appeared as implacable barrier to progress. The problem of how to attract workingmen away from harmful recreation preoccupied the radicals as well as the reformers. To this end, Ironside and Beal continued to demand a wider toleration: thus the Library should

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1. ibid., pp. 156-159
2. Holland, op.cit., pp. 236-238
3. S.M. 6 July 1839; ibid., 13 July 1839

'mingle the dry works of philosophers, the
imaginations of the poet and the pictures of
the artist, throwing out the wand of enchantment,
if they wished to draw men from the alehouse, and
from the intoxication of the worst species of
literature'.   1

The Library continued to exclude novels and plays almost to the very end,

however, despite attempts by Ironside to overthrow the rule as late as 1857.[2]

Within its prescribed limits, however, the Library achieved some success.

By the 1850's, it had accumulated 8,000 volumes.   These covered a wide

range of subjects, including science, geography, history, the arts, biography,

divinity, as well as miscellanies, voyages and travels.   In 1853, about 600

volumes a week were being issued.[3]   Financial difficulties, and the

competition of the Free Library led to the winding up of the Mechanics'

Library, however, and the stock was handed over to the former institution

in 1861.[4]   The rule excluding novels and plays was rescinded in 1858, but

ultimately, public demand was for a library which carried not only fiction,

but parliamentary blue books, and other papers of contemporary relevant: in

the face of this, the essentially propaganidst Mechanics' Library went out of ex-

istence, despite the efforts of Ironside to save it.[5]

The shortcomings of the Mechanics' Library were, however, a stimulus

to the provision of library facilities by other educational bodies.   The

Mechanics' Institute received a collection of parliamentary papers in 1833,

and started collecting books together the following year.[6]   In 1841, a

1.   S.M. 8 July 1848
2.   S.R.I. 3 October 1857
3.   Catalogue of the Books of the Sheffield Mechanics' and Apprentices
        Library, Sheffield, 1845; ibid., 1849; Report...of the Mechanics'
        Library Soiree, etc., p. 6; S.R.I. 1 February 1870
4.   S.R.I. 6 July 1861
5.   ibid., 1 October 1859; Salt, 'Isaac Ironside etc.', p. 180
6.   M.I. Minutes, I, 25 September, 1833; M.I. Annual Report, 1834

formal library, 'for the industrious working class', was proposed, for only 50 or 60 of the members, and 1 of the apprentices, had connexions with other libraries, and the Institute was anxious to stress the importance of social and domestic reading, and private study.[1] The new library grew rapidly after its opening in 1842; over a thousand volumes were given free, and the number had reached 1650 by the end of the first year.[2] Admission to the library was 1/- per quarter for members, and 6d. for apprentices, with non-members admitted at a higher rate. Although the volumes were 'carefully selected', the library was of much wider and immediate interest than the Mechanics' Library. The books covered not only conventional religious works, histories and biographies, but a wide range of scientific books; crucial perhaps for the success of the library were the volumes on voyages and travels, plays, poetry, novels and romances - one of the first actions of the library committee had been to subscribe for a set of Scott's Waverley Novels.[3] This liberal policy was perhaps determined by the number of middle class subscribers who used the library. However, despite vigorous circulation figures, the stock was handed over to the new Free Library in 1856.[4] Later library provision at the Institute seems to have been grossly inadequate: Henry Tatton, a pupil there in the 1870's, said that very often the books which one required were out, so one asked for any.[5] The People's College began a library in 1853, in connexion with the courses of study offered at the College. The competition of the Free Library lessened the need for this, and the College concentrated on accumulating reference works, rather than a lending library.[6]

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1.   S.R.I. 2 October 1841; M.I. Minutes II, 27 August, 1841
2.   M.I. Annual Report, 1842
3.   loc.cit; M.I. Minutes, II, 10 December 1841
4.   M.I. Minutes, III, 5 June 1856
5.   Henry Tatton, unpublished ms., S.C.L., M.D. 1056, p. 688
6.   P.C. Annual Report, 1853; S.D.T. 30 September, 1859

In addition to purely educational provision, the institutions provided a range of facilities which combined quasi-educational and recreational functions; these were intended to attract in members, and also had an indirectly propagandist function.   The idea that counter-attractive recreation could be a means of moral and social education was widely discussed in the 1830's, and from the first, the Mechanics' Institute functioned with these ideas in mind: 'rational amusement and occupation in leisure hours' was an early priority.[1]   This argument was strongly urged by Dr. Favell, in 1836, who also advocated the provision of parks, and other wholesome outdoor facilities.[2]   Paul Rodgers, writing in 1840, felt the need for greater popularization of the Institute, and suggested the prevision of facilities for gymnastics, music and social meetings.[3]   This view was becoming increasingly influential: in 1843, John Fowler urged that 'there should be classes for amusements as well as for learning; and they should hold out, even to pleasure seekrs, superior inducements to such as are to be found in the music and dancing saloons of public houses.'[4]   Many working men felt alienated by the sober middle class tone of the Mechanics' Institute and the Mechanics' Library.   In 1831, some artisan members of the Library felt 'the urgent necessity of infusing a little more popular spirit into the constitution'.   Proposals for an 'economical dinner', along the lines of the Birmingham Political Union, which would reconcile class with class, and 'do more to advance, renovate, (and) give popularity to all the proceedings than a thousand meetings as is held in the Town Hall', were met with disapproval

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1.   S.I., 23 October 1832
2.   Favell, op.cit., p.5.   Also see S.C. on Public Walks (P.P. 1833, XIV), AA 884-885
3.   Paul Rodgers, A Lecture on the Origin, Progress and Results of the Sheffield Mechanics' Institution, Sheffield, 1840, p.24
4.   Report of the Proceedings...in honour of Sir A.J. Knight M.D., etc., p.8

in the local press.[1] Nevertheless, by 1842, when proposals were made for singing, dancing and other counter-attractive recreations, the <u>Sheffield Iris</u> argued that some enlightened amusement, as well as more frequent popular lectures, would do much to reinvigorate the Mechanics' Institute.[2]

The first attempt at alternative recreational facilities was made by the Mechanics' Institute. A newsroom was proposed by Ebenezer Elliott in 1835.[3] This was planned as a temperance newsroom, where newspapers could be read 'without the connexion of draughts of porter and fumes of tobacco smoke'.[4] A newsroom was finally opened on conjunction with the Institute's library in 1843. This was open between 6.00 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. in the evenings, and on Saturdays, providing the Sheffield and Leeds papers, second-hand copies of the <u>Times</u> and the <u>Manchester Guardian</u>, as well as periodicals, such as <u>Punch</u> and the <u>Spectator</u>.[5] This venture made a financial loss, but the Institute persevered with newsrooms into the 1870's.[6]

Attempts to provide a newsroom in the Mechanics' Library were more controversial, however. As with the issue of novels and plays, the radical members of the Library were continually in conflict with the principles of the institution. In 1836, Isaac Ironside's proposal to include newspapers was defeated by a very great majority.[7] Nevertheless, the radicals persevered,

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1. <u>S.I.</u> 25 January 1831
2. <u>ibid.</u>, 12 November 1842
3. M.I. Minutes, I, 28 October, 1835
4. <u>S.Ind.</u> 6 February 1836
5. M.I. Minutes, II, 26 May 1843; <u>ibid.</u>, 15 September 1843
6. <u>ibid.</u>, III, 8 March 1854; 13 November 1854; <u>ibid.</u>, IV, 18 March 1870; <u>S.T.</u> 23 April, 1853
7. M.L. Minutes, 4 July 1836

with the support of Dr. Knight, and to the disgust of conservative subscribers, planned to convert a room next to the Library for recreational purposes, with chess boards and newspapers. Orthodox members were convinced that cards and bagatelle were about to follow,

> 'and an institution intended to afford mental
> improvement to the mechanics of Sheffield would
> have been converted into a sort of initiatory
> hell for the education of future gamblers'.

Plans for the newsroom were abandoned, but a coffee room was opened, and chess introduced, in direct opposition to the will of many of the subscribers.[1]

The recognition of the need to provide recreation came to fruition in the late 1840's, when the Mechanics' Institute temporarily amalgamated with the newly-formed Athenaeum. This was campaigned for by veteran Thomas Asline Ward, and received wide support in the town. The rationale behind the new venture was a restatement of the underlying philosophy of the Mechanics' Institute, an especially increased intercourse between master and artisan. Appeals were made to the self-interest of the employers, and

> 'to the masters and large merchants of the town,
> whose interest it is to have subordinates in their
> employ, intelligent, well-principled, and well-
> informed; to the subordinates themselves, whose
> interest it is, by means of self-culture, to enable
> them to take a higher grade in society, and to fulfill
> whatever situation they may hereafter be destined to
> occupy with ease and credit.' 2

This meant not only a revival of the Mechanics' Institute's educational programme, but a new commitment to organised recreation. The Athenaeum section of the new institution made a deliberate attempt to woo middle class support, by modelling itself upon a London club: for a subscription of 25/-, the facilities provided included a newsroom with national and

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1.   ibid., 3 July 1838, 31 July 1838, 7 August 1838; S.M. 6 July 1839
2.   S.I. 7 January 1847; ibid., 14 January 1847; S.R.I. 16 January
        1847

local papers and periodicals, a chessroom and a coffee room, with steaks

and chops, 'dressed in the London style'.[1] The new building in Surrey

Street was opened with a grand soirée in November 1849, but there was much

resentment. The premises had been built out of public money intended

primarily for working class education, but was monopolised by 'wealthy

merchants, opulent tradesmen, professional gentlemen, and gentlemen without

any trade or calling.'[2] The connexion with the Athenaeum did harm to the

standing of the Mechanics' Institute, struggling to carry on classes,

'starving in its garret, poor thing...while its more pretentious patron,

having "encumbered it with help", eats roast meat and boiled meat, and lolls at ease

in the spacious rooms below stairs'.[3] A year after the new twin institution

opened, proposals for a separation were discussed. This was achieved in

1851, with the support of Isaac Ironside; the recreational facilities had

mainly been for the benefit of the merchants and manufacturers who frequented

the Athenaeum, and it was concluded that the idea of fraternization between

the upper and lower classes 'appeared to some extent utopian'.[4]

Despite the failure of this experiment, the Mechanics' Institute

maintained a modest social programme from the 1840's. Large exhibitions

were held in 1839 and 1840: these displays of 'the curiosity of Nature and

works of Art' were inspired by a similar event in Manchester. The purpose

of the exhibitions was supposedly educational, but appealed to the curiosity

of the public; there was an element of showmanship in the demonstrations of

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1. S.T. 7 April 1849; this is not to be confused with the George
    St. Athenaeum, opened in 1847, with all the facilities of a superior
    club. The George St. Athenaeum maintained its exclusivity, and
    refused to join the Mechanics' Institute's venture. S.T. 31 March
    1849; ibid., 17 November 1849; Pawson and Brailsford, op.cit.,
    pp. 74-75
2. S.T. 10 November 1849; ibid., 24 November 1849
3. ibid., 1 November 1851
4. M.I. Minutes, III, 18 March 1850; ibid., 27 September 1851; the
    Athenaeum went its separate way as the Lyceum

microscopes and magic lanterns, electro-magnetic and galvanic machines and steam engines.[1] An important function of such exhibitions was fund raising, and to this end, there were plans for an accompanying tea party, concert and bazaar.[2]

Increasingly, during the following decades, the Mechanics' Institutes put more energy into the organisation of other social events. In 1842, tea parties began to be held with the annual meetings.[3] More formal soirées were also organised: in 1843, the work of Sir A.J. Knight for the Mechanics' Institute and the people of Sheffield was commemorated with tea, coffee and bread and butter at a shilling a head.[4] The Institute also began to provide occasional treats for its members, along the lines already established by the sunday schools and chapels.[5] The apprentices were given tea and buns in January 1840.[6] Gradually, organised recreation became more adventurous: in 1844, the members of the Institute were taken to York on a special train, to the great gratification of all involved.[7] Numerous balls, music festivals were also held, which were intended not just to provide suitable recreation, but to raise money.[8] During the 1850's, regular galas were arranged: these were opportunities for advertisement and fund-raising, as well as enjoyment. Often such occasions were very elaborate, such as in 1860, when Norfolk Park was taken over for a gala, with bands, dancing and refreshment, and the

1. ibid., II, 9 November 1838, 13 November 1838; M.I. Annual Report, 1839
2. M.I. Minutes, II, 17 May 1839
3. ibid., 14 October, 1842
4. ibid., 16 May 1843; Report of the Proceedings...in honour of Sir A.J. Knight M.D., etc. An earlier attempt to honour Ebenezer Elliott with a tea party had been turned down by him: M.I. Minutes II, 26 November 1841, 10 December 1841
5. See above, chapters 7 and 9
6. M.I. Minutes, II, 28 January 1840
7. ibid., 4 November 1844; ibid., III, 29 May 1857
8. ibid., III, 29 May 1857

presentation of a silver bugle to the Hallamshire Rifle Corps by Lady Wharncliffe.[1] Social events became regular, rather than special occurrences: in 1853, the Mechanics' Institute began fortnightly lectures and concerts in the winter months. Saturday evening recreational meetings were held in the 1860's with a great deal of energy.[2]

This miscellaneous recreational provision in part may have represented a wish to promote a corporate identity, and to strengthen the bonds of loyalty, especially during the financially difficult years of the 1850's. Significantly, the Mechanics' Library, always financially more secure, and resolutely setting its face against frivolity, made few attempts to provide counter-attractive recreation. This was despite repeated requests for soirees and other activities from radicals such as Ironside. Almost the only exception was a soirée at the Cutlers' Hall in 1853, to advertise the advantages of the Library to a wider public.[3]

In contrast, the People's College and the Hall of Science, with their emphasis on fellowship, accepted recreation as a crucial part of their work. The strong sense of comradeship and loyalty felt by students at the College was reflected in a variety of social events. From the first year, R.S. Bayley thought it important to provide 'as much unobjectionable recreation as was consistent with a diligent attention to classes'.[4] During that year, there were three trips to Roche and Beauchief Abbeys, and to Wentworth House. The end of the first session was celebrated by a trip to see Mr. Catlin's Indian Exhibition at Brightside, with demonstrations of an Indian war dance, music and whoop, and later followed by a more orthodox soirée.[5]

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1. ibid., 17 July, 1860, 24 July 1860, 8 August, 1860
2. ibid., 3 December 1862, 13 May 1863
3. Report...of the Mechanics' Library Soiree, etc., passim
4. Bayley, First Annual Report, etc.
5. ibid.; S.I. 31 December 1842

More recreational events were put on after the reorganisation of the College in 1849. In 1855, an exhibition of photographs, lithos and nature prints was held, with the aid of the Society of Arts. More successful, however, were the trips to places of interest within a day's journey, such as Stainborough Hall, Worksop and Conisborough Castle, which took place almost annually.[1]

Recreational events at the People's College were in a very real sense rewards; at the Hall of Science, however, the aim of the Sheffield socialists was to provide people with an environment in which recreation and study were of equal importance. Innocent amusements was thus a way of creating genuine harmony among the members. Social activities in no way detracted from the Hall's essentially religious and educational character. Under the leadership of Isaac Ironside, there was an active programme of dances, glee singing, recitations and masquerades. At such events, Ironside was seen to be keeping order by means of a dog whistle; there were songs in the style of the music hall, such as 'The Dancing Sweep', sung by a real sweep, and 'Give me Back my Arab Steed'.[2] Even after the decline of its formal eduational work, the Hall of Science continued to be used for recreational as well as propaganda purposes, such as the Chartist Soirée addressed by Richard Otley and Ernest Jones in 1850.[3]

The propagandist nature of these institutions meant that the moral and social training of their members was inevitably emphasised: it will be seen that the Mechanics' Institute, the Mechanics' Library and the People's College positively encouraged the adoption of middle class standards of behaviour by the working classes: only the Hall of Science appeared to be genuinely free of this preoccupation.

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1. P.C., Annual Report, 1853; ibid., 1854-1863
2. New Moral World 26 September 1840, quoted by Salt, Vocational Aspect, XXV, p. 136
3. S.T. 9 November 1850

Inevitably, the attempt of the Mechanics' Institute to provide sustained education for its artisan members was made more difficult by problems of social behaviour. The difficulties of teaching unruly apprentices were felt in 1833, when branch schools were in operation to teach elementary subjects to junior members.[1] In 1850, the levity and disorderly conduct of younger pupils resulted in a teachers' petition demanding a minimum age of 14 years.[2] Irregular attendance and poor behaviour were a continuing problem for the Institute, and prevented a more flexible approach to teaching. In 1870, brief experiments with weekly students were abandoned, for although many new students were attracted, they were 'less respectable and well behaved, and more migratory in their habits than others'.[3] Low and irregular attendances, particularly in the Spring, invalidated the usefulness of Science and Art Department exams, which required a minimum attendance.[4] The reliance on untrained and youthful teachers was also a problem. A want of regularity and punctuality in the teachers at the Institute was noted in 1833, and was still a problem in the 1880's.[5]

Such problems made training in moral and social behaviour all the more urgent. The values most conducive to self-help were urged consistently. Not surprisingly, the Mechanics' Institute set most store by diligence, and regular attendance.[6] Although the People's College perhaps attracted a more serious type of student, there were frequent reminders of the need for self-improvement. New students were advised that learning was only gradually

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1.   M.I. Minutes, I, 6 May, 1833
2.   ibid., III, 25 February 1850
3.   ibid., 2 March 1870
4.   ibid., 3 April 1873
5.   ibid., I, 27 December 1833; ibid., V, 26 May 1882
6.   ibid., I, 2 November 1835

acquired, and 'to get it you must be <u>attentive, punctual, patient</u> and <u>industrious</u>'.[1] The acquisition of these virtues was plainly useful in the laborious pursuit of knowledge, especially when the College held morning classes at 6.30 a.m. during the 1840's.[2] The importance of the habits of study and self-reliance in the outside world were also stressed, enabling working men 'to go through life with credit to themselves and usefulness to others, in whatever circumstances they may be placed'.[3] The acquisition of solid moral and mental habits was recommended by R.S. Bayley, and continued to be upheld after his departure: in line with this, the College continued to lend its support to conventional denunaciations of working class vice and drunkenness.[4] The rules of the College were few, but the propriety of the female students was fiercely safeguarded. Women were allotted a portion of the classroom by the committee, and had to leave the room first, while the male students remained seated.[5] In this way it was hoped to establish and maintain the public respectability of the College.[6]

The Mechanics' Library sought to controle its apprentices with restrictive rules and regulations. It was necessary in the first instance for masters 'or other respectable persons' to guarantee the good behaviour and suitability of the apprentices.[7] Any member convicted of felony, grand or

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1. Moore Smith, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 28; P.C., <u>Class List</u>, Sheffield, 1846
2. <u>ibid.</u>, Moore Smith, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 14
3. P.C., <u>Annual Report</u>, 1858
4. <u>S.T.</u> 25 October 1851; Moore Smith, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 11
5. P.C., <u>Rules and Class List,</u> n.d. <u>ibid.</u>, 1869
6. <u>S.D.T.</u> 30 September 1850
7. M.L., Minutes, p.31; <u>Catalogue</u>, etc.

petty larceny was immediately excluded.[1]   The effective use of the Library

by apprentices was hedged with restrictions: apprentices were excluded from

the reading room, and denied access to certain books, particularly those

with valuable plates.[2]   They were forbidden to loiter unnecessarily, and

to waste time on the way to and from work, under pain of expulsion.[3]   The

exclusion of novels and plays meant that working men were restricted to books

with a useful or moral content, and the apprentices permitted access to books

only under sufferance.

The Mechanics' Institute was in a position to bring overt propaganda

to bear upon its members.   The virtues of thrift were promoted by the opening

of a branch of the Yorkshire Penny Bank within the Institute in 1877, which

promoted 'habits of economy and forethought', as well as a corporate spirit.[4]

Prizes were introduced in the early days, to encourage emulation and com-

petitiveness, as well as to reward success.[5]   Regular addresses to students

on useful and elevatory subjects were instituted in 1850.[6]   The bulk of the

propaganda was transmitted by lectures.   The gathering momentum of the

temperance movement was reflected by such means: Charles Favell, George

Turton and Dr. Knight all spoke on topics associated with drink in the 1830's.[7]

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1.   M.L. Minutes, pp. 26-27; Additional Rules, etc.
2.   M.L. Minutes, 16 June, 1830, 15 November 1831, 21 November 1837;
          Catalogue, etc.
3.   M.L. Minutes, p.21; Regulations, etc.
4.   M.I. Minutes, IV, 28 March 1877
5.   ibid., I.   30 September 1835
6.   ibid., III, 10 May 1850
7.   See below, chapters 19-21

Lectures of this type diminished after 1850, but there was still a place for moral exhortation at the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College.   In 1862, Rev. Joseph Willis addressed the People's College on 'Character and Its Idiosyncracies', condemning idle friendships, and the dreadful results of novel reading.[1]   The Mechanics' Institute held lectures in subjects such as thrift as late as 1878 .[2]

Predictably, the institutions expressed a deep rooted conviction of the benefits of their educational work.   In 1841, the committee of the Mechanics' Institute proclaimed that 'a more intelligent and elevated character has been given to a large number of the Mechanics of the town, who had become useful and ornamental members of society'.[3]   The committee of the Mechanics' Library in 1851 noted with pride 'the very general spread of useful knowledge among the various classes of the community...and the marked improvement which has taken place in the condition of the working classes'.[4]   In the Mechanics' Institute, however, economic depression and declining membership soon gave rise to a new pessimism: during the 1840's, it was realised that the Institute could only attract a nightly average attendance of 30, while the population of the town had risen to over 120,000.[5]   Thus within ten years of its opening, the Institute was in decline; indeed, as early as 1835, the numbers had started a downward trend, through the effects of the trade depression.[6]   Despite symptoms of occasional recovery, this decline accelerated from the 1850's; in the following decade, the classrooms were only partly used, despite constant

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1.   Newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, S.C.L., X, pp. 9-10
2.   M.I. Minutes, IV, 30 January 1879
3.   ibid., II, 1 November 1841
4.   M.L. Annual Report, 1851
5.   M.I. Minutes, II, 6 November, 1843
6.   M.I., Annual Report, 1835; S.I. 7 November 1837

advertisements in the press, and the availability of teachers.[1]

The People's College has traditionally been given credit for its sturdy democracy, and its training of some eminent local figures; Samuel Plimsoll, and James M.orhouse, Bishop of Manchester, both received their initial education there, as well as several councillors and aldermen. For this reason, and perhaps its influence on the London Working Men's College, it has achieved a reputation as the most successful of the educational institutions of nineteenth century Sheffield.[2] Nevertheless, its career is in many ways parallel to that of the Mechanics' Institute. The Committee of the College showed a similar complacency: R.S. Bayley drew attention to the

> 'improved manners, more elevated principles, greater
> love of knowledge, habits of self-denying regularity,
> the cultivation of better feelings, and a vastly extended
> range of vision and purpose'

which were among the benefits of the College.[3] However, by the time Bayley left in 1848, the College was already in serious difficulties, and declining attendances in the 1860's led to a complete cessation of adult work by 1874.[4]

Clearly, the role of the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College was severely circumscribed by their voluntary status. Only the Mechanics' Library, by rigorous management, succeeded in maintaining financial solvency.[5] The crippling effects of a shortage of money is clearly shown by the Mechanics' Institute. The dependence on subscriptions and fee incomes made the Institute vulnerable in the years of economic depression, and this problem was already apparent by 1837.[6] By 1844, the Institute was in debt, and financial difficulties characterised the remainder of its career.[7]

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1.   <u>S.R.I.</u> 25 January 1867
2.   Jones, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp. 18-21; Armytage, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 3; Harrison, <u>History</u>, etc., pp. 17, 19, 28
3.   Bayley, <u>First Annual Report</u>
4.   J.H. Stainton, <u>The Making of Sheffield 1865-1914</u>, Sheffield, 1924, p.128. M oore-Smith, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 35
5.   <u>S.T.</u> 1 October 1853
6.   M.I., <u>Annual Report</u>, 1837
7.   M.I. Minutes, II, 8 July 1844

Shortage of cash imposed a stranglehold upon every aspect of its development: the lack of an adequate building led to the unsatisfactory and temporary amalgamation with the Athenaeum, and inaccessible rooms at the top of the new accommodation. The disadvantages of the building were rebutted by the committee, however, who commented

> 'if the place was as high as the Eiffel Tower,
> and a football match were to take place on the roof,
> we should hear nothing of those stairs'. 1

Despite reorganisation, the finances of the Institute steadily worsened. The committee believed themselves to be in a worse position than the denominational institutes, who were at least able to draw cash and teachers from their congregations.[2]

A second criticism of the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College is that they failed to provide the type of education which was needed in Sheffield: the limitations of financial resources obviously had some bearing upon this. Some evidence of the irrelevance of the Mechanics' Institute may be found in the continual apathy of the town, and the diminishing numbers who attended advanced courses.[3] In their increasing preoccupation with elementary classes after 1850, both the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College seemed to be turning their backs on advanced work. Indeed, elementary education was one area in which they were able to make a valuable contribution: for a quarter of acentury or more, their role was comparable to the voluntary day schools and the sunday schools in the provision of a basic literacy, and they fulfilled valuable remedial work with adults who had missed the chance for a rudmentary education in childhood. Their role in the provision of elementary education was of vital importance, until forced out of the field by the School Board in the 1880's.[4]

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1. M.I. Minutes, V, Annual Report 1888; the bulk of the building passed ultimately to the corporation for the establishment of the Free Library, and in 1868, the main lecture room was let to the Council, for use as a Council Chamber. Newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, 42, p. 69
2. M.I. Minutes, IV, 29 March, 1871
3. ibid., 2 March 1870, Annual Report 1880
4. Roderick and Stephens, Annals of Science, 1972, p. 356

Nevertheless, the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College failed to provide the quality or quantity of advanced work envisaged by their founders. As early as 1836, the numbers who attended lectures had fallen drastically, except when there were 'amusing experiments'.[1] The miscellaneous nature of the lectures were criticised by Paul Rodgers in 1840. Rodgers maintained that the expectation of the Institute had been extravagant, and the lectures too high and distant for working men, in contrast with the flexibility of the chapels, who made effective contact with the working classes through sunday school teachers and local preachers.[2] This was endorsed by Dr. Holland, who felt that the instruction offered was too scientific, abstract and serious, and 'the feelings of the uneducated are not interested, because the understanding does not comprehend what is taught'.[3] Ultimately, what has been called the 'time and tiredness factory' whereby artisans were unable to study fomplex subjects in depth in the few hours of leisure after a heavy day's work, undermined the whole effectiveness of advanced evening class education.[4]

The accelerated demand for practical scientific education in the 1870's and 1880's gave the Mechanics' Institute and the People's College a second chance to respond to a clearly demonstrated social need. Nevertheless, both institutions were unable to respond adequately to the new demands. Despite protracted discussions, the Mechanics' Institute failed to make use of the Science and Art Department until 1873, and the People's College could only participate in limited co-operation. The failure of the Institute to provide adequate workshop and laboratory facilities meant that the bulk of the successful science instruction in the 1880's and 1890's was handled instead by

1.   Favell, op.cit., p.16;
2.   Rodgers, op.cit., p. 14; Favell, op.cit., p.10
3.   Holland, op.cit., p. 234
4.   Roderick and Stephens, Annals of Science, 1972, pp. 357-358

Firth College and the Technical School; this contributed ultimately to the demise of the Mechanics' Institute, which was refused affiliation by the Technical School, and considered unsuitable for grants under the Technical Instruction Act.[1] A recurrent problem, highlighted by the demand for scientific education in the 1870's was the acute deficiency of adequately qualified teachers. The Mechanics' Institute in particular suffered from this, when there was pressure to offer courses in practical science in the 1870's; cash shortages prevented the Institute offering adequate fees and expenses to its teachers.[2]

Ironically, the Mechanics' Institute, intended by its founders to provide practical training for Sheffield's artisans, foundered in 1890 precisely because of its inability to do this. The People's College, in revolt against the philosophy of the Mechanics' Insttitute, pioneered the idea of self-determination and a humanist education for working men, but was forced to provide an increasing amount of elementary education, and ultimately failed to provide the advanced vocational courses which working men came instead to want. The Mechanics' Library, its philosophy clearly out of step with contemporary needs, capitulated in the face of competition from the Free Library. The Hall of Science, essentially the personal creation of the quixotic Isaac Ironside, ceased its organised educational work by the end of the 1840's. Clearly, voluntary provision of this type could only fulfill demand in a fumbling sort of way, and arguably, none of the secular adult education institutions could make much impact upon the mass of the working class in Sheffield.

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1.   M.I. Minutes, V, 28 March, 1887
2.   ibid., IV, 6 September 1871, 18 October 1871; ibid., V, 26 May, 1882

The achievement of the Mechanics' Library, the Mechanics' Institute, and increasingly after 1850 the People's College, was their role in the articulation of the consensus values of employer and artisan: such institutions helped to integrate generations of ambitious tradesmen and manufacturers with the established merchants and professional men.   They provided the platform upon which the expanding middle class could express their commitment to the 'civilising' of working class culture, and the creation of a disciplined workforce, and hence commit themselves to a public position of social responsibility within the community.   In contrast, the Hall of Science and the People's College in Bayley's time, with a firmer basis among the artisan class, enabled working men to achieve self-determination, and an education humanist or political in scope.   Despite fundamental differences in philosophies, they held out to the working classes the chance to achieve a basic literacy, and selective opportunities for further study.   Education thus provided the means by which the artisan was to be reconciled with society, and given a stake in its future.

The proliferation of educational provision in Sheffield in the nineteenth century arose out of a new concern with the education of the working class.   Literacy levels were higher in Sheffield than in some other northern towns, but many working people were unable to read or write.   For the middle classes, ignorance was directly reflected in irreligion, crime and violence.   The education of the working class child was vital in the interests of social order.   From the earliest years, it was determined by the nature of middle class ideology.   Through sunday schools, day schools and charity schools, working class children were given a minimum education, appropriate to their station in life, and firmly founded upon the moral principles of the Bible.   The acceptance of the values of diligence, thrift, sobriety and deference were demanded in return for an often inadequate elementary education.   The School Board after 1870 still used the formula

first developed by the sunday schools and charity schools.

A second factor determining the education of the working classes was the need for scientific and technical training. In this way, Britain's commercial and industrial superiority would be sustained by a class of skilled and innovative workmen. These needs were first explored in the Mechanics' Institute and formed an important strand in the philosophy of the highe r grade and technical schools and in Firth College in the last quarter of the century.

The moral and scientific elements in the ideology of education derived from the need to educate the worker for his station in life, in the interests of social order and national prosperity. In a very real sense, they both involved role education, and sprang fundamentally from considerations of social control. Educational experiments which fell outside the scope of these guiding principles did not survive. The Hall of Science, fired by Owenite ideals, was an educational force in Sheffield for little more than ten years. The People's College, committed to the free intellectual development of working men survived into the 1870s with the help of the middle class, and exchanged its humanist ideals for the utilitarian education already found in the Mechanics' Institute.

Involvement in learning exposed working class children and adults to contact with middle class values. The lessons of punctuality, discipline, diligence and sobriety were disseminated through direct propaganda. Moral and religious indoctrination were at least as important as elementary education in the day schools, and were still implicit in the Mechanics' Institute, the Mechanics' Library and the People's College. In addition, social and recreational activities, and facilities such as libraries and penny banks helped to create a new context for the transmission of values. Arguably, the gaps in provision, the varying quality of the teaching, and persistent absenteeism seriously limited the effectiveness of education in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, literacy levels continued to rise. The values of discipline, order and conformity were disseminated to greater

umbers of children and adults than ever before, and schools and institutes
thus brought in many who were beyond the reach of church and chapel. In
many senses, education failed to produce an ideal society - crime and
violence still abounded. Nevertheless, by the end of the century it had
become a mass experience. If many who passed through schools and adult
institutes in the nineteenth century failed to be reconciled with goals
and values prescribed for them by society, at least they had the knowledge
of what was expected of them.

Part Three

Temperance

17.   Introduction

In Sheffield, as elsewhere, the temperance movement was forged
by the efforts of middle and working class reformers, and in turn reflected
their individual priorities.   Hostility to drink was fundamental to the
social philosophy of many manufacturers, small entrepreneurs, and self-
improvement working men.   The integration of middle and working class
supporters of temperance into a common social ideogogy emphasised the gulf
between the 'rough' and the 'respectable'.[1]   The temperance ethic cut across
the barriers of class, and as with shared religious and educational experiences,
transmitted to an important section of the working class the values and ideals
of middle class reformers.[2]

Temperance appealed to many as a social panacea – the future
prospects for the individual or the society which could be saved from drink
seemed limitless.   During the late 1830's and 1840's, total abstinence
from alcohol was linked with the emerging working class consciousness, as
a weapon in the struggle for utopia.   Teetotal chartists tried to use
teetotalism to achieve the political recognition of the working classes on
their own terms, and to make them worthy of that recognition.   Many
ambitious working men made a generalised response to temperance which long
outlived teetotal Chartism.   Richard Cobden's belief that the salvation of
the working class lay with the temperance movement showed the unshakeable
connexion between self-help and sobriety.[3]

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1.   Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians – The Temperance
          Question in England 1830-1870, London, 1972, pp. 23-25
2.   Brian Harrison, 'Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth
          Century England', Past and Present, 38, 1967, pp. 121-22
3.   Rechabite and Temperance Magazine, 13, 1882, p. 13

For many small tradesmen and employers of labour, the temperance ethic was a part of the search for goodness, and the temperance society, like a Chapel, provided vital social support. Temperance work gave valuable experience of administration: perhaps more important was its encouragement of group identity and the spirit of community responsibility. Involvement with temperance allowed working men who wished to be respectable to separate themselves from popular culture, and from the lifestyle and cultural experiences of the 'rough' poor. Collective opposition to drink gave the insecure and the inspiring new social relationships, and a pre-ordained system of morals and values. For the small employers, consolidating and advancing their social and economic position, temperance played a vital role. In the context of the increasing social awareness of the Victorian period, responsibility for poverty could be placed squarely upon drink and working class depravity, with an occasional sally at the greed and corruption of the aristocratic cereal growers. At least until the 1890's political economy and the dictates of industrial capitalism escaped from blame. And for many employers, temperance could be used to establish a greater measure of work discipline, and ultimately, profit.

For the working man, as well as the substantial employer, the temperance ethic and its social organisation provided an important means of survival and progress in an increasingly competitive industrial society. Temperance had a dynamic function for both the middle and working classes: the movement cut across the lines of class unity, forcing the working classes into relationships with other social groupings. Teetotalism was important for the artisan who wished to become respectable, and the ambitious employer, who sought to advertise and to consolidate his position. Employer and artisan often had shared class origins, experiences and cultural affinities: in Sheffield, at least until the middle of the century, they lived and worked in close proximity. Temperance was thus an important aspect of the creation of a new consensus, based upon the cultural assimilation of artisans and tradesman, craftsman and shopkeeper, and the energetic and often self-made employer.

It played a crucial role in the formation of habits of respectability.

18.   Drink and the Community in Sheffield

Throughout the eighteenth and ninteenth centuries, drink was of central importance in the daily lives of the people of Sheffield; seventy years of temperance pressure could only modify, not dislodge, the fundamental role of alcohol and drinking in the fabric of society. The resilience of this tradition may be explained by two factors; firstly, the continued relevance of alcohol for pleasure, and the escapism, and secondly, the identification of drinking with activities and facilities integral to the day-to-day realities of urban existence.

Thus temperance opinion focussed its attention not just on beer, spirits and wine, but their consumption in public houses, taverns and beershops, and the central role of these facilities in local culture. Increasingly, drink as well as drunkenness came under attack. It is arguable that in the context of urban living conditions, with poverty, overcrowding and violence, the problem of drink achieved a new dimension. Firstly, alcohol and socialised drinking played a fundamental role in the painful transition from rural to urban life. Increased working class drinking and the emergence of the temperance movement were twin responses to the rapid growth of Sheffield between 1820 and 1850. By 1851, half the adult population of the town were migrants into the city from the surrounding countryside: between 1841 and 1851 alone, Sheffield had gained nearly nine thousand through migration.[1] Secondly, many workers, including those accustomed to town life, were increasingly forced to come to terms with the new rhythms of work resulting from the increasing use of steam power

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1.   A.K. Cairncross, 'Internal Migration in Victorian England', Manchester School, 1949, p. 86; Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield, Liverpool, 1959, pp. 6-7, see above, chapter 2.

and the firmer demarcation between home and workplace, leisure and work. Many workers in the craft industries suffered in terms of status as well as cash during years of depression. Finally, the periodic ravages of poverty, hunger and disease spared few working class families in nineteenth century Sheffield.

Drink and the public house thus helped to cushion the working man against insecurity and tension, and mitigated the shock of rapid social and cultural change. Through the conviviality of drink, the traditions, ceremonial and sociability of a more ordered life could be maintained. From the 1860's, a new distinctive urban culture was emerging. Drink continued to have a central role in the theatrical entertainments and the music halls of late Victorian Sheffield.

The social function of the drinking place was in the first place utilitarian. The importance of the pub in working class life was a result of the general inadequacies of facilities for working people.[1] The wide-spread adulteration of milk, the impurities of the water supply, meant that people drank beer because there was no alternative; 'Ale... fulfilled the functions of the modern teapot, and generally, no doubt, with no more harm done'.[2] Despite the growing avialability of cheap tea and coffe, there was no practical rival for beer.

The public house had two main roles, as a provider of recreation, and as a social meeting place.[3] The pub was an escape from the home. In general, working class housing in Sheffield was of a higher standard than elsewhere, and the proportion of lodging houses was low.[4] Nevertheless,

1. For the social functions of drink, see Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., pp. 37-44
2. Mary Walton, Sheffield, Its Story and Its Achievements, Sheffield, 3rd edition, 1952, p. 108; H.A. Monckton, A History of English Ale and Beer, London, 1966, p. 7
3. Harrison, op.cit., pp. 45-55; Brian Harrison, 'Pubs', ed. H.J. Dyos, and Michael Wolff, The Victorian City - Image or Reality, London, 1973, 1, pp. 161-190
4. S.C. on the Sale of Liquors on Sunday Bill, Report (P.P. 1867-68, XIV) A.1511; Pollard, op.cit., p. 98

for most working people, homes were uncomfortable and cramped. The
prevalence of craft work, and the close identification of home and workplace
added to the discomfort, and delayed the acceptability of the home as a place
of leisure. The vitality of the pub was reinforced by the lack of alternative
recreational provision for working people. Parks such as the Botanical Gardens
were closed to the poor. The provision of public parks in Sheffield was slow.
Despite the gift of the Park by the Duke of Norfolk in 1841, working people
preferred to seek open air recreation on foot outside the town. The local
pub was often an easier and more acceptable place of resort.[1]

The pub was important to the urban working class for other reasons,
it provided not only warmth and shelter, but necessary facilities such as
lavatories and meals. With the advent of steam machinery and shift work,
workmen increasingly looked to the pub for the chance to have breakfast
before beginning a six a.m. shift.[2] Traditionally, the workman had his midday
meal brought to the workplace by his wife. However, the distancing of home
and workplace with the growth of working class suburbs after 1850 made this
difficult. Although eating houses gradually spread, many artisans naturally
resorted to local pubs for food and drink.[3]

Pubs were also necessary for providing food, drink and shelter on
Sundays. Those in lodging houses tended to eat at home.[4] However, there
was a pressing demand for pub facilities from thousands of working men and
their families who walked out into the countryside, across the moors to
Hathersage and Castleton or to Chatsworth. Some of the more energetic young
men might walk thirty miles in a day, as did Michael Beal in his youth. The

1. Sheffield began to acquire public parks only in the 1870's. S.C. on the Sale of Liquors, etc., (P.P. 1867-1868, XIV), AA4582-4584, 7722, 7765; Walton, op.cit., pp. 169, 213, 239; Pollard, op.cit., p. 98
2. S.C. on the Prevalence of Habits of Intemperance, First Report, (P.P. 1877, XI), AA.2996-2999
3. S.C. on the Sale of Liquors, etc. (P.P. 1867-1868, XIV), A7911.
4. ibid. , AA. 1510-1511, 4642-4644

affinity of the Sheffield worker for the countryside was described by Alderman

William Fisher in 1868:

> 'a great many of the population of Sheffield have been
> born in the villages around. The town is ugly and
> smoky, and the country is exceedingly beautiful about,
> and they pour out on foot, and by railways, and in vehicles
> in very great numbers'. 1

The advent of cheap railway excursions accelerated this habit, and Sheffield

workmen travelled as far as Grimsby and Worksop in the 1860's. It was the

custom to spend the whole day in the country, and the rural pub provided rest,

shelter and a glass of ale for the tired traveller.[2]

Opportunities for sport were closely allied with drinking. The

robust nature of popular culture has already been discussed.[3] Cock-fighting

and bear-baiting were proverbially associated with pubs in the eighteenth

century; the R.S.P.C.A. and the temperance organizations emerged simultaneously

as a response to the brutality of cruel sports and excessive drinking.[4] The

association of drink and sport continued. Sheffield antiquarian R.E. Leader

regretted that

> 'football, and the fine old Yorkshire game of knur and
> spell, and the quiet bowling green and skittle alley
> and quoit ground, derived additional attractions for
> the opportunity they gave for betting and heavy drinking.' 5

During the nineteenth century, these began to be replaced by more sedentary

games, such as cards, dominoes and dice. Bagetelle, and gambling for money

and drink were common.[6] The establishment of salons and concert rooms for singing

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1. ibid., A. 6790
2. ibid., AA. 1512-1513, 6791, 7722, 7765-7766, 7916-7923; S.C. on intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877, XI), AA.3006-3007
3. See above, chapter 2
4. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p.91
5. R.E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century, Sheffield, 1901, p.45
6. Jelinger C. Symonds, Report on the Trades of Sheffield, and on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Young Persons Employed in Them, Sheffield, 1843, p. 23

and dancing in the second half of the century was a deliberate policy by the publicans to make pubs more attractive, and kept alive the uninhibited vigour of the eighteenth century tavern.[1] The growth of the music hall marked a further step in the institutionalization of drink and pleasure.[2]

The pub was fundamental to social intercourse on every level. It accommodated the daily exchange of news and gossip; thus the personal relationships of the workshop and the street corner were extended into more convivial surroundings.- As a day-to-day information centre, the pub was unparalleled. Michael Beal visited pubs to read the newspapers, and to have a chat about local and political affairs: there was almost nowhere else he could have gone.[3] The lack of an alternative meeting place meant that the pub sometimes emerged as a backcloth to political conspiracy and radical intrique.[4] Radical intellectuals Joseph Gales, James Montgomery, Ebenezer Rhodes and Charles Sylvester requented the Bull Inn on the Wicker in the early 1790's. This resulted in Sylvester's rhyming satires on the Volunteers, and Montgomery's satirical attack on the mayor of Doncaster, for which he was imprisoned. The Bull Inn came to be regarded by the authorities as a hot-bed of sedition.[5]

The political reputation of the pub was compounded by its close links with friendly societies and trades unions.[6] Funds and society activities were

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1.   S.C. on Intemperance, etc. (P.P. 1877 XI) AA.3080-3081
2.   Pollard, op.cit., p. 119; E.D. Mackerness, Somewhere Further North –
      A History of Music in Sheffield, Sheffield 1974, pp. 83-84
3.   S.C. on the sale of Liquors, etc. (P.P. 1867-68, XIV) A. 7728
4.   E.J. Hobsbawm and George Rude, Captain Swing, London, 1969, p.60
5.   Leader, op.cit, pp. 50-51
6.   See below, chapter 25

commonly centred on the pub. Thus the Scissors Mutual Aid Fund and the

Scissor Grinders' Union met at the Punch Bowl on Bridge Street.   Frequently,

the secretary of the union was the landlord of the pub.   The celebrated

William Broadhead, secretary of the Saw Grinders' Union, and heavily implicated

in the Sheffield 'Outrages', was landlord of the Royal George on Carver Street.

Compulsory monthly meetings, at which drinking was encouraged, and the levying

of fines for non-attendance, promoted the·profits of the landlord, as well as

the solidarity of the union.   The pub was thus the natural place for trades

societies to discuss policies and tactics.   The role of the pub as a meeting

place for conspirators was clearly exposed by the Royal Commission on the

Sheffield Outrages.   Joseph Thompson, the secretary of the Forgers, lived at

the Corner Pin pub on Allen Street, and was involved in conversations about

rattening on his premises.   The gunpowder used in the explosions was bought

and sold in public houses.[1]

Workingmen were tied to the drinking place not only by their own

friendly societies and trades unions, but by the deliberate policy of some

masters.   A major incentive to drinking was the custom of 'linked' wages:

a shortage of coin meant that it was convenient to pay men together in a pub,

where money could be changed.   Sometimes, a manufacturer had a direct interest

in a pub, and this method of payment was good for trade.   Payment was tradi-

tionally made on Saturday night by many masters, and this was a direct stimulus

to heavy weekend drinking.[2]

Until shorter working hours and the growth of a Saturday half-holiday

gave the working man a clear opportunity for sustained recreation, much daily

drinking was carried out in workshops and factories.   The workplace, like the

pub, saw the formation of relationships and encouraged social interaction: drink

was at home in the workplace as the pub.   Daily drinking in factories and

1.   Symonds, op.cit., p. 17; S.D.T. 19 October, 1866; ed. Sidney Pollard,
         The Sheffield Outrages - Report presented to the Trades Union
         Commissioners in 1867, reprinted Bath, 1971, pp. xv,xvii, evid.
         J. Platts pp. 4, 8, J. Thompson, p. 33; R. Holmshaw p.50; G. Shaw,
         pp. 111-112

2.   Report of the Committee appointed by the Town Council to Enquire into
         the apparent Excess of Drunkenness in the Borough of Sheffield, Sheffield
         1853, pp. 10-11; John Wilson, 'The Habits of the Artisans and their
         Families' in S.R.I. 5 December 1865

workshops could have a functional purpose: the incidence of dust in grinding, more especially in branches of dry grinding, has been well documented, and this was drastically increased with the application of steam power.[1] The problems of dust and heat in the workshops meant that men had to rely on a frequent supply of beer.   Alcohol was valued for its restorative effects. At the Sheffield Lead Works, a pint of ale was supplied daily to the men in the 1860's, in an attempt to minimize the incidence of lead poisoning.[2] It was observed by Dr. Knight that grinders who drank frequently tended to live longer, because of their absence from the pernicious effects of the grinding process.   Grinders were thought to prefer to spend their wages on drink, rather than safety devices to minimize the effects of dust.[3]

The growth of the heavy steel industry, with the heat and discomfort, and the exertion required from the workmen, perpetuated the role of drink in the workshop.   The iron and steel workers were described by John Wilson as 'inveterate drinkers', because of the physical exertion involved in their labours.[4]   The thirst produced by Sheffield industry was held to be a major cause of local drunkenness by the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent in 1876.[5]

The prevalence of drinking in theSheffield trades was made possible by the independence of the artisans.   The division of labour meant that each craftsman was master of his own trade, renting premises for himself, and outside the control of the large mercahnt s and manufacturers.   The inclination

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1. Dr. A.J. Knight, Observations on Grinders' Asthma, Sheffield, 1822, p.6; G.C. Holland, The Mortality, Sufferings and Diseases of Grinders, Sheffield and London, 1841-2, 1 p. 10, 2 p. 8, 3 pp. 4-5; J.C. Hall, The Trades of Sheffield, as Influencing Life andHealth, London, 1865, pp. 14-17
2. Hall, op.cit., p.6
3. Knight, op.cit., p.7; Symonds, op.cit., pp. 4, 5, 9
4. S.R.I. 5 December 1865
5. ibid., 6 May 1876

of many artisans was to work when they chose. This tendency was exacerbated
in the rural grinding wheels, where work was often irregular through dependence
on the vagaries of the natural water supply, vulnerable to drought in summer and
frost in winter. As late as 1865, a quarter of the town's grinding wheels were
still powered by water.[1] Drinking and sport was a natural relief for grinders
when work was interrupted. This was observed by Samuel Roberts, who described
them sitting 'at the wheeldoor with their copious jug and their small pots
handing round the never-cloying English beer'.[2]

The strength of piecework in the local trades contributed to the
freedom of many artisans to work their own hours. It also increased
opportunities for drinking. When trade was good, high wages reinforced this.
Men on piecework commonly began drinking on Saturday, and continued into the
beginning of the following week. The habit of a 'St. Monday' or a 'Natty
Tuesday' was widespread. Although sometimes at the cost of long hours, men
could customarily earn a good wage by hard work during the rest of the week.[3]

Such was the weekly rhythm for many workmen in the Sheffield trades;
the division of the time between hard physical exertion and heavy drinking was
only eroded by the spread of the factories, and the replacement of piecework
with day work. Superimposed upon daily drinking was a pattern of ritual
ceremonial drinking customs. These fulfilled several important functions.
They helped to reconcile workers to the increasing pace and monotony of
work allowing formal opportunities for conviviality. Such customs reinforced

1.   Hall, op.cit., p.11
2.   Quoted by John Wilson, S.R.I. 5 December 1865; Symonds, op.cit., p.16
3.   Symonds, op.cit.,pp. 3-4; 18, 20; Hall, op.cit., p. 18; S.C. on
        Intemperance, etc., (pp. 1877 XI) AA.1171, 2939-40. S.C. on Habitual
        Drunkards, Report (P.P. 1872 IX) A.1731 Report, etc. 1853, p.7

the mystique of the exclusive craft trades. Drinking marked stages in

apprenticeship, and in this way, outsiders or new recruits were able to gain

the acceptance of their fellow workers.

In the late eighteenth century, the men in Samuel Roberts's silver

plate works enjoyed regular drinking parties in the workshops, and an 'annual

saturnalia' took place each September.[1] Such traditions lingered on in the

iron and steel trades.[2] Although in London, drinking customs were on the wane

by the 1840's, in Sheffield it was difficult to find a local trade which

lacked these 'fines and footings'.[3] Writing in 1839, Abel Bywater described

a cutler's 'lozin' or lossing, the celebrations when a man came of age:

> 'the whole neighbourhood is made aware of the
> fact by a peel of bells, which happen to be
> ingots of steel, suspended and struck with a
> hammer, to the great annoyance of all around'. [4]

This was followed by a supper, with singing, shouting and drinking.

Antiquarian Henry Tatton observed similar customs at Darwins, Queen Street,

probably in the 1870's. Christmas and weddings were also specially

celebrated. At Darwin's a weekly subscription of $3\frac{1}{2}$d. was spent on a

Christmas feast, the head of the firm presiding with 'a bottle or two of

port, and any amount of beer for the men.'[5] At Guest and Chrimes's brass

works, large sums were spent on drinking to celebrate thebeginning and end

of apprenticeships, birthdays and weddings, allegedly resulting in a debauch

of two or three days.[6]

1.   Samuel Roberts, Autobiography and Select Remains, London, 1849, p.38;
         Leader, op.cit., pp. 39-40
2.   Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p. 42
3.   ibid., p. 309; British and Foreign Temperance Intelligencer, 1841,
         5, pp. 375-76
4.   Abel Bywater, The Sheffield Dialect, Sheffield, 1839, p.v.
5.   Henry Tatton, unpublished ms., S.C.L., M.D. 1056, p.659
6.   Thomas Beggs, Sketch of the Life and Labours of John Guest, London
         and Worksop, 1881, p. 79

Ceremonial and festive drinking in the workshops thus represented an extension of the celebrations of pre-industrial society, carried forward into urban culture. Another aspect of this was the survival of feasts and fairs. Such events remained a popular attraction in Sheffield, at least until the middle of the nineteenth century. As with drinking customs, they afforded a welcome break from the monotony of work. Because of the high proportion of migrants in the local population, festivities were an agreeable opportunity to renew contact with country cousins, and allowed town and country to come together in uncontrolled enjoyment. The easy intimacy of these occasions was accompanied by heavy drinking and cruel sports. Alcohol had a central role on such occasions. Even the poorest would brew beer in readiness, and house-to-house visiting to taste the results on the eve of the feast was the custom.[1] Despite such home brewing, the pub came into its own during local feasts. The Royal Oak pub had a central and symbolic role during the Scotland st. feast.[2] The sports of the day usually concluded with singing and dancing at the various pubs.[3] Statute or hiring fairs, as well as local market days, also promoted drinking, which was a natural accompaniment to commercial transactions which involved drink.[4] Participation in seasonal festivities was not restricted to adults. Shrove Tuesday saw the custom of 'spending the penny', with children between the ages of five and ten years gathered in the more orderly pubs, and payed a penny for plum cake and warm sweetened wine. This was followed by games, and even Samuel Roberts concluded that these were very 'joyous and harmless meetings'.[5]

1.   Leader, op.cit., pp. 42-44; S.T. 1 November 1873
2.   See above p. 26
3.   Bywater, op.cit., p. v;
4.   Ian Dewhirst, 'Yorkshire Horse and Cattle Fairs', Yorkshire Ridings Magazine, April 1971
5.   Roberts, op.cit., p. 21

The importance of drink and the pub as a source of recreation and enjoyment for the Sheffield workingman was reflected in the songs of the radical poet and filesmith Joseph Mather, and in other, anonymous, drinking songs. Mather died in 1804, but his songs show the conviviality and vitality of the pub which survived through the nineteenth century. The Cocktail Feast and The Guinea Club Feast are both celebrations of extraordinary festivities, when

'In love and true friendship we mean to conclude,
And drink all the liquor our friend has not brewed,
We'll drain every barrel from biggest to last,
To loosen our hides at the guinea club feast'   1

The anonymous Saturday Night, dating from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, describes how the workmen wait at the door of the warehouse to be paid, then

'Having reckon'd they ne'er stop
But joy to the beer shop,
Where the fumes of tobacco and stingo invite;
And the oven inhabits
A store of Welsh rabbits,
To feast jovial fellows on Saturday Night'.   2

The pub in this song accommodated not only drink and food, but 'buying and selling and courting and shaving', and laughing and joking, which 'put wrinkled sorrow and care to the flight'. 3

This habit of Saturday night drinking and festivity continued as a weekly outlet for the energies and tensions of working people throughout the ninteenth century. Masters and manufacturers often participated in heavy weekend drinking. In the words of the unknown author of Saturday Night, the masters went to th pubs to discuss local affairs, and 'all ranks and conditions Commence politicians while sat at the alehouse on Saturday night'.[4]   Drinking

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1.   Wilson, op.cit., p. 58.   Also see 'Shout'em down's barm', p. 52 and 'The Blind Fiddlers' p. 55.   Mather celebrated the vitality of popular culture, with its races, bull baiting, cock fighting and drinking.   He turned to political satire through his songs and broadsheets, supporting Paine and liberty in 1790's., thus reflecting the fierce radicalism of some Sheffield artisans.   See W.H.G. Armytage, 'Joseph Mather - Poet of the Filesmiths', Notes and Queries 22 July 1950

2.   Wilson, op.cit,, p. 87

3.   ibid., p. 88

4.   loc.cit.

and entertainment were essential to business deals. This is shown in the records of the Town Trustees and the Cutlers' Company. During the eighteenth century, the Cutlers' Feast became the great social event of the year, lasting three days, and celebrated by masters and men, with treats in the taverns.[1] The feast became increasingly more magnificent, attracting in 1771 two former prime ministers, Rockingham and Bute, the Dukes of Norfolk, Devonshire and Leeds, five earls and representatives of the local gentry. By 1805, up to £300 was expended on these occasions.[2] Heavy drinking and elaborate toasts were an essential part of the Cutlers' Feast. The Company also held many minor dinners and treats: business was regularly conducted in pubs, and there was a constant expenditure on this, as well as on entertaining strangers.[3] Drinks for the crowd, toasts and dinners were also a regular feature of elections, such as in 1835, when Hugh Parker celebrated his return to Parliament with a public dinner at the Tontine Hotel, and liberal toasts and celebrations.[4] Other public events, such as the opening of the Sheffield canal in 1819, and the Sheffield to Rotherham railway in 1838 were occasions for public and private drinking.[5]

The excesses of middle class drinking were not removed until a consciousness of status and respectability moderated heavy public drinking. Under the influence of temperance pressure, middle class attitudes towards their own consumption of alcohol came to be ambivalent. Nevertheless, the

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1. R.E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century, Sheffield, 1901, pp. 48-9, R.E. Leader, History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire, I, Sheffield, 1905, p. 196
2. ibid., pp. 208-216
3. ibid., pp. 218-40
4. S.I. 27 January 1835
5. S.L.R. 22 February 1819; ibid., 31 October 1838

habits and traditions of working class drinking continued. Much of the

drinking was done in beerhouses, introduced by the Beer Act of 1830. These

had cheap licences, and continued outside the control of the magistrates until

the Licensing Act of 1872.[1] These were described by Jelinger Symonds in 1843.

Many catered exclusively for young people, and were deliberately made attractive,

brilliantly lit, with painted ceilings, and offering dancing and cards, as well

as drink. In external appearance, however, Sheffield beerhouses put up little

show. Most were like private houses, and in the 1840's, the only indication of

their character was a patterned and painted window blind.[2] Gradually, pubs

selling gin and other spirits appeared, elaborate and ostentatious saloons, with

gas lights, mirrors and mahogany. These were in imitation of the spirit shops

of the metropolis and elsewhere, and with their brilliant lighting and

pretensions of elegance, strove to attract the casual drinker seeking refuge

from the discomforts of home life. There were still few of these in Sheffield

in the 1840's.[3] By the 1870's, there was a tendency for humble refreshment

houses and pubs to be converted into spacious and elaborate dram shops, with

large saloons and many entrances. The larger, anonymous public houses were

thought to be especially attractive to women drinkers.[4] The same accusations

were made against grocers' off-licences, which proliferated in the suburbs in

the last quarter of the century.[5]

The number of beer houses and pubs in Sheffield is one indication

of the availability of beer for the working classes. After 1830, beerhouses

1.   Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., pp. 69, 81-86
2.   Symonds, op.cit., p.7
3.   ibid., p.8; Harrison, Victorian City, etc., Vol. 1, p. 170
4.   S.C. on Intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877, IX), A. 2952
5.   S.R.I. 2 May 1871; British Temperance Advocate, August 1871, p.860

proliferated, often run by people in other trades as a sideline. By October 1830, 150 had applied for beerhouse licences, and within three years, there were 235 new beerhouses in Sheffield, as well as 329 fully licensed pubs.[1] By 1871, the number of beerhouses had increased to 649, as opposed to 566 pubs. The number of fully licensed pubs reached a peak of 1275 in 1893, before declining. The new category of off-licences established by the Licensing Act of 1872, resulted in 666 'beer-offs' in 1883. Off-licenses reamined fairly stable, numbering 636 in 1930, as opposed to 792 pubs.[2]

The fluctuations in the number of licenses is partly explained by the tightening of the licensing laws, as a response to direct temperance pressure. Nevertheless, the proportion of licenses to people remained higher than in many cities. In 1821, there was one licence to 312 in Sheffield, but the effect of the Beer Act meant that in 1841, there was one pub or beerhouse to every 149 people. Thereafter, the population generally increased faster than the licensed provision, but the jump in the numbers of all types of licensed premises in the 1870's brought the ratio down to 1:157. From the early 1890's, the number of drinking places declined in absolute terms, and in relation to population, reaching 1:363 in 1930.[3]

Contemporaries often observed that Sheffield had far more licenses than Leeds, despite the similarity in area and population. Police magistrate

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1. S.M. 8 May 1830; S.T. 9 October 1830; S.Ind. 16 October 1830;
   Dr. J.N. Reedman, Report on a Survey of Licensing in Sheffield,
   Sheffield, 1931, pp. 6-9
2. From the table 'Growth of Population and Licenced Premises',
   given by Reedman, op.cit., p. 12
3. Figures extrapolated from above.

J.E. Davis observed in 1877 that there were 1294 drinking places in Sheffield, as opposed to 807 in Leeds.[1] Of the ten most populous towns in England and Wales in 1878, Sheffield ranked fifth in the number of persons to drinking places, behind Bristol, Newcastle, Manchester and Salford, but with a higher proportion than Birmingham, Hull, Liverpool, Leeds and Metropolitan London.[2]

Sheffield was thus well provided with facilities for drinking in the nineteenth century. Doubtless many working people drank regularly, but moderately, with only occasional excesses on Saturday nights, weddings, funerals or holidays. Nevertheless, there was a strong preoccupation by the authorities with the incidence of drunkenness, and the link between drink and criminality. Although statistics exist for the apprehension and conviction of drunkards, they are of limited use to the historian. There was often a failure to distinguish between alcoholism, drinking and drunkenness.[3] The number of convictions was determined by the effectiveness of police supervision, which was variable: thus the proportion of police constables per head of population in Sheffield in 1877 was estimated at 1:781, in contrast to 1:442 for Manchester, and 1:581 for Liverpool.[4] In any case, the inadequacies of the laws relating to drunkenness meant that drunkards were rarely apprehended, unless openly committing a breach of the peace, or a felony. The decision whether to arrest varied with the temper of the police, and was essentially an individual choice. In Sheffield in the 1870's, it was estimated that not one in twenty found drunk on the streets was actually charged; magistrates and police felt the existing system of fines a wholly unrealistic way of dealing with the problem.[5]

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1. S.C. on Intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877, XI), AA.1265-1266
2. S.C. on Intemperance, etc., Fourth Report, (P.P. 1878-9, XIV), Appendix p. 541
3. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p. 21
4. S.C. on Intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877, XI), AA. 1251, 3017-3020)
5. S.C. on Habitual Drunkards, etc., (P.P. 1872, IX), AA. 1475-1617, 1685-1770

Nevertheless, a proportion of offenders were charged and convicted. A minimum impression of the scale of drunkenness may be derived from the proportion of drunkards, set against total criminal arrests. This was high: in the year ending 1871, there were 2732 apprehensions, of which 1164 were for drunkenness.[1] Of these, only 154 were discharged as first offenders. The remainder were fined or committed as persistent offenders. 196 were strangers, most of whom were vagrants. Given this evidence, it seems that arrests and convictions were limited largely to the tramp, the alcoholic and the general detritus of the urban population, who took refuge in regular and heavy drinking.

Despite this residuum of habitual offenders, police magistrate J.E. Davis compared Sheffield favourably with other towns, on the grounds of superior police supervision, and also more temperate habits. Thus in the year ending August 1871, there were only 901 convictions for being drunk and disorderly, in contrast with 1769 in Leeds, which had more people, but significantly fewer beerhouses.[2] In the following year, only 1006 men and 353 women were charged with drunkenness, as opposed to 7411 men and 3415 women in Liverpool.[3] In the relation of apprehensions to population, Sheffield was again better than other cities. In 1877, the apprehension rate was 1:222, as opposed to 1:40 in Manchester. The impression from this evidence is that Sheffield may have had less of a drink problem than elsewhere. Chief Constable John Jackson thought this was because Sheffield workmen tended to drink steadily, but moderately, throughout the week, while the Manchester operatives had to crowd all their drinking into a Saturday afternoon.[4]

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1. ibid., A. 1717
2. ibid., AA. 1563, 2399
3. S.C. on Intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877, XI), AA 1228-1229, p. 124
4. ibid., AA. 3051-3052

Figures for police prosecutions show some modifications in the pattern of drinking in the second half of the century. There were 948 apprehensions in 1847, rising to a peak of 1622 in 1852, the year before the Town Council's report on drunkenness. Between 1855 and 1860, apprehensions mostly fell below 900. From the late 186.'s, however, there was a steady rise to a peak of 1260 in 1870, and apprehensions remained above 1200 after 1875.[1] Despite this, the proportion of drunkards to the population declined. Prior to Sheffield's 'Drunken Report' this reached a unique figure of one to every 86 people. Figures improved steadily, stabilizing at about 1:220 after 1871.

The decreasing number of arrests on Sundays may be evidence of declining drunkenness at the weekends. In 1859, there were 138 prosecutions for Sunday offences. This fell to 110 in 1867, and to 77 in 1875-6. Average daily apprehensions on Sundays stood at 2.3 in 1869, but fell to 1.4 in 1875-6.[2] This improvement may have been due to the restrictions on Sunday licensing hours imposed by the Wilson Patten Act of 1854, although after popular pressure in London, hours were extended again.[3] Average daily apprehensions on weekdays remained constant, at 2.6 in 1869-70 and 3.7 in 1875-6. Given the steady increase in population, however, the evidence is again for a proportionate decline in drunkenness. A new phenomenon was the rapid increase in female apprehensions. This had been under 12 per cent in 1857, but rose to 21 per cent in 1868, and reached 25 per cent in the 1870's.

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1. Sheffield City Police, Prosecutions for Drunkenness, S.C.L., M.P. 1386; S.C. in Intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877, XI), appendix ix p. 349.

2. S.C. on the Sale of Liquor, etc., (P.P. 1867-68, XIV), AA. 4514-4517, 6781; ibid., appendix iii p. 417; S.C. on Intemperance, etc., (P.P. 1877 XI), appendix i p. 349

3. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., pp. 244-245

19.   The Temperance Movement 1830-1900.

The drunkard and the drinkseller were from the 1780's, the targets of magistrates and clergymen, fired with a new zeal for law and order and the observance of the Sabbath. In January, 1788, William Masland was fined five shillings for drunkenness on a Sunday;[1] many others were to fall foul of the evangelical conscience. Fines of tenshillings, with costs against the innkeeper were usual, while the offending customers were fined three shillings and fourpence.[2]

Such cases may be seen as part of a general assault by magistrates against recreation and commercial dealings on the day of rest. Organised resistance to drink and drunkenness were delayed until the birth of the temperance movement, about 1830. From 1830 to the 1850's, the campaign against drink was carried out in an institutional framework, through the temperance and teetotal societies. Thereafter, the battle against drink was fought out on a broader front. Many churches and chapels began their own propaganda campaigns, working alongside the pioneer temperance societies. The emergence of a pressure group working for the prohibition of alcohol in the 1850's involved a wide range of church and lay people in the anti-drink campaign, and led to political pressure at national and local level.

The first national temperance organisation, the British and Foreign Temperance society, was founded in 1831 by influential aristocratic and middle class elements, as part of the evangelical concern with the excesses of popular culture The approach of the B.F.T.S. was characteristically moderate:

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1. S.R. 26th. January 1788.
2. S.I. 12th. July, 1799; also see ibid., 19th. July, 1799, 13th. May,1802,
     28th. April, 1803, 1st. December, 1803, 20th. May, 1804, 2nd. August,1804,
                                                              22nd. May, 1806.

while opposed to the consumption of spirits, the society had no objection to the use of beer.[1] This was duplicated at local level by the establishment of provincial temperance societies. The first Sheffield society was founded in response to public pressure, in September, 1831. In its advocacy of abstinence from ardent spirits, the society fitted exactly into the existing evangelical preoccupation with working class morality. The request for a society predominantly from leading clergymen. The Vicar of Sheffield, Thomas Sutton, was joined by other Anglicans, such as Henry Farish, John Livesey, Joseph Brown and W.H. Vale. Prominent dissenting ministers were also involved, such as Independents James Boden and Thomas Smith, and Unitarian Nathanial Phillips. Lay support came from the Anglican steel merchant and tool manufacturer Samuel Newbould, and banker George Younge.[2] Interest was also shown by James Montgomery, by medical men such as Dr. Knight, and magistrate Hugh Parker.[3] The Vicar of Sheffield was president, and the society was said to have won the support of all the town's clergy, the senior magistrate of the West Riding, and other-influential gentlemen. By May, 1832, membership was said to number about five hundred. The complacency of such middle classevangelicalism was clear: the secretary reported to the B.F.T.S. that 'the society is flourishing; several societies are forming in distinct manufactories, and the working classes are taking a deep interest in the subject'.[4]

In reality, the moderate approach of the temperance society had little impact upon drinking habits in Sheffield:

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1. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., pp.113-114.
2. S.I. 2nd. August, 1831; ibid., 9th. August, 1831.
3. ibid 17th. April, 1832.
4. British and Foreign Temperance Herald 1st. June, 1832, p.75.

applications for licences under the Beer Act of 1830 continued to increase.[1]
This failure helped to encourage the development of new tactics. The working
class inebriate needed a positive ideology, with which he could personally
identify. This was met by the idea of total abstinence from all alcohol, or
teetotalism. Working men from Preston and elsewhere in the north of England
were pioneers of this new attitude. Under the influence of working class
teetotallers, the temperance society took on a radically new rôle, offering
identity, acceptance and support in much the same way as the chapel.[2] In
some towns, teetotallers tried to take over existing anti-spirits societies,
sometimes defeating moderationists after open debate, as at Leeds in 1836.
In general, teetotalism had to develop outside the moderate societies: middle
class supporters of temperance were unable to supportthe implications of
teetotalism for a number of social, psychological religious and political
reasons.[3] The concept of total abstinence transformed temperance from a
code of social behaviour, prescribed by one class for the moral elevation of
another, to a participatory ethic of self-help and personal denial. Many
evangelicals, whilst advocating abstinence from ardent spirits, declined to
accept a philosophy which entailed their personal avoidance of all alcohol.
For the middle classes, dring was central to the rituals of hospitality: to
do without wine, port and spirits would have been unthinkable in many homes.
This was endorsed by medical opinion, which, in the absence of anything else,
recommended brandy and other spirits for medicinal use. In addition, alcohol
had been sanctioned by the Bible as a fundamental of the Christian tradition,
and abstinence for wine when used for festive or ceremonial purposes would have
been unthinkable. Middle class sensibilities were further offended by the
demands of working class teetotallers for control,and by the coarseness of
their emotionalism.

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1.   S.T. 9th. October, 1830, S.I. 12th. October, 1830, S. Ind. 16th. October,1830.
2.   For the origins of teetotalism see Harrison, op.cit., pp. 107-26.
3.   ibid., pp. 127-46.

In many town, there could be no common ground between middle class concerns for the moral improvement of the masses, and working class commitment to austerity and self-help.

The schism between such irreconcileable elements was fought out at national level. The British Association for the Promotion of Temperance, which had grown out of the Lancashire teetotal societies, failed to affiliate with the B.F.T.S. in 1835. The adoption by the teetotallers of the extremist long pledge, which forbade the offering, as well as the consumption of alcohol, cemented their separate existence. The conflicts between the moderate and teetotal elements of the movement have been interpreted as a manifestation of class tension between middle class moderates and working class teetotallers. It has been suggested that

> 'when an anti-spirits society adopted the teetotal pledge,
> gentility usually departed in a hurry.... as soon as
> emphasis switched from preserving the sober to
> reclaiming the drunkard, the temperance movement
> outgrew the respectable basis of its support'.   1.

Respectability did not return to the movement until the 1850's, with the foundation of the United Kingdom Alliance as a political pressure group, with non-teetotal principles, and the assimilation of the churches into the mainstream of temperance activities.

In Sheffield, however, the temperance movement in these crucial formative years behaved rather differently. As elsewhere, the anti-spirits society was conspicuously ineffective in reducing drunkenness. As early as November 1832, a correspondent in the Sheffield Iris wrote of the society 'from the little signs of life it has lately evinced, I concluded it to have been dead'.[2.] In March, 1834, the apathy of the society, and the indifference of its founders was again publicly lamented.[3.]

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1. ibid., pp. 137-38.
2. S.I. 6th. November, 1832.
3. S. Ind. 8th. March, 1834.

The weakness of the anti-spirits society was perhaps the stimulus to the establishment of a teetotal society, dominated by James Edgar and other Protestant Methodists from the newly established and predominantly working class Surrey St. Chapel.[1] The new society was in existence by April 1834, and began to correspond with the national teetotal paper, Jospeh Livesey's Preston Temperance Advocate. Progress was slow, but the society claimed a hundred members by the autumn of that year.[2]

The need for a separate teetotal society was short-lived, however, for the existing anti-spirits society underwent a revival. This was stimulated by the visit of James Silk Buckingham to Sheffield, in the early part of September 1834, following the presentation of his parliamentary report on drunkenness.[3] Buckingham had become one of Sheffield's first elected members of parliament in 1832. He was something of an eccentric, but his political views exactly reflected the self-conscious and newly articulate middle class opinion in the town. This was particularly the case with his opposition to monopolies, taxation and slavery, and his support for the freedom of the press.[4] Furthermore, Buckingham's attacks upon hereditary

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1. James Edgar was Joseph Livesey's correspondent in the Sheffield district. P.T. Winskill, The Temperance Movement and its Workers, London, 1892, I, p.135; Winskill, The Comprehensive History of the Rise and Progress of the Temperance Reformation, Warrington, 1881, p.81.
2. Preston Temperance Advocate May 1834, p.38; ibid., October 1834, p.77.
3. S.I. 16 September 1834; Ralph E. Turner, James Silk Buckingham 1786-1855: A Social Biography, London, 1934, p.308.
4. Buckingham's Sheffield supporters included leading liberal manufacturers William and Henry Ibbotson, and John Blackwell of the Sheffield Iris; see Leeds Temperance Herald 8 August 1837; Turner, op. cit., pp.245-261; J.S. Buckingham, Mr. Buckingham's Defence of his Public and Private Character Against the Atrocious Calumnies Contained in a False and Slanderous Report, Sheffield, 1832, pp.26-28.

distinctions, and his concern for the rights and liberties of the poor, made him popular with the Sheffield artisans.[1]   His views on temperance were extremely progressive.   He had abandoned wines and spirits in 1826, several years before the English temperance movement got under way, and he became one of the first converts to teetotalism.   His election as member of parliament for Sheffield must not be seen as a victory for teetotalism, for at that stage, drink was not part of his political programme.[2] Nevertheless, his involvement with the 'Drunken Report', and later, the Select Committee on Public Walks earned him considerable public attention in Sheffield.   He was the temperance movement's only parliamentary spokesman in the 1830's.

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1.   Turner, op. cit., pp.293-296.
2.   J.S. Buckingham, Address to the Electors of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1832.

The national activities of one of Sheffield's first members of parliament, combined with his local popularity, gave teetotalism a new prestige. This may have facilitated its acceptance among some of Sheffield's middle classes. In the summer of 1834, the local press gave considerable space to discussions of the parliamentary report on drink, and to temperance issues in general.[1] Following the arrival of Buckingham in Sheffield, a large temperance meeting was held, attended by Buvkingham, and with James Montgomery in the chair.[2] During the autumn of that year, there was an infusion of teetotal Protestant Methodists into the anti-spirits society: 'the one was in possession of the means for promoting the temperance cause, yet wanted zeal, the other had zeal, but wanted the means'.[3]

From this point, the early teetotal society appears to have faded out of existence. Meanwhile, the drink issue was kept alive by the fiercely fought parliamentary election in January, 1835. The candidature of Buckingham was vigorously opposed by the drink interest, who united to support his opponent, the Tory Samuel Bailey, to his considerable embarassment.[4]

Throughout 1835, the revived temperance society was in a state of transition. The language of the earlier moderate society was carried forward in the continued advocacy of abstinence from ardent spirits. Simultaneously, pledges for the total abstinence from all intoxicants were offered.[5] By the first annual meeting of the society in August 1835, two hundred youths had allegedly promised to abstain from all intoxicating liquors, both distilled and fermented, except for medicinal purposes.[6]

1. S.I. 26 August 1834; ibid., 30th. September, 1834; also see ibid.,17 March. 1835 and 31 March 1835, for discussion of Bills.
2. Winskill, The Temperance Movement, etc., 1,p.112, and Comprehensive History, etc., p.32.
3. P.T.A. February 1835 p.14.
4. S.I. 6 January, 1835; ibid., 13 January, 1835; S.M. 10 January,1835. See also A Freeholder, A Letter to G.C. Holland on the Coalition of the Publicans and Sinners to Disturb the Peace of the Town and to Perpetuate Drunkenness, third edition, 1835; A Cool Observer, A Reply to a Letter Addressed to G.C. Holland M.D. by 'A Freeholder', with Additional Remarks on the Comparitive Claims of Mr. Buckingham and Mr. Bailey, Sheffield, 1835.
5. S.M. 21 March 1835; S.I. 12 May 1835.
6. S. Ind. 1 August 1835; S.M. 1 August 1835; S.I. 4 August, 1835.

Although moderationists customarily took the chair at society meetings, radical teetotalism appears to have been discussed with no apparent tension. At a typical meeting in November, 1834, the society voiced its official policy of not interfering with the moderate use of ale and porter at home, then allowed an address by William Cruickshanks, Dundee carter and temperance advocate, who attacked the evils of beer in a 'plain, homely and unvarnished, though remarkably energetic style' considerably enlivened with anecdotes.[1] By April, 1836, the society was unequivocally teetotal, organising teetotal socials, and inviting newcomers to sign the pledge.[2] By 1841, it had changed its name to the Sheffield Total Abstinence Society, and was offering the long pledge of militant teetotalism.[3]

By 1835, therefore, the temperance movement in Sheffield had accepted the concept of total abstinence, to which it was completely committed by 1836. If the social tensions experienced in many of the northern temperance societies were repeated in Sheffield, withdrawal of middle class involvement would have taken place during the transitional year of 1835. Certainly, a distaste for teetotalism was not unknown among the leaders of the middle class community in Sheffield: by the end of 1835, two of the most prominent men in the town had ceased their connexion with the movement.

One of these was Hugh Parker, West Riding Magistrate since 1799, and a partner in one of Sheffield's major private banks. Parker had been increasingly a conservative force in the town. During the 1830's, he clashed sharply with popular opinion, particularly in his firm attitude to law and order during the riouts of 1831-32, and his support for the Poor Law.[4]

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1. <u>S.M.</u> 1 November 1834; <u>S.I.</u> 4 November 1834.
2. <u>P.T.A.</u> April 1836, p.30; <u>S.I.</u> 10 January, 1837; <u>Leeds Temperance Herald</u> January, 1837, p.13.
3. Sheffield Total Abstinence Society, <u>Rules</u>, Sheffield, 1841.
4. Samuel Roberts, <u>The Guardianship of Hugh Parker esq., with the doings and Sayings of his Son,</u> Sheffield, 1837; R.E. Leader, <u>Reminiscences of Old Sheffield, its Streets and People,</u> Sheffield, 1876, pp.214, 270.

The teetotal society also failed to retain the support of James Montgomery, poet, philanthropist and former radical, and arguably the most influential man in Sheffield in this period. His involvement with almost every social and religious agency for the improvement of the local working classes has led a recent biographer to comment 'to list Montgomery's public services is to list what was done for the public good in Sheffield during the first half of the century'.[1] On being asked if he were prepared to sign the pledge, Montgomery replied that he was not sufficiently perfect in the ten commandments to be prepared to enter upon an eleventh; clearly, the discipline of teetotalism was a constraint which he was unable to accept.[2] For both Parker and Montgomery, their involvement with the community was evangelical and paternalistic, and they failed to develop a political relationship with the working classes of the town. The step from the patronage of a middle class anti-spirits society, to participation in a radical teetotal organisation was too large for them to accomplish.

It is clear, therefore, that some influential supporters of the anti-spirits society preferred to end their formal connections with temperance by 1835. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a continuity of middle class leadership and participation in the 1830's which survived the progression from moderation to teetotalism. In addition, new middle class supporters joined the society after 1835. By 1841, the teetotal society had the support of some of the most important men in the community, as well as a solid basis of artisan support. Among the committee members of the society in 1841 were two doctors, two Methodist ministers, one gentleman, and ten merchants and manufacturers, as well as five shopkeepers, and the keeper of the town's temperance hotel.[3]

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1. Harvey Fremont Beutner, 'With Fraternal Feeling Fired - The Life and Work of James Montgomery', Northwestern University, unpublished Ph.D, 1967, p.318.
2. Ibid., p.340.
3. Sheffield Total Abstinence Society, op. cit.; Occupations from Henry A. and Thomas Rodgers, The Sheffield And Rotherham Directory, Sheffield, 1841.

The most active spokesmen for the temperance movement in Sheffield came from the industrial middle classes, who were increasingly participating in the political and social life of the town in the 1830's. Representative of this group were William and Henry Ibbotson of the Globe Works, steel convertors and tool manufacturers. The Ibbotsons pioneered works temperance meetings as early as January, 1832.[1] They were also leading supporters of James Silk Buckingham in the election of 1832, and again in 1835.[2] The Ibbotsons were involved in the Mechanics' Institute, and their workmen had the reputation of being among the best educated in Sheffield. William Ibbotson produced pamphlets urging the economic benefits of railways, and opposing the Corn Laws, which reflected the political interests of many Sheffield manufacturers. His convictions of the superiority of the Middle classes, and his antipathy to the aristocracy, were typical of this generation of temperance reformers.[3]

In many cases, support for temperance was combined with other reformist activities. Individuals of high social status, already prominent in the Mechanics' Institute and the Literary and Philosophic Society, became involved with teetotalism in the 1830's and 1840's. Among these were the Quaker ironfounder Edward Smith, who had been a founder of the Mechanics' Library. Smith was president of the total abstinence society in 1841: the previous year, he had urged the benefits of teetotalism upon the Society of Friends, as 'the principle of Moderation is daily found to be powerless against the incessant unwearied seductions of custon and appetite.[4]

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1. S.I. 3 January 1832.
2. Turner, op.cit., p.248; Buckingham, Defence, etc., pp. 26–28; S.M. 10 January, 1832.
3. William Ibbotson, Remarks on the Present State of the United Kingdom, Sheffield, 1833; Thoughts on the Corn Laws, London and Sheffield, 1834. A Letter on the Rejection of the Sheffield and Rotherham Railway Bill, Sheffield, 1835.

Another influential supporter was Dr. A.J. Knight, the Roman Catholic doctor. Knight was concerned with the problem of grinders' drinking habits as early as 1822.[1] He was involved with the Mechanics' Library and the Mechanics' Institute, to whom he lectured in the 1830's, often on temperance subjects.[2] He had supported the anti-spirits society in 1831, and ten years later, while vice-president of the teetotal society, became the first Sheffield man to receive a knighthood.[3]

Despite the antipathy of many doctors to teetotalism, the medical proffesion in Sheffield provided the society with some of its most active workers, generally because they considered alcohol a danger to health.[4] George Turton, surgeon, accoucheur, general practitioner and ultimately lecturer in obstetrics at the Sheffield Medical School, as well as one of the first of the Town Council, was one of the Protestant Methodists who joined the anti-spirits society in the autumn of 1834.[5] He opposed ardent spirits, rather than all intoxicants, lecturing to the Mechanics' Institute in 1835 on the pernicious effect of spirit drinking. Nevertheless, he showed a flexibility typical of many temperance supporters at this time: he was connected with the short-lived teetotal society, dominated by the members of the chapel at which he was co-founder and presiding elder, and also chaired meetings of the anti-spirits society, at which the use of ale was being increasinly attacked.[6] In 1844, he was vice president of the Total Abstinence Society.[7] Other prominent doctors were involved with the cause of temperance from 1834: these included Charles Favell, who lectured to the temperance society and the the Mechanics' Institute on the evils of intemperence,

1. A.J. Knight, _Observations on Grinders' Asthma_, Sheffield, 1822
2. Mechanics' Institute, _Annual Report_, Sheffield, 1836.
3. _S.I._ 17 April 1832.
4. Harrison, _op.cit._ p.
5. _S.T._ 6 September, 1851; _S.R.I._ 6 September 1851; Leader, _Reminiscences, etc._, pp.42,53,348. Turton was presiding elder at Surrey St. chapel from 1830 at least until 1833, and appears of the circuit plan for 1834-35. He was active in the Wesleyan Association until his death. S.C.L., Surrey St. Chapel records, preachers' minutes N.R.1, accounts N.R.6. N.R.17.
6. _P.T.A._ October, 1834, p.77; _ibid._, February 1835, p.14; _S.M._ 1 November,1834; _S.I._ 4 November, 1834; M.I. _Report_, Sheffield, 1834.
7. _National Temperance Advocate_, 1, 1844-45, p.11.

and surgeon John Harmer Smith secretary of the total abstinence society in 1841.[1]

Through men such as Dr. Knight, Dr. Favell, George Turton and Edward Smith, the link between temperance and other reformist activities was established. Many temperance people were involved not only in education, but in the anti-slavery movement in the 1830's. Much of the dynamic of the local anti-slavery movement came from middle class women. The female relatives of men involved in temperance work were especially active. The interaction between slavery and temperance was less marked after the adoption of teetotalism: nevertheless, about one sixth of the women concerned with slavery in 1837 had some temperance connexions.[2]

Several of the supporters of the teetotal society in the 1830's and 1840's were related to an interlocking network of nonconformist families of high social status. This provided a growing link between Sheffield and other provincial cities, and with London. Out of this milieu was formed the social basis of the liberal party. Surgeon John Harmar Smith, Solicitor John William Pye Smith and manufacturer William Rawson had connexions with prominent reforming families, such as the Reads and Wilsons of Sheffield, the Pye Smiths of Sheffield and London, and the Bainses of Leeds:[3] in two generations, this kinship group produced the liberal M.Ps. Samuel Morley and H.J. Wilson. Such family networks had an important impact upon the conscience of the community. But support for temperance in its early years was by no means restricted to nonconformity. Dr. Knight was Catholic, and the Misses Harrison, spinster daughters of a wealthy saw manufacturer and pillars of the local Anglican community,

1. S.M. 13 September, 1834; S.I. 26 August 1834; P.T.A. October 1834, p.77; M.I., Report, 1833; Sheffield Total Abstinence Society, op.cit.
2. Anti-slavery ladies with temperance links included Mrs. Favell, Mrs.J.W.Smith, Miss Sutton, Miss Ibbotson, Mrs. Rawson. See Slavery- an Appeal to the Christian Women of Sheffield from the Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery, Sheffield, 1837; N.B. Lewis, 'The Abolitionist Movement in Sheffield 1823-1833', Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 18,July 1934; Lewis,'Sheffield and the anti-slavery movement 1823-1833'. T.H.A.S.4, 1937, pp.309-11.
3. I owe this information to Dr. J.C.G. Binfield, University of Sheffield.

helped by providing the teetotal society with premises for its meetings.[1]

The question of clerical support is complex. In general, teetotalism was opposed by the denominations at least until the 1850's, and the argument that alcohol had biblical sanction re mained strong. Some clergy did support teetotalism, however, and of these, the nonconformists were overwhelmingly dominant. But nonetheless, it has been suggested that 'in most denominations, at least until the 1870's, most ministers were hostile or indifferent to teetotalism'.[2] National denominational support was delayed until the 1860's, when the Anglicans made a deliberate attempt to seize the dominance of the movement from the conconformists.[3]

In Sheffield, however, religious support swung behind temperance and teetotalism from the earliest years. This can be analysed in three ways: the active work or patronage or clergymen, the provision of facilities such as church halls and schoolrooms for temperance meetings, and organised denominational support must all be considered.

Support for the anti-spirits society ahad come from 'All the Ministers and the Roman Catholic'.[4] Three of the four secretaries of the society were ministers. These were the evangelical Thomas Best of St. James, and the Methodist McLean and Carver.[5] Several clergy continued their support for temperance into the teetotal period. It is not clear if they pledged themselves to total abstinence, but clearly, they felt able to work with teetotallers. At a meeting in March, 1835, Thomas Sutton, Vicar of Sheffield spoke from the chair about the dangers of drinking ardent spirits, then introduced a speaker from the teetotal Yorkshire Temperance Association, who attacked moderation as 'the Waterloo on which the greatest conflict between

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1. S.I. 10 January, 1837.
2. Harrison, op.cit., p.180.
3. For temperance and religion, see ibid., pp.179-95.
4. British and Foreign Temperance Herald, 1 June, 1832.
5. S.Ind.13 September, 1834; S.I. 16 September, 1834; ibid 23 September, 1834.

temperance and intemperance must take place.[1] Thomas Sutton and other evangelicals such as Thomas Best, maintained links with the teetotal society into the late 1830's, and must have given a measure of prestige.[2] Occasionally, sermons at Anglican churches drew attention to the problem of drink, as for example at St. Mary's in March, 1835.[3] In general, active religious support in this decade was limited to Anglicans and Methodists: in 1838, the society regreted the lack of support from ministers of other denominations.[4]

One practical contribution which the churches made was the provision of suitable facilities for meetings. Rooms attached to Wesleyan Chapels were used from the beginning of 1835.[5] Without the cooperation of the churches, temperance activities would have been seriously hampered for lack of suitable accommodation. The Temperance Hall was not opened until 1855, and even after this date, church school rooms and vestries continued to be used. Temperance meetings on church premises duplicated some of the functions of prayer meetings, and prepared the way for a closer relationship between religion and temperance. Thus at a teetotal meeting at Brunswick Wesleyan chapel in 1836, addresses were made by three Methodist preachers from the circuit, who signed the pledge with twenty-six others.[6] The chapel community could mobilize and focus the new attitude to drink. Brunswick led the way by banning the use of wine in the vestries. The strongly working class Bethel Primitive methodist chapel followed suit, forbidding the consumptionof beer by children on sunday school outings after a teacher was discovered drunk and insensible, and by opening its doors to temperance meetings.[7]

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1. S.M. 7 March 1835.
2. Thomas Sutton was president of the temperance society in 1837.
   S.M. 1 August 1835; S.I. 4 August 1835; ibid, 3 January 1837.
3. S.M. 18 March, 1835.
4. S.I. 2 January, 1838.
5. For example, Park Wesleyan chapel and Red Hill Sunday School. S.M. 7. February, 1835; ibid., 21 March, 1835.
6. S. Ind.6 February, 1836; P.T.A. April 1836, p.30.
7. J.L. Spedding, 'Primitive Methodism in Sheffield and District'. unpublished ms., md.1898. 1, pp.12, 40.

Support for teetotalism was by no means uniform, however, In Rotherham, the Wesleyan minister Bromley opposed teetotalism, and disputed publicly with travelling orator F.R. Lees in Sheffield Town Hall.[1] On the other hand, the attitude of other ministers to drink was so radical as to be out of step with local and national oppinion. In 1849, the Baptist minister Thomas Horsfield was involved in a controversy through his opposition to the use of wines in the sacraments. He resigned taking the majority of his congregation with him.[2]

The first denomination to espouse teetotalism formally in Sheffield were the Quakers, due partly to the influence of Edward Smith. Famouse travelling lecturers such as F.R. Lees visited the Friends' Meeting House. A Quaker teetotal societywas formed in 1840, which was active in the diffusion of information about temperance.[3] The widespread adoption of the bands of hope by the denominations after 1849 prepared the way for the general acceptance of teetotalism.[4]

By 1850 therefore, the Sheffield temperance movement was supported by a significant range of people. It is difficult to see this as a return of respectability, for temperance had gained the approval of clergymen and influential townspeople at its inception, and this had not been materially altered by the adoption of teetotalism. The establishment of branch societies, fund raising for the Temperance Hall and the diverse recreational facilities offered by the movement, in the form of lectures, demonstrations and excursions are all evidence of the increasing scale of its activities. Leading opinion in the twon was beginning to argue from a temperance viewpoint.

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1. S.R.I. 29 August, 1840; National Temperance Magazine 1, 1844, p.157: Rev. J. Bromley, Observations in and Facts Relative to the Speech of Rev. J. Bromley on Totalism, Rotherham, n.d.
2. Thomas Horsfield, A. Plea for a Change in the Wine in the Lord's Table. London and Sheffield, 1849; National Temperance Advocate. 5, 1849, p.34.
3. British and Foreign Temperance Intelligencer. 5, 1841, pp.375-76.
4. See below Chapter 21.

In 1848, the prominent Anglican Philanthropist Samuel Roberts attacked the mayor for presiding over a banquet of the licensed victuallers' society, arguing that there was 'scarcely a crime of importance but what has been connected with drunkenness'.[1]

The period after 1850 saw a continuation of these trends. In 1852, sympathy towards temperance was such that the Town Council ordered an enquiry into popular drinking, which made some sensible observations about the lack of recreational facilities for the working classes.[2] Two years later, crowded enthusiastic meetings led by some of the local clergy resulted in the establishment of a Sheffield auxilliary of the United Kingdom Alliance. Thus many middle class people, unwilling or unable to support total abstinence, were able to campaign for the sale of alcohol by legislative means.[3] Thenceforth, teetotallers and prohibitionists cooperated as a parliamentary pressure group, both a national level, and locally. The issues of licensing restrictions, and attempts to get the Permissive Bill with the option of local veto through parliament occupied the energies of Sheffield temperance workers for the remainder of the century.

These years also saw the growing involvement of working people in the temperance movement. The success of a temperance society could be gauged by the number of artisand and mechanics, often reformed drunkards, who could be brought under its influence. The Sheffield Society had strong support from these groups. Soirees and temperance festivals from the early 1830's tended to be 'chiefly composed of the working classes'.[4] The 1840's saw the spread of small working class teetotal societies: these had

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1. Samuel Roberts, The Ruin of Sheffield: Or, the Licensed Victuallers Again!, Sheffield, 1848; N.T.A. 4, 1848, p.5.

2. G.L. Saunders, Report of the Committee Appointed by the Town Council to Enquire into the Apparent Excess of Drunkenness in the Borough of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1853; J.M. Furness, Record of the Municipal Affairs in Sheffield. 1843-93, Sheffield, 1893, pp.97-98.

3. S.T. 25 November, 1854; British Temperance Advocate, 32, 1855, p.10.

4. S.I. 10 January 1837; Leeds Temperance Herald, January, 1837, p.13.

been anticipated by the works temperance societies of the 1830's, such as that at the Globe Works.[1] The central temperance society rapidly recognised the need for district groups, who could carry out local tract distribution, along the lines already established by existing tract and benefit societies.[2] The first branch society, the Little Sheffield Temperance Society, was founded in 1842. By 1845, there were other branches at Bridgehouses, Brocco and the Park.

In social composition, these branch societies approach most nearly the idea of a working class teetotal society. Many of the members of the Little Sheffield temperance Society were reformed drunkards, and the majority of its income was said to have been contributed by 'poor hardworking people'.[3] The society had strong links with the working class Bethel Primitive Methodist Chapel.[4] The local appeal of such societies was strong. The Little Sheffield Society claimed over two thousand members by its third year. In 1844, Bridgehouses had five hundred adult members, while the society at Brocco numbered a thousand, a third of whom were reformed drunkards.[5]

Local working class teetotal societies were strongly evangelical. They were valuable for their contact with the poor, and pursued an active policy of tract distribution. Inducing reformed drunkards at attend church was a principal aim. In 1850, a female branch of the Little Sheffield society was formed, with a tea party at Bethel Sunday school.[6] The members of such societies were predominantly poor, and doubtless often barely literate. Nevertheless, the relations with the parent society were strong, and the branch societies cooperated under the patronage and direction of the committee of the Sheffield society:

1. S.I. 6 January, 1832; ibid., 24 April, 1832.
2. P.T.A. February, 1835, p.14.
3. N.T.A. 2, 1843, p.130.
4. Spedding, op.cit., p.40.
5. N.T.A. 1, 1844-45, p.11.
6. S.T. 9 November, 1850.

the Little Sheffield society ultimately amalgamated with the Sheffield Temperance Society in 1862.[1] Thus working class teetotalism was able to function inside an institutional structure run by middle class teetotallers, often of high social status.

The period after 1850 saw the increasing involvement in temperance by religious bodies, and a new emphasis on temperance as a Christian experience. This was reflected by the formation of a new Sheffield Temperance Society in 1863, in response of the failure of the existing association to enlist the active sympathies of Christian people in Sheffield.[2] Thereafter, the temperance movement in Sheffield was dominated by the U.K.A., the Sheffield Temperance Association of 1835, and the new Temperance Society. Relations between the organisations were generally cordial.

The formal participation of the churches in temperance increased in the 1860's. The Methodists were especially active. A United Methodist Free Church Temperance Society was formed in 1858.[3] By 1870, it was estimated that two thirds of the churches in the town had connexions with the temperance movement.[4] Gradually, however, some of the initiative passed to the Church of England. In 1869, there were twenty six teetotal clergymen in Sheffield, predictably with a heavy Methodist bias. The number also included five Anglicans from Sheffield's leading churches, St. Mathews's, St. Paul's and St. James's.[5] The Anglican minister C.H. Collyns was national secreatary of the British Temperance League in 1884, and was succeeded by another Sheffield clergyman, H.J. Boyd. The Gospel Temperance Missions of the 1880's confirmed the importance of the Church of England in temperance activities in Sheffield.

1. <u>B.T.A.</u> March 1862.
2. <u>ibid.</u>,August 1863, p.71.
3. <u>ibid.</u>, 25, 1858, p.139.
4. <u>ibid.</u>, August 1870, p.74.
5. ed. Rev Dawson Burns, <u>Graham's Temperance Guide</u>, London, 1869, pp.114-19.

Another aspect of the churches' involvement with temperance were the bands of hope. The Sheffield Sunday School Band of Hope Union, established in 1855, aimed to spread the principles of total abstinence among Sunday scholars and teachers.[1] Most chapels established their own small temperance groups. There was also a increasing similarity of methods employed by the churches and the temperance societies: these will be discussed in greater detail below.[2]

The strength of nonconformity and of the class of small employers in Sheffield is reflected in the membership of the temperance movement, and reinforced its position in the community. The British Temperance League set up its national headquarters in Sheffield in 1888, which reflects the strong local support for the B.T.L. The United Kingdom Alliance also had many subscribers in the town: while no city rivalled London or Manchester in the value of its donations, by the 1870's Sheffield ranked third or fourth in this respect.[3]

Clearly, any analysis of the subscribers to these organisations can only be a minimum statement of the influence of temperance in this period. The numbers who subscribed fluctuated; in any case there were many with no formal connection with the movement who shared its attitudes to drink. Thus subscription lists and committee membership can only show the hard core of the institutionalised support for temperance. The mass membership, which gave nothing, remains obscure.[4]

With these limitations in mind, it is possible to make some generalisations about the leadership and the regular supporters of temperance in Sheffield in the second half of the nineteenth century.

1. Newspaper cuttings relating to Sheffield, IX, pp. 333-334.
2. See Chapters 7 and 21,
3. Brian Harrison 'The British Prohibitionists 1853-1872 - A Biographical Analysis', International Review of Social History, 15, 1970, p.
4. Brian Harrison, 'Drink and Sobriety in England 1815-1872 - A Critical Bibliography', ibid., 12, 1967, pp. 209-10.

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It has already been suggested that temperance was par excellence a doctrine
of the self-made man, many of whom exploited their talents and opportunities
in the fields of industry and commerce.[1] Leading temperance reformers were
part of a wide network of reforming agencies, with wide interests in education,
philanthropy and local government. Predominantly dissenting in religion,
temperance activists played a major part in the formulation of the political
attitudes which helped to create the liberal party.[2]

The U.K.A. was numerically the strongest temperance organisation in
Sheffield by the 1870's. Its political philosophy had enabled many influential
people who were not teetotallers to lend their support to the temperance cause.
Its supporters were predominantly drawn from the employers, and from the churches.
The first U.K.A. committee to be set up in Sheffield in 1854 included two clergymen,
an Anglican J.F. Witty, and a Congregationalist J. Earnshaw. Seven were merchants or
manufacturers in the local trades, and grocers and other shopkeepers accounted
for four. The committee also included W.J. Clegg, at that time a collector of rates,
who became one of Sheffield's most vocal supporters of teetotalism. There were
also a number of existing temperance activists, such as canvasser Thomas Featherstone,
bookseller D.T. Ingham, temperance hotel proprietor Joel Kirby, and James Melling,
who as medical galvaniser an proprietor of hydropathic baths brought a pseudo-medical
element to the new organisation. Three of the manufacturers, Thomas Turner,[3]
Richard Elliot and John Askham, were also town councillors.

The domination of large and small employers of labour merchants and
manufacturers in the Sheffield trades, wholesale and retail shopkeepers.

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1. See above, Chapter 17; Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p. 150.
2. For the leadership, see ibid., pp.147-78; Harrison, 'The British Prohibitionists',
   etc, op.cit., pp.375-467.
3. S.T. 25 November, 1854; B.T.A. 22, 1855, p.10: William White, General Directory
   of the Town, Borough and Parish of Sheffield and Rotherham, Sheffield, 1856.

and tradesmen, was perpetuated in the major temperance organisations. The U.K.A. soon overtook the teetotal B.T.L. in numerical support: in 1878, the B.T.L. received sixty subscriptions from Sheffield, but by 1886-87, the U.K.A. had a hundred and sixty seven subscribing locally. The relative strength of the U.K.A. may be gauged by a breakdown of the subscriptions. 52 of the 60 subscriptions to the B.T.L. were under one pound. Only one person gave more than this, and 33, or more than half the total list, gave half a crown. In contrast, 37 of the 167 subscribers to the Alliance gave between a pound and ten pounds. The biggest single category were the ten shilling and half guinea subscribers: indeed, the Alliance had no half crown subscriptions from Sheffield at this time.[1]

Despite the greater generosity of the Alliance's supporters, both organisations drew support from similar groups of people. It will be seen that the composition of Sheffield's leading temperance supporters had not materially changed since the 1850's. The largest single category within both were merchants and manufacturers: at least 38 of the U.K.A. subscribers and 12 of the B.T.L.'s were drawn from this group. The next largest category were retail and wholesale shopkeepers. At least 20 of the U.K.A.'s supporters, and 10 of the B.T.L.'s were drawn from this group. Significantly, 9 Sheffield clergymen subscribed to the U.K.A. in 1886, of whom 4 were Methodists and 1 Anglican. The rigorously teetotal B.T.L. attracted only a solitary Wesleyan minister. Another major group were miscallaneous agents, agents, accountants, solicitors, auctioneers and stockbrokers, accounting for 9 B.T.L. and 19 U.K.A. members.

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1. Details from the annual reports of the B.T.L. and the U.K.A., at the National Temperance League, Livesey-Clegg House, Sheffield.

In an analysis of temperance leadership in Sheffield in the second half of the nineteenth century, some individuals are notable for the consistency of their involvement. Nineteen of the subscribers to the B.T.L. also gave to the U.K.A. in 1886. These include some of Sheffield's most active reformers: individuals prominent in the temperance movement for several decades, but also involved in a wide range of other reforming activities.[1] Without exception, these individuals were part of the grass-roots evolution of the nonconformist conscience, which characterised local and national political life in mid- and late Victorian England. Confident in their status as employers, their experience was that of the self-man, although they often came from auspicious social backgrounds. Life-long teetotalism undermined unimpeachable social and commercial respectability. Despite the growing Anglican interest in temperance, these leading teetotallers were overwhelmingly nonconformist, with a strong preponderance of Quakerism. Their political principles were liberal, forged from a philosophy Hegelian rather than utilitarian, and from a conviction that the state should have a positive function in the regulation of the life of the community. Their teetotalism was linked therefore with a wide range of educational and philanthropic commitments.

Among the most prominent temperance leaders was W.J. Clegg, acknowledged leader of the Sheffield temperance movement. His prominence in temperance was such that a national conference of the B.T.L. without his presence was described as 'Hamlet, with the Prince of Denmark left out'.[2] The son of a cutler, he became teetotal in 1839 at the age of thirteen, and turned his Anglican education to good use as a solicitor's clerk, rate collector, and ultimately solicitor:

1. These were W.J. Clegg, J.C. Clegg, W.E. Clegg (solicitors), Thomas Cole (draper), J.H. Barber (banker), John Delaney (General dealer), Phillip Diggett (coal merchant), Daniel Doncaster (steel manufacturer), Isaac Milner (cutlery manufacturer), Joseph Nadin (herbalist), Isaac Ellis (agent), R.C. Horner (agent) D.T. Ingham (bookseller), Abraham Sharman, G.W. Sharman (tea dealers), H.J. Wilson (silver refiner), William Fulford (bookseller).
2. B.T.A. August 1889, p.114.

in this capacity, he appeared as the watchdog of the Sheffield brewster

sessions, and the scourge of the licensed victuallers in the 1870's and 1880's.

Despite the alleged disadvantage of his militant teetotalism, he affirmed his

position as town councillor, alderman and eventually mayor in 1887, 1888 and 1890.

His high office in the B.T.L. and the U.K.A. was complemented by his early work

in the anti-slavery campaign, the Bank of Hope Union and the Gospel Temperance

Union.[1] His sons, John, Charles, and William Clegg followed in the tradition of

life long teetotalism, service on the town council, and in local government, and

an early identification with the Liberal interest.[2]

Equally well-known in Sheffield, and of greater national status, was

the Liberal M.P. H.J. Wilson, son of a prosperous Nottingham cotton spinner; his

family ultimately controlled the Sheffield Smelting Works, one of the town's

most successful silver refinging businesses.[3] The family background was one of

uncompromising nonconformity and personal austerity, with strict avoidance of

drink and tobacco. Henry signed the pledge as a sixteen year old in 1849, and

four years later was present with his father at the inaugural meeting of the U.K.A.

He combined his commitment to teetotalism with an active political life, at

first locally, espousing the nonconformist cause on the Sheffield School Board.

In 1885, his political convictions took him to Westminster, as Liberal M.P. for

Holmfirth. [4]

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1. ibid., February 1888, p.21; ibid., November 1889, p.181; ibid.,
   October 1891, p.131; ibid., August 1895, p.321; P.T. Winskill,
   Temperance Standard Bearers of the Nineteenth Century, Manchester, volume 1.1897
   Harrison, 'British Prohibitionists' etc., op.cit. p.
2. Big and Little Guns of Sheffield, reprinted from S.W.N. Sheffield, n.d. pp.53,
   67; Sheffield and District Who's Who, sheffield, 1905, p.30
3. Ronald E. Wilson, Two Hundred Precious Metal Years - A History of the Sheffield
   Smelting Company Ltd., 1760-1960, London, 1960, pp.138-9, 141.
4. Mosa Anderson, HJ. Wilson - Fighter for Freedom, London, 1953;
   W.S. Fowler, A Study in Radicalism and Dissent - the Life and Times of
   Henry Joseph Wilson 1833-1914, London, 1961. H.J. Wilson's letters and
   papers are in Sheffield City Library, Also see D.E. Fletcher, op.cit.

Others in this mould were Daniel Doncaster, the son of a 'little mester', who withdrew from file making to set up a prosperous business as a steel converter. A Quaker, with close family links with the Rowntrees of York, his business increased 'by divine blessing'. Doncaster and his wife were among the first in Sheffield to sign the pledge. Their Quakerism was reflected in many practical ways, such as support for the Infirmary. The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, the Aged Female Society and the Peace Society, all consistent with a sound basis of political liberalism.[1] Another major Quaker teetotaller was J.H. Barber, director of the Sheffield Savings Bank, J.P., town trustee and Liberal. A teetotaller from 1838, he involved himself with the abolition of slavery, and of the opium traffic, the Peace Society, the Bible Society and the Anti-Corn Law League.[2]

Other leading teetotallers were Methodists. Among them were Abraham Sharman, who started a grocery business from humble beginnings, and was active in the United Methodist Free Church, and in the Liberation Society, and wealthy draper Thomas Cole, educated at Westley College, and prominent in the Literary and philosophic Society.[3] The Baptist bookseller, D.T. Ingham was also a long time supporter of temperance. Having signed the pledge as early as 1831, he was involved in local temperance for over sixty years, and was also active in the Liberation Society, and in the Building Society movement.[4]

By the 1880's the temperance issue was increasingly part of a generalised concern for the social well being of the working classes, expressed by the aggressive social policies pioneered by the Methodists, and reinforced by Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, The Y.M.C.A. and others. In the 1880's and 1890's drink became increasingly part of the social purity question.

1. J.E. Doncaster, 'Reminiscences of Daniel Doncaster', unpublished ms., S.C.L.; S.R.I. 16 August 1884; Daniel Doncaster and Sons - The Story of Four Generations, Sheffield, 1938, pp3-8; Winskill, Standard Bearers, etc., p.245; Winskill, The Temperance Movement etc., 1, PP. 182-83.

2. ed. H.M. Doncaster, A Memoir, mostly Autobiographical, London, 1903; Doncaster, James Henry Barber, a Family Memorial, 2 vols, Sheffield, 1905; Big and Little Guns, etc., p.135.

3. Harrison, 'British Prohibitionists', etc., op.cit., passim; Winskill, Standard Bearers, etc., 2, p.245; Winskill, Temperance Movement, etc., p.184.

4. pp.182-83. Sheffield and District who's Who, etc., p.226; Harrison, 'British Prohibitionists', etc., op.cit., p.   ; Winskill, Standard Bearers etc., 2, p

Political and religious groupings in Sheffield were moving towards the concept that reform was possible only through democratic participation and the use of political machinery at local and national level; this much had been learned from the innovatory tactics of the U.K.A.

The relationship between temperance and wider social concerns is reflected in the emergence of the Sheffield Social Question League, active between 1893 and 1895. This originated from the heightened concern of some Wesleyans with urban social problems. In their fundamental aim of making the life of the city 'purer and happier', the League advocated not only progressive temperance legislation, but a forward policy of municipalization. Thus municipal control of education, the extension of public libraries and other cultural anc recreational facilities, better sanitation and housing, public control of utilities, and even the nationalization of land, mines and transport would (elevate social conditions (and) raise even the lowest and most degraded amongst us'.[1]

Led by Wesleyan Edwin Richmond, the S.Q.L. published its own newspaper, The Hammer, from 1893 to 1895 and carried forward its belief in democratic participation and political action by campaigning in parliamentary and local government elections. Other bodies in Sheffield, such as the Trades Council, were also concerned to exploit the political machinery of local government in the interests of better social conditions, and The Hammer occasionally carried Trades Council news.[2] Despite its appearance as a ginger group, however, the S.Q.L. reflected many of the tensions and attitudes of orthodox liberalism. Although the League had links with working class councillors such as Charles Hobson, and backed the early closing movement, and a policy of maximum wages and minimum hours,

1. The Hammer, 21 October 1893.
2. ibid., 20 January, 1894.

it was firmly anti-socialist, and ultimately anti-labour, supporting Wesleyan

timber merchant Batty Langley, the president of the S.Q.L. against Charles Hobson

in the candidature for the Attercliffe by-election in 1895.[1] Membership of

the League was broadly nonconformist, and it involved many individuals active

in the mainstream of the temperance movement in the 1890's such as James Melling,

Henry Adams, G.W. Sharman, Cecil Wilson, W.G. Hall, W.S. Skelton and others.

The campaign against drinking, betting and gambling also attracted clerical

support, principally from Primitive Methodist ministers such as S. Henshaw and

Independent John Calvert.[2]

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1. For opposition to socialism, see _ibid._, 30 December 1893; _ibid._,
   17 February 1894. For the Attercliffe by-election, see _ibid._, 30 June 1895;
   Joyce Brown, 'Attercliffe, 1894 -'How One Local Liberal Party failed to
   Meet The Challenge of Labour', Journal of British Studies
   14, May 1975, pp48-77.

20. <u>Attitudes towards Drink.</u>

The attitudes of temperance activists towards drink and society changed in emphasis during the nineteenth century, as the composition and priorities of the movement shifted. The growth of teetotalism in the 1830's and the emergence of the U.K.A. in the 1850's resulted in new and radical ideas about the suppression of alcbhol. Attitudes also changed with the emergence of new beliefs in what was possible. Thus the emphasis on moral suasion, which characterised the first twenty years of the movement, was supplemented by a commitment to the legislative enforcement of sobriety from the 1850's onwards.

The emerging middle class culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, imbued with evangelical ideas, focussed upon the brutality, irreligion and immorality of the working classes; although prosecutions for Sunday drinking increasd in the 1780's and 1790's, drunkenness was as yet incidental to the general state of working class depravity. By the 1830's, however, drunkenness had begun to emerge as the critical factor in working class culture. The middle class awareness of drunkenness increased after the Beer Act of 1830, and there is a close relationship between this legislation, and the mobilisation of temperance opinion. Simultaneously, the emergence of radical teetotalism enshrined drink itself as the principle enemy. Although the orbit of the movement widened in the sedond half of the century to include attacks on the manufacturers purveyors and sellers of the commodity, the condemnation of the demon drink itself remained crucial to the thinking of the movement.[1]

The sustained concern of temperance activists with the dangers of drink was reflected in the long term propensity of the movement to see drunkenness and sobriety in antithetical terms, between which there could be no middle way.

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1. Sheffield held 'with a firm grasp the doctrine advanced by Mr. Pope and Mr.Raper – namely that <u>drink itself</u> is an evil, and only an evil; not a good greature, but at war with God's laws and man's highest interests, and therefore ought to be annihilated'. <u>B.T.A.</u> 18th. January 1862.

What drink did to the individual or to society was 'bad', and what sobriety could achieve was 'good': the dichotomy between the evils of drink and the virtue of abstinence was fundamental to the philosophy of temperance for a century or more. Although the attitudes of the movement were occasionally anti-aristocratic, in Sheffield, working class culture bore by far the greatest brunt of the attack. Temperance is closely linked to stock attitudes to popular irreligion and illiteracy already expressed before and after 1830. The image of drink, emotive and pictorial, brought into sharp focus existing middle class perceptions or working class culture. The symbolic attack on drink concealed many bourgeois fears about popular culture, and in turn, helped to consolidate the superiority of the 'respectable', and to prevent a radical analysis of the origins of poverty.

It will be seen that the identification of drinking with working class depravity was crucial to temperance thinking. The growing habits of moderations and decorum which characterised 'polite' society, and sections of the labour aristocracy by 1850 contrasted with the savage enjoyments and the irregular drinking bouts found among some of the working classes. Temperance involvement was attractive, because it bestowed the right to control and mould the cultural patterns of the working classes. For the middle classes, drunkenness was but one step removed from the inarticulated fear of violence, the destruction of property and mass revolution.

Although such fears were largely instinctive and unspoken, a clear correlation was drawn between drink, and the other anti-social phenomena attributed to the working classes. Drunkenness encouraged idleness; although neither Sabbatarianor teetotaller, in 1863 Canon Sale lent his weight to the campaign for Sunday closing, in order 'simply to prevent persons sitting and boozing'[1]. This was despite the fact that for many working class families, Sunday was the only complete day of leisure.

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1. S.R.I. 22nd. April 1863, See also ibid, 4 May 1867.

It was important that Sunday should be sacred if not to God, then to Mammon: manufacturer John Unwin urged that Sunday should be a day of sobriety, in conscious preparation for hard work on a Monday. [1]

Temperance workers repeatedly stressed the 'waste' expense, misery and crime consequent upon the indulgence of intemperance'. [2] The link between workkng class drinking and crime was held to be self-evident. This sometimes involved the theft of tools from the employer to pay for drink: this arose from the habit of pledging tools for ale, which resulted in the loss of the master's property. [3] The observatiòns of Jelinger Symonds in 1843 implicitly confirmed the causal connexion between drink and crimes such as prostitution. [4] This was taken up by Engels, in his description of working class culture in Sheffield. [5] Samuel Roberts believed that Saturday night drinking led to tumult, robbery, visiting of brothels and sometimes death, and held that there was hardly any crime of importance which was not induced by drunkenness. [6] Albert Smith, clerk to the Petty Sessions in Sheffield, addressed a parliamentry select committee in a similar vein in 1852. Public houses, ar argued, were becomingevery year less respectable -

> 'the keepers of some are convicted felons,
> and many applications are made by persons so
> circumstanced to obtain houses. Many of the
> lowest class are used to harbour thieves,
> prostitutes, etc. [7]

The connexion between drink and criminality survived the century, and it became a commonplace to ascribe the need for prisons and workhouses to drink. [8]

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1. loc. cit.
2. S.I. 10th. March 1835; See address to Sheffield temperance society by J.S. Buckingham, New British and Foreign Temperance Magazine and monthly Chronicle, October 1841, p.320.
3. S.I. 3rd. April, 1832.
4. Symonds, op.cit., p.7.
5. F. Engels, The Conditions of the Working Class in England, paperback edition, 1969, p.231.
6. National Temperance Advocate 4, 1848, p.5.
7. S.C. on Public Houses, Report, (P.P. 1852-53, XXXVll), p.845.
8. For example B.T.A. February 1886, p.19.

The rationale behind this relationship was essentially the belief that drunkenness promoted savage and irrational behaviour. Buckingham described it as :-

> 'a sort of temporary suicide, by
> which a man destroys his own reason, and
> for the purpose of a momentary gratification,
> reduces himself below the level of a brute'. 1.

Temperance reformers tended to portray the drunkard as brutal and bloated, men who would conceivably stop at no crime nor violence. This was one way of hitting out at the drunkard, who exasperatingly turned a deaf ear to the blandishments of the teetotaller.

One of the strengths of temperance was that it had the moral sanction of religion. A drunkard was beyond the reach of the church, and for many Christians, there could be no true godliness without sobriety. The churches mounted their bitterest attack on the issue of Sunday drinking, the day on which the interests of religion and recreation clashed most publicly. Many churchmen feared the counter attraction of the pub, which despite the erosion of licencing restrictions, remained open on Sundays. The pub even ensnared Sunday school children, 'revelling in all that was vile and demoralizing'. 2. In the words of the Congregationalist minister T.W. Holmes,

> 'It was on that day, with temptations of music
> and song, and flower shows and conjuring, that
> heedless young men and women were drawn aside
> out of the paths of virtue, and became afterwards
> occupants of our prisons and workhouses'. 3.

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1. <u>S.I.</u> 7th. April, 1835.
2. <u>S.T.</u> 3rd. February, 1855.
3. <u>B.T.A.</u> February, 1885, p.19.

Such a statement implicitly admits the superiority of the pubs as providers of recreation in the 1860's; by the end of the century, the churches and chapels had made a conspicuous effort to rival the drinking places as purveyors of leisure. This will be discussed in detail below.[1]. In the mid-Victorian period, much of the clergy's hostility to public houses arose from the way in which they mimicked the religious life of the churches. Rev. John Flather complained to the select committee on the sale of liquors on Sunday about the amount of quasi-religious singing in pubs, commenting indignantly :

> 'I have passed many of those public houses in
> which psalms and hymns have been sung, and time
> has been kept; and if you were simply outside,
> you might suppose that it was a place of worship'. 2.

The conviction that it was the pub and the dram shop which directly nullified the efforts of the churches was widely held. This was the case with the Temperance Society, formed in 1863:

> 'If the questions be put - why no larger proportion
> of our people habitually attend divine worship -
> why so few of our Sunday schoolars become members of
> Christian Churches ....the only answer that ban be
> given is to point to the prevalence of intemperance'. 3.

Such was the attitudes of inceasing numbers of churchmen. Medical orthodoxy also attacked drink : despite the conservatism of medical opinion elsewhere, some doctors in Sheffield attacked drink from the 1830's. Disease, insanity and ultimately death were the fates in store for the drinker. Medical evidence, however dubious, was powerful propaganda for temperance activists. Charles Favell argued in 1834 that intemperance led to disease. 4. Travelling lecturer J.L. Levison gave several psuedo-scientific lectures along these lines in 1837, illustrated with casts and widely attended.

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1. See below, chapter 21
2. S.C. on the Sale of Liquors, etc., (P.P. 1867-68, XIV),
3. B.T.A. August 1863, p.71.
4. S.M. 13th. September 1834.

Levison argued that drunkenness was hereditary, and that alcohol
stimulated the base of the brain, supposedly the seat of 'animal feelings';
the confusion of morality and science was characteristic. [1]
Some Sheffield doctors were unhappy about such physiology, and indeed,
many of the temperance movement's most widely known lectures were medically
or scientifically inaccurate. [2]

However, the general belief in the connexion between drunkenness
and disease was firmly entrenched. A local practitioner, Dr. Beaumont,
started a monthly periodical, The Abstainer and Temperance Physician in 1864,
which helped to rally medical opinion. In 1903, following the conclusions
of the parliamentary committee, and in response to temperance pressure,
the Sheffield corporation produced a municipal poster on the abuses of
alcohol, which argued not only that drunkenness filled workhouses, prisons
and lunatic asylums, but that drink itself was injurious. [3]

Drink was linked with poverty, as well as with crime and disease.
There was a sharp awareness of the effect that drink could have upon
families already placed on the margins of survival by illness, unemployment
or old age. In such situations, however, drink was seen as the cause and
never the by-product of poverty. The poor, as well as the criminal, cost
money. Supporters of the Maine Law in 1855 argued that pauperism and crime
had already cost the country ten or twelve million pounds. [4] The drain
upon the national resources through the provisions of prisons and workhouses
was a key argument in temperance thinking in the second half of the century.

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1. S. Ind. 28th. January 1837; S.I. 31st. January, 1837; ibid., 30th.May 1837.
2. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p.p. 121-125.
3. Poster in S.C.L., 'The Abuse of Alcohol', Sheffield, 1903.
4. B.T.A., XXII. June, 1855, p.68.

An alternative analysis of poverty was late in coming. In 1870, the Chairman of the B.T.L. argued that the prevalence of poverty on the streets of Sheffield, the 'shoals of ragged children, with all the light of childhood banished from their hungry eyes ....slatternly women, and dissipated, debauched men', were directly or indirectly traceable to drink. [1.] The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent in 1881, in an important series of articles, drew attention to the demoralised state of the poor, arguing 'the existence of these outcasts is due rather to drink, than to the rate of wages; to idleness, dissipation and improvidence, than to any decline in our prosperity'. [2.] A more sympathetic analysis of poverty was reflected by temperance opinion only in the 1890's. The Social Question League argued that the blame for poverty, vice and squalor did not lie with the poor, and that these conditions were in no way inevitable: 'they are not the outcome of inevitable laws. They are simply effects following causes .... some of which are removeable, and others are at least capable of being very considerably minimised'. [3.] The League focussed attention on issues such as better housing, and municipal control of public utilities. Drink was nevertheless a major target, and the League argued that drinking must be strictly controlled by the rule of law. [4.]

Criticism of popular drinking was by no means restricted to middle class social reformers. Opposition to drink was also expressed by radical working men, especially in the 1840's. The drunkard was impossible to organise politically. He was also vulnerable to exploitation. Many stone masons, bricklayers and cutlery manufacturers kept beer shops, or were licensed publicans, and reputedly would employ men only if they spent their wages on drink.

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1. ibid., August 1870, p.745.
2. ibid., November 1881, p.591;
3. The Hammer 21 October, 1893.
4. ibid., 5 January 1895.

The Chartist _Working Man's Advocate_ cited the case of a teetotal workman, discharged by a razor manufacturer for refusing to drink a 'par-a-moor'. [1.] Mostly it was the small masters who were vulnerable to depression in trade, and who sought to supplement their livelihood by other means, who exploited their workman in this way. The practice by which sick clubs were run by landlords of pubs was also attacked. Mismanagement, and the amount of money wasted in drinking and feasting, lessened the effectiveness of the club in times of need. [2.]

Most middle class people continued to perceive working class culture in terms of drunkenness, crime and depravity. For temperance activists, the choice lay between drunkenness and abstinence: these alternatives were expressed in the antithetical images of death and life, poverty and wealth, family neglect and domesticity, violence and peace, ignorance and self-help, the dualism of being 'beyond the pale', and the coveted respectability. The benefits of society were articulated in utopian, idealistic terms: total abstinence was to be the architect of social, moral, political and religious regeneration. Temperance reformers at a meeting at the Globe Works in 1832 argued in utilitarian terms: sobriety was calculated to secure to the individual 'the largest possible development of personal beauty, the most perfect use of the senses, and the utmost amount of intellectual and moral attainment'. [3.] Supporters of the Maine Law in 1854 thought happinness important, but placed the claims of prohibition on a materialist, but nevertheless idealistic basis. The Maine Law was thus to be the universal panacea, halving rates and taxes, diminishing crime, madness and poverty, at a stroke filling churches and schools, and protecting the interests of the labourer by the introduction of cheap bread. [4.]

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1. _Sheffield Working Man's Advocate_ 27 March 1841, p.7.
2. _ibid._, p.3.
3. _S.I._ 3 January 1832.

4. _S.T._ 25th. November 1854; _B.T.A._ XXII 1855, p.68.

The universal relevance of teetotalism was ardroitly exploited by professional advocates the travelling salesmen of the temperance movement such as J.C. Booth, local agent of the B.T.L. :

> 'If they wanted to increase education, this was the movement to help them .... if they wanted to see a better state of things that at present existed, if they wanted more schools and fewer jails – more mechanics' institutions and fewer workhouses, then they must come boldly forward and help this temperance movement. If they wanted to help the cause of religion the temperance movement was just the thing for them'. 1.

Perhaps the most potent aspect of temperance propaganda was the usefulness of the ethic of sobriety for the dispossessed, or for the ambitious who wished to improve their social position. Reformers tended to argue the individual benefits of abstinence, but had a clear perception of the long-term advantages of temperance for society. The Sheffield Iris in 1834 argued that sobriety could turn working men almost into gentlemen, through the elevation of intellect and taste, the idle amusement of the beer shop giving way to an appreciation of 'the strains of Handel and Haydn .... the inspired poetry of the Scriptures'. 2.

The most powerful benefits of temperance, however were material, expressed crudely, but dynamically through the affirmations of reformed drunkards. George Nicholson, a moulder from Carlisle, working at Queen's Foundary, in Sheffield, was converted to teetotalism in 1835. His belief in the Benefits of sobriety were unquestioning. Characteristically, he described his former life as one of poverty, want, and disgrace and misery, with his wife forced to beg, 'having not a bed to lie down on, orscarcely a rag to our backs'. Within five months of joining the temperance society, he boasted a comfortable home,a smiling wife and child, all debts paid, and better health.3.

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1. ibid XVII, 1860, p.33-34.
2. S.I. 23 September 1834.
3. British and Foreign Temperance Advocate, II, 1835, p.213.

Domestic tranquility, and the reconciliation of the drinking man with his fireside, were key parts of the temperance ethic. William Barlow, reformed through the influence of the works overlooker, reflected this :

> 'instead of my house being an hell, it
> is now a house of prayer; and I would
> not part with my domestic happiness
> for all the drink in the world'.   1.

The role of the home as the seat of social training was stressed by MP. A.J. Mundella in 1887: temperate homes were happy, thrifty and intelligent, with husband and wife sharing domestic blessings, and the children well-educated. 2.

If reformed working men believed sobriety to produce health, wealth and domestic felicity, the temperance ethic had especial relevance to the socially ambitious, who sought to rise in status through self help. J.C. Booth urged the practical advantages or teetotalism:

> 'if they wanted to improve their trade
> or their commerce they must help the
> Temperance Movement, and then they would
> find it would help them in attaining what
> they desired, and they would also find their
> own position increase fifty-fold'. 3.

The teetotal community, like that of the chapel, tended to look after its own.

The temperance ethic was carried into the workshop, as well as to the domestic fireside. Reformers and employers disliked workshop drinking customs. They also feared organised unions - teetotalism was thus a weapon for the employer, because it could drive a wedge between a man and his workmates, and make a worker easier to control, both politically and socially. Teetotalism could isolate a man from his workmates. The poor but respectable mechanic who failed to pay his way in ritual drinking and his tools hidden, and his engine interfered with. 4. Working man CharlesShirton emphasised how teetotalism could benefit both master and man:

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1.   B.T.A. II 1840, p.26
2.   ibid., May 1887, p.71
3.   British and Foreign Temperance Intelligencer V, 1841, pp.375-76.
4.   S.D.T. 6 February 1856.

'the sober man could always command a fair day's pay; he need not resort to "rattening" to achieve the rights of labour, and he had no need of the trades union'. [1].

For Chartists and radical workingmen, howver, abstinence was one means to achieve the political organisation of the working class. Liberation from drinking also meant freedom from exploitation. Many Chartists shared with reformers such as Buckingham the belief in the need for alternative facilities. For the Working Man's Advocate, this had immediate political implications -

> 'amusements draw men from temperance to
> drunkenness; but take away the inducements
> which urge them to attend the beerhouse, and
> you at once convert the drunkard to a rational
> being'. 2.

For the churches, teetotalism was increasingly seen as a way to create a religious society. The problem of Sunday drinking epitomised religious fears about depravity and irreligion. Some reform drunkards also experienced religious conversion, and began to attend public worship, occasionally becoming class leaders. [3]. Instead of being in a public house on Sunday, George Nicholson could 'go to a place of worship with my wife comfortable, and spend the Lord's day in peace'.[4]. The affinity between teetotalism and Godliness was absolute: for many, abstinence was a necessary precondition of religious conviction. J.C. Booth felt that teetotalism would reinvigorate and purify the church, and remove many of the evils and obstructions which prevented thousands from attending. [5].

The role of teetotalism in moral and social regeneration was crucial: however, it was only the beginning. This was stated explicitly by temperance orator Dr. Grindrod on one of his visits to Sheffield.

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1. S.D.T.   6th. February 1856
2. National Temperance Advocate II 1843, p.130
3. Sheffield Working Man's Advocate   27th. March 1841, p.3.
4. British and Foreign Temperance Advocate II 1835, p.213
5. B.T.A.   XXVII 1860, pp.33-34.

He argued that when men ceased to be drunkards, they had not done all they could for themselves or for society. Self education remained to be achieved. [1]

Edward Smith urged the need to use the leisure time of the reformed drunkard profitably: time wasted in coffee houses should be spent improving the mind and character.[2] For many activists, the cause of drunkenness was popular ignorance, and education and self-help were the formidable tasks facing the reformed drinker.[3]

The belief in the benefits of abstinence for the individual was thus profound. The link with wider social issues was close, for only by reforming the individual drinker could society as a whole be improved. The dynamic role of temperance in this process was argued by lecturer J.L. Levison:

> 'make the poor and uneducated man understand that
> he is to be benefitted by uniting with us, by
> degrees the comforts and respectability he attains
> will extend to those above him, they will in turn
> influence the higher classes, until at last the
> changes accomplished by this single principle will
> be sufficient to make men more wise, mor happy,
> better educated and less willing to bow to the
> tyranny and oppression of despotic rulers'.   4.

Despite the persuasive arguments of temperance reformers, however, some of Shefield's most influential citizens spoke out publicly against temperance propaganda. The opposition to temperance centred on three main groups: the brewers and licensed victuallers, working class spokesmen on the town council, and some middle class representatives of the liberal interest. The critics of the temperance movement often shared a n uneasy political platform. Their views became public as a response to the more extreme antics of local teetotallers between 1850 and 1880, when sabbatarians and teetotallers joined forces in the interest of drastic licensing restriction.

1. Temperance Intelligencer 1844, pp. 325-26
2. Proceedings of the World's Temperance Convention, London, 1846, p.15
3. The British League, I may 1847
4. S.I. 30th. May 1837.

During the second half of the century, temperance attacks placed the licensed victuallers in Sheffield very much on the defensive. By 1850, the purveyors and sellers of drink had reached a position of strength in the community: in 1845, they had numbered 1492, and three years later, erected an asylum near Grimesthorpe, for the support of needy members or their widows.[1] The drink interest was looked upon favourably by many local councillors. Three of Sheffield's first five mayors were supporters of the licensed victuallers. Henry Wilkinson, mayor of Sheffield in 1848, drew the thunder of Samuel Roberts by presiding over a banquet of licensed victuallers during his first year of office.[2]

Public discussions of licensing restriction were reflected in a polarisation of attitudes towards the drink question. The formation of the U.K.A. in 1854 was contested by the drink interest, and public discussion of the Maine Law was enlivened by the opposition of the 'beer party'.[3] Attempts to petition parliament against the Sunday drink traffic in 1855 were contested by publicans, with the support of some town councillors. During the debates of this year, the drink interest learned how to manipulate sections of working class opinion by bringing up brewers' waggons, and treating the crowds to free ale.[4] The attempt to enforce a Sunday Closing bill in 1863, and the passage of the Licensing Act in 1871 provoked major public confrontations between the brewers, licensed victuallers and teetotalers. The mayor of Sheffield, Thomas Moore, who was also a brewer, led the local opposition to the licensing bill, with the support of the Sheffield and Rotherham Victuallers Association, and some town councillors. At an 'indignation meeting' in October 1872, the drink interest followed their opposition to

1.   Roberts, _Ruin of Sheffield,_ etc., p.10; Pawson and Brailsford, _op. cit._
2.   Roberts, _op.cit.,_ p.5; N.T.A. IV. 1848, p.5.   (pp.92-93.
3.   S.T. 10th. March, 1855.
4.   B.T.A., XXII March, 1855, p.35.

licensing restrictions with the formation of a defence association, involving leading brewers, and wine and spirit merchants. [1]

The opposition of the drink interest to restrictions on the trade was stimulated not only by a wish to protect business, but a thorough defence of the role of drink in society. Licensed Victuallers rebutted all claims by temperance workers that drunkenness was increasing. They argued for the positive social benefits of pubs, for example suggesting in 1872 that without drinking places, the vast organisation of friendly societies could not have attained its 'honourable and provident position'.[2] The drinksellers also argued, without success, the merits of pubs as necessary facilities for night workers on the heavy industry.[3]

Such arguments failed to impress temperance reformers in Sheffield, or, indeed, the local licensing benches. A more sophisticated political argument was used by some town councillors, who sought to publicly champion the interests of the artisan. By 1867, former Chartist Michael Beal had become a prominent figure in Sheffield as president of the chamber of industry, and treasurer of the British United Order of Oddfellows. His radicalism was still reflected in his outspoken defence of working class rights. His opposition to licensing restriction was based upon the conviction that working men were essentially rational beings, who should exercise ultimate control over their own leisure activities. Beal called upon Sheffield's working men to assert their dignity of character, and to 'tell the House of Commons they were capable of conducting themselves creditably and respectably'. Rebutting the extremism of teetotal attitudes towards drunkenness, Beal claimed that three quarters of the country were in fact moderate drinkers. He upheld the right of the working man to take a pint of ale and his tea or dinner at a pub on a Sunday, or to read the newspapers and chat about local affairs.

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1. _S.D.T._ 27 August 1872; _ibid._, 4 October 1872.
2. _ibid._, 27 August 1872.
3. _ibid._, 4 October 1872.

Licensing restrictions meant that working men should suffer thehardship of being 'turned out at ten o'clock, like apprentice boys, as if not fit to take care of oneself'. Ultimately, a man's character was in his own keeping: whilst men might be made more temperate by education, no compulsory legislation could achieve this. [1]

The position adopted by Michael Beal was broadly supported by those councillors and others who sought to protect the interests of the working classes. Isaac Ironside, who was converted to teetotalism in 1848, opposed drunkenness, but argued that sabbatarian and teetotal interests had no right to enforce their views on the town.[2] John Wilson voiced the class feelings of many working men in protesting that the middle classes should not escape from restrictions in drinking - 'it is not more immoral to drink a pint of ale in an inn, than a glass of wine or brandy in a club'.[3] One Robinson, a shoemaker, publicly attacked the clergy, who 'talked about intoxicating drinks when the working classes were affected, but....had their cellars stocked with wine and bottled beer'.[4] Rhetoric of this nature had an immediate impact upon working men, traditionally jealous of their rights and liberties, and hostile to any threat of middle class exploitation.

Some leading merchants and manufacturers, and also the Liberal M.P. J.A. Roebuck were sympathetic to working class feelings over licensing. Alderman William Fisher, merchant, manufacturer and former mayor of Sheffield, addressed the Select Committee on the Sale of Liquors on Sunday in 1867-68. He argued the importance of the pub to the working man, particularly on Sunday, his day of leisure - the public house is to him a sort of news room and a study, and a place where he can get the most pleasure out of his spare time.'

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1. S.C. on the sale of liquors on Sunday, etc., (P.P. 1867-68, XIV) A 7728-7791; S.T. 3 February 1855; S.R.I. 22 April 1863; ibid., 5 may, 1863 (S.D.T. 2 July 187
2. S.T. 3 February 1855.
3. S.R.I. 25th April 1863
4. ibid., 5 May 1863.

In any case, he argued, the reductions in the charges for drunkenness indicated a greater degree of public order, to which higher wages, improved housing, and the spread of education had made a major contribution.[1] J.A. Roebuck incurred the wrath of Sheffield temperance workers by his avowed resistence to licensing restrictions. In 1863, over the Sunday Closing Issue, he stood as the champion of the real interests of the working classes. His affirmation that there should not be one law for the rich and one for the poor brought him into line with street corner orators over the drink issue.[2]

In the last quarter of the century, as temperance became a *sine quo non* of liberalism, some conservatives on the council, the school board and on the licensing bench continued to use these arguments, in their role as proctectors of the working classes. The concerted attack by temperance interests on licenses in the local brewster sessions again produced controversy in the 1890's. The conservative Sheffield Daily Telegraph was the vehicle for these views: in 1894, it argued that it was unfair that those with a vested interest if cafes and temperance hotels should sit on licensing committees, whilst the directors and shareholders of breweries were excluded.[3] Correspondents to the paper took a stronger line, claiming that the method of preventing drinking by the removal of licenses was 'nothing but tyranical humbug'.[4] In the elections of 1894, the Social Question League candidates, campaigning for social purity against drink and gambling were soundly defeated. Whilst respectable middle class and working class oppinion at no time condoned drunkenness, teetotallers, by attempting to manipulate the machinery of local government to their own ends, had gone too far.[5]

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1. S.C. on the Sale of Liquor on Sundays, etc., (P.P. 1867-68, XIV),
2. S.R.I. 11April, 1863; B.T.A. May 1863, p.38;   (AA,6789, 6798-6800.
   Roebuck lost the confidence of working men because of his hostile attitude to trade unions as a member of the Royal Commission, and his widely quoted speech on 'capital and labour'. Pollard, op.cit., p.157; Fletcher, op.cit.pp.
3. S.D.T. 8 November, 1894.

21. The work of the temperance movement 1830-1900

Temperance activists sought to promote sobriety in three main ways: by a propaganda campaign of moral suasion and political pressure, by the exploitation of the recreational needs of the Victorian working classes, and by the provision of alternative facilities, offering the social support and the conviviality of the pub without the contamination of alcohol. The onslaught against drink and the drunkard was constant and unabated. Political pressure was inaugurated by the U.K.A. in the 1850's, and sustained in various ways at local and national level. The importance of counterattractive recreation was acknowledged by Buckingham and others as early as 1834.[1] Increasingly after 1850, the temperance society shared with the chapels the monopoly of wholesome recreation. The years between 1870 and the end of the century saw as a complement to the sustained attacks on the licensing benches the spread of coffee houses, and experiments with dry pubs.

Moral suasion was perhaps the most important aspect of temperance propaganda. For the individual, support for temperance meant involvement in a shifting pattern of relationships, and a variety of institutions and pressure groups. Many of those who called themselves teetotallers came to abstinence through the medium of religious conviction, and had no formal connection with temperance organisations. Nevertheless, the temperance community, based in part upon the teetotal society, had an important role to play in urban culture. Ironically,

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1. S.I. 17 March 1835.

the temperance society and the pub had much to offer that was similar, and appealed to the same sort of people: 'to a large extent pub and temperance society fought so fiercely because their roles were so similar.'[1] The temperance society, like the pub, offered support, identity and social contact to the lonely and to the stranger: there were many who had such needs in Victorian Sheffield. Both provided working men with the opportunity to rise socially, through the relationships and the social skills which they fostered.[2] Temperance society and pub were thus twin responses to the stresses and tensions inherent in rapid urbanisation.

In turn, the temperance society and the religious community were exactly analagous in social function.[3] Many temperance activists were also prominent in the life of the church and chapel. There were also marked similarities in technique and organisation. In Sheffield, the affinity between the cause of religion and temperance was clear from the earliest years. It was common for temperance meetings to be held in chapels and prayers and hymn singing were a frequent accompaniment.[4] Gradually, as the organisation of temperance and religion became more sophisticated, there was a clear synchronization of activities. The British Temperance League regularly held their annual conference in Sheffield, and this was acknowledged by temperance sermons, open air meetings and love feasts, run by the chapels. Similarly, national meetings of the Methodists in Sheffield were accompanied by teetotal meetings, and

1. Harrison, The Victorian City, etc., 1, p.185.
2. ibid., pp.184-5.
3. see above Chapter 3.
4. S.I. 25 July 1837; B.T.A. 1855 p.117.

deputations from the local branch of the U.K.A.[1]

The temperance movement copied much from the nonconformist denominations, especially the Methodists. In a community such as Sheffield, Methodism and teetotalism tended to involve the same sorts of people, drawn to a large extent from the working class. The needs of the dispossessed and insecure, and also of the ambitious, could be met in the same way by temperance society and chapel.

The problem of how to reconcile the working class drunkard and sinner to sobriety and godliness also tended to be faced in similar ways. The temperance movement, imbued with the fervour of evangelism, sought out its sinners in courts and alleys. Following the example of the town mission, established in 1851, temperance activists began employing their own missionaries for evangelical work. Even the working class Little Sheffield Temperance Society managed to fund a missionary in 1854-55.[2] The Sheffield Sunday School Band of Hope Union, established in 1855, aimed to spread the principles of total abstinence among sunday school teachers and scholars. At the same time, the Primitive Methodists engaged a town missionary of their own, by appointing Rev. R. Robinson, a long standing teetotaller, to pioneer denominational temperance work in Sheffield.[3]

From the 1830's, the pledge of total abstinence was crucial for the success of the cause. There is a marked parallel between the emotional catharsis of signing the pledge, and the process of conversion. The guilt of the drunkard was equated

1. *Temperance Advocate* June 1862; *ibid.*, July 1862.
2. *B.T.A.* XXI, August 1854, p.94; *ibid.* XXII, February 1855 p.22.
3. *ibid.* XXI, February 1854 p.22.

with the guilt of the sinner; only total insulation from
contamination and temptation could ensure redemption.
George Turton recalled the case of a drunkard converted in
Queen St., who soon relapsed and got into a fight. Full of
contrition, he signed the pledge, and 'he has since stood,
although he has had all the temptations of the fair to pass
through.'[1] Highly charged public meetings, with preaching
and affirmations from reformed drunkards were heavily relied
upon to produce converts. Large numbers could be converted
quickly: during its first year of its operation, the teetotal
society collected a 'mighty phalanx' of three hundred and
eighty reformed drunkards, a quarter of the society's total
membership.[2] Revivalist techniques were used with great
zest. During the 1850's, missions by visiting American
evangelists such as J.B. Gough and General Carey from Ohio
filled the chapels, and resulted in many pledges being taken.
One hundred and twenty signed the pledge after Gough's first
visit in 1854.[3] Large open-air meetings became an increas-
ingly popular device in the 1870's and 1880's, as the churches
involved themselves more publicly in temperance work.[4] The
churches and temperance societies worked closely together in
a religious mission in Attercliffe in 1882. The summer of
that year saw the launching of the Blue Ribbon campaign,
culminating in a six weeks interdenominational mission, with
daily open-air meetings advertised by a band, pledges taken,
and blue ribbons distributed. Twenty-four thousand pledges

1. P.T.A. February 1835, p.14.
2. British and Foreign Society for the Suppression of
   Intemperance, op. cit., p.55.
3. B.T.A. XXI, 1854, p.10.
4. ibid., May 1882, p.679.

were said to have been taken in Sheffield during these weeks.[1]
The incidence of relapsed drunkards must inevitably have been
high; but temperance sources are silent on this aspect.

The temperance movement organised converts and adherents
in ways successfully pioneered by the Methodists. Emotional
involvement was maintained by preachings and monthly love
feasts, in which members addressed the meetings, and particip-
ated in a collective group therapy.[2] Quarterly temperance
sermons were inaugurated by local clergy in 1869.[3] It was
important to keep reformed drunkards involved: working class
converts played a crucial role in public meetings. Other
techniques of evangelism were also copied. Home visits were
an important way of making contact with the inebriate, at least
in the early decades. Tract distribution was a vital part of
the campaign of moral suasion. The revived temperance society
of 1835 regarded this as a priority, and divided the town into
districts, under 'captains'.[4] Working class teetotal
societies were especially aggressive publicists of teetotalism.
The Little Sheffield society had thirty-eight tract distributors,
and circulated three hundred Temperance Advocates each month in
1844: those who could afford it paid a penny a week.[5] For
the middle class teetotaller, tracts were an important way of
breaking down barriers and providing an entree into the homes
of the poor, and the excuse for a second visit to collect the

1. B.T.A. October 1882, p.758; ibid., November 1882, p.774;
   ibid., December 1882, p.790; S.R.I. 16 October 1882.
2. British and Foreign Temperance Intelligencer VI, 1842,
   p.168.
3. B.T.A. May 1869, p.635.
4. P.T.A. February 1835, p.14; National Temperance
   Magazine I, 1844 p.157.
5. National Temperance Advocate I, 1844-45 p.11.

tract.[1.]   Tracts also helped to exploit and advertise special missions.   Many thousands were distributed during Gough's visit in 1854.[2.]   In 1877, the pledge and the tract, key weapons of temperance propaganda, were combined in a single perforated tear-off sheet.[3.]

Under arrangements such as these, many thousands of propagandist pamphlets were distributed.   Some of the major temperance papers were disseminated in Sheffield by these means. Prominent among these were Joseph Livesey's Preston Temperance Advocate, begun in 1834, and a model for all future temperance publications, the B.T.L.'s British Temperance Advocate, initially published weekly, then monthly from 1862, the Alliance News, founded in 1854, and Onward, the journal of the Band of Hope Union, which commenced in 1865, and was the joint organ of the Lancashire, Cheshire and Sheffield band of hope unions in its early years.[4.]

The temperance periodical was designed specifically to bring the message of total abstinence to the working class fireside.   The very real shortage of reading matter for working men meant that tracts and magazines could fulfil a valuable educational and recreational need, as well as disseminating propaganda.   The Temperance Advocate often included local news items, in an attempt to rival the public house as a source of information and gossip.   This was welcomed by temperance supporters in Sheffield, who argued that many poor teetotallers could ill afford to buy even a weekly paper for the general

1.   Brian Harrison, 'Drunkards and Reformers - Early Victorian Temperance Tracts', History Today, XIII, 1963, pp.178-185.
2.   B.T.A. XXI, 1854, p.10.
3.   ibid., June 1877, p.216.
4.   For temperance publications see Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc. pp.126,193,236,317.

news.[1] Simply written and condensed passages of news had
an important educational and political role: this was
acknowledged by Ralph Skelton in 1862, who argued that
thousands of working class readers had neither the time nor
the taste for reading bulky matter. For many teetotal con-
verts, accustomed to spending their leisure in the tap room,
reading was a painful and laborious exercise.[2]

The function of the temperance periodical was didactic,
as well as counter-attractive. There were many factual
articles on specialised issues, often with a medical or a
quasi-scientific basis, such as the chemistry of beer:
education was thus combined with propaganda.[3] Journals such
as Onward contributed to the basic political education of the
working classes, and carried articles on the franchise in the
mid-1860's.[4] Direct temperance indoctrination was the
ultimate aim, often through didactic stories. Onward, slanted
towards children in the bands of hope, carried many tales which
emphasised the role of the idealised, innocent child, with
'long flaxen hair, blue eyes, symmetrical features,' often
abused by drunken parents, but ultimately rescuing them from
drink.[5] Thus moral tales of biblical simplicity brought home
to a credulous readership the benefits of thrift and industry.
In the tale of 'Five shillings a week, and what became of it,'
published in Onward in 1865, the story of teetotaller Thomas
Brown, investing five shillings a week in a building society,
and ultimately able to live off his rents, was contrasted with

1. Temperance Advocate 29th March 1862.
2. ibid., 1 March 1862.
3. Onward, 1, 1865-66 pp.101-02.
4. ibid., pp.6-7.
5. ibid., pp.5-6.

Robert Smith, his neighbour and workmate, who dissipated his
five shillings in the Red Lion, and ultimately became desti-
tute.[1] Thus the parable of the wise and foolish virgins,
redrawn in terms of the realities of urban working class life,
was persuasively employed in the support of Victorian industrial
capitalism. For the first time working man could read stories
which related to his own social situation, his aspirations and
fears. The message was that self-help always brought rewards.
Although by the end of the century, simple moralistic tracts
for mass consumption had given way to sophisticated and closely
reasoned pamphlets for the educated, temperance tracts gave a
generation of working class people a familiarity with the
values of decency, frugality and sobriety, and the material
rewards that they brought.[2]

Temperance propaganda was disseminated on a regular basis
by programmes of formal lectures and informal addresses. The
formal lecture, with a clearly defined didactic role, developed
in the 1830's, parallel with the growth of the Mechanics'
Institute. Some of the men who gave Sheffield's first lectures
on temperance subjects were prominent in the Mechanics' Insti-
tute, and in other educational organisations. Of these, the
best known were Charles Favell and Arnold James Knight.[3]

Although the movement initially relied upon local reformers
with wide interests to pioneer temperance lectures, a system of
professional travelling agents and lecturers quickly developed;
in this way, temperance followed the experience of early
Methodism, with its networks of itinerant preachers.

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1. Onward, 1, 1865-66 pp.34-5.
2. Harrison, History Today, etc., passim
3. S.I. 26 August 1834; ibid., 3 March 1840.

J.L. Levison, who lectured on drunkenness in Sheffield in the first half of 1837, was one of the earliest of these.[1] He was followed by others, such as H. Freeman, travelling secretary of the British and Foreign Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, who lectured in the Quaker Meeting House in 1840.[2] The itinerant system rapidly became refined and professionalised. Some of the temperance movement's most famous temperance advocates made repeated visits to Sheffield, among much publicity. Perhaps the most famous was prohibitionist F.R. Lees, who spoke in Sheffield many times between 1840 and 1894,[3] and his opponent, the American temperance orator J.B. Gough, who spoke in the Music Hall in 1858.[4] Others were Dr. R.B. Grindrod, medical temperance advocate, who lectured on physiology in 1844,[5] and Henry Vincent, pioneer of teetotal Chartism in the early 1840's, and later a firm exponent of the self-help ideology.[6]

The arrival in Sheffield of famous temperance orators became a regular social event in the town, as well as giving publicity to the temperance cause. In content, lectures were uniformly didactic. Many of the earlier lectures were moral and social in emphasis. Charles Favell spoke on 'The Evils of

1. _S.Ind_. 28 January 1837; _S.I_. 31 January 1837; _ibid_., 30 May 1837; _ibid_., 30 June 1840.
2. _ibid_., 23 December 1840.
3. _S.R.I_. 29 August 1840; _B.T.A.II_, 15 September 1840 p.112; _New British and Foreign Temperance Magazine and Monthly Chronicle_, October 1841 p.320; _National Temperance Advocate and Herald_ II, 1843 p.120; _B.T.A_. XVIII, 1851 p.69; _ibid_., XXIV, 1857 p.10; _British Temperance League_ 1865 p.302; _B.T.A_. 1874 p.186; _ibid_., 1882 p.635; _ibid_., 1894 p.179. For Lees, see Harrison, _Drink and the Victorians_ etc., pp.202-07, 213-14.
4. J.B. Gough, _Two Orations on Temperance_, Sheffield 1858; see Harrison, _op.cit_., pp.212-14.
5. _Temperance Intelligencer_ 1844 pp.325-26; Harrison, _op.cit_., pp.134,173,192.
6. _B.T.A_. XXII, 1855 p.117; Harrison, _op.cit_., pp.287,387-89.

Intemperance' in 1834.[1] During the education controversy of 1847, Thomas White addressed temperance audiences on 'Popular Ignorance the Cause of Drunkenness', and 'Education, As it is, and As it Should be'.[2] With the advent of the U.K.A., and the involvement of temperance in political campaigning, lectures were given on practical questions such as the liquor traffic, and the Maine Law.[3] The development of a popular interest in science meant that lectures on scientific and quasi-medical aspects of temperance were well received: temperance lecturers in turn fed this interest with enthusiastic, if inaccurate scientific discourses. J.L. Levison's lectures on drunkenness in 1837 made free use of the principles of phrenology and physiology in the cause of total abstinence.[4] The relationship between temperance lectures and popular interest in science is close: from the 1870's, the bulk of lectures had a scientific content. Although phrenology and physiology were still of interest, there was increasing emphasis on chemical aspects of the temperance argument. In October 1875, a series of lectures were given by S. Compston in the Temperance Hall, entitled 'Beer and Brandy Are they Food or Physic?', and 'The Effects of Wine and Spirits on the Heart and Pulse'. These were profusely illustrated with chemical experiments and coloured diagrams - attendances were good, and the audience characterised by their close attention and intelligent questions.[5] The chemistry of

1. S.I. 26 August 1834.
2. The British League of Total Abstainers' Magazine V, May 1847.
3. B.T.A. XXII, 1855 p.68; ibid., XXIII, 1856 p.83.
4. S.Ind. 28 January 1837; S.I. 31 January 1837; ibid., 30 May 1837.
5. B.T.A. December 1875 p.342.

alcohol and the physiology of temperance continued to draw audiences in the 1880's and 1890's.[1]

Thus temperance could exploit popular interest in social and scientific questions, and play a very real part in the education of the working classes. Vitally important in the process of conversion and its reinforcement was the regular programme of informal meetings in which working class speakers, especially reformed drunkards, played a crucial role. The tactical uses of the working class convert were quickly recognised and exploited by the teetotal movement in the 1830's. Dramatic performances by reformed drunkards evolved into a counterattraction to public house entertainment, and had much in common with the amusements afforded by the Victorian music hall. Such performances represented the 'secularization of the conversion experience', with the public repudiation of drink and poverty, and demonstrations of the happiness and material prosperity that had resulted from signing the pledge.[2] Such consciousness-raising helped the reformed drunkard to come to terms with his past, and reaffirm his commitment to sobriety. Many performances became little more than a self-conscious act, learned by rote and rehearsed; but a susceptible audience was often swayed by emotion into conversion. The very ordinariness of the reformed drunkard held out a real hope for the working class drinker who wished to learn abstinence.[3]

In Sheffield, the early success of teetotalism was encouraged and sustained by addresses of reformed drunkards.

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1. B.T.A. March 1878 p.32; *ibid.*, December 1879 p.208; *ibid.*, January 1880 p.224; *ibid.*, January 1881 p.431.
2. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.130.
3. *ibid.*, pp.127-34.

Often these were the humble counterparts of the professional
itinerant lecturer. A tea party in Brunswick Wesleyan school-
room in 1836 was addressed by Ralph Holker from Oldham and
Robert Winter from Manchester, announced as 'two old soldiers
and reformed drunkards.' Following this, three Wesleyan
preachers and twenty-six others signed the pledge.[1] The
sentimentality of a suggestible audience was cleverly exploited
by the movement, and testimonials from children were an
especial attraction. At the anniversary meeting of the
temperance society in 1837, addresses by 'Several Reformed
Children' followed those of local clergy and employers.[2]
Gradually, few teetotal meetings were held without affirmations
from converts. This was particularly the case with working
class teetotal societies, where the currents of emotion were
never far below the surface. The Little Sheffield Temperance
Society in its regular meetings at Bethel Primitive Methodist
Chapel could usually produce several reformed drunkards: in
1849, a succession of converts, 'whose altered appearance and
deportment were calculated to cheer one's heart' addressed the
audience on the evils of moderate drinking which had led them
to become sots, and the 'incalculable blessings' they had
derived from the society.[3] The usefulness of the reformed
drunkard was soon exploited to the full by the temperance
machine, and displays of this type continued to be of value.
Ultimately, however, the movement placed a strong reliance on
professional itinerant working class speakers, who made extensive

1. S.Ind. 6 February 1836; P.T.A. April 1836 p.30.
2. S.I. 3 January 1837.
3. N.T.A. V, 1849 p.22.

campaigns in Sheffield. James Mellings, a St. Helens glass blower, conducted ten lectures and open air meetings in the summer of 1844, and over three hundred signed the pledge.[1]

Temperance pressure could be applied not only through the pledge and the prayer meeting, but in the work situation, by the resourceful employer. The workman who did not drink was arguably more reliable, produced better quality work, and was fit to put in longer hours. The strength of these arguments was not lost on manufacturer Joseph Rodgers, who already had the reputation of employing better educated workers.[2] Rodgers himself donated to the temperance society, for 'if you succeed we shall get the money back again, because you will make us some sober workmen.'[3]

The decision to enforce temperance principles in the workshops was ultimately a matter for the individual employer. With the growth of larger units of production in the second half of the century, the personal influence of the manufacturer declined. Some employers were successful in exerting pressure, however; this was particularly the case in family firms which boasted strong loyalties, and a harmonious relationship with the work force. In the brass works established by John Guest in 1847, there was a ritualistic system of fines and footings, culminating in especially heavy drinking to celebrate weddings. Under the influence of John Guest, this was replaced by a tea meeting, and a presentation to the couple.[4] During the controversy over the Sunday Closing Bill in 1863, some teetotal employers claimed a remarkable degree of support from their

1. *National Temperance Magazine*, I, 1844, p.208.
2. S.L.R. 17 January 1852.
3. S.T. 7 January 1854.
4. Thomas Beggs, *op.cit.*, p.79.

workmen, which may be evidence of direct pressure. Joshua

Moss, of Moss and Gamble Bros., got up a petition, allegedly

signed by four fifths of the men. This contrasted with the

generally high level of working class antagonism to the Bill

in the town.[1] It is likely that other large employers

involved in temperance did their best to promote its principles

in the works. This may well have been the case in the Wilson

family's Sheffield Smelting Works, and in the factories of

Daniel Doncaster and Edward Smith. Many of the most active

supporters of teetotalism were smaller employers, however.

Bookseller and printer D.T. Ingham, and grocer Abraham Sharman

were clearly in a position to exercise a firm discipline with

their apprentices, although this has not been recorded.

The involvement of the temperance movement in direct

political pressure began with the foundation of the U.K.A. in

1854. Through the campaign for the prohibition of the sale

of alcohol by legal means, the Alliance committed temperance

to wholly new tactics and possibilities. The fight for the

Maine Law involved Sheffield temperance activists for the first

time in a national political campaign. From the 1870's, an

awareness of the increasing importance of local government

brought teetotallers into the local political arena.

The Maine Law was of crucial importance in the thinking of

temperance activists for well over half a century. The belief

in legal restrictions on the availability of alcohol was the

basis for national parliamentary campaigns for an English

version of the American legislation: this was sustained through

1.   B.T.A. May 1863, p.38.

agitation for successive bills.   Locally, temperance activists battled annually in the Brewster Sessions for the wholesale reduction in the number of liquor licences.   The Sunday Closing campaign also reflected the attempt to erode drinking by legislative means.   Prohibition, licensing campaigns and Sunday Closing involved both teetotallers and 'temperate' drinkers. The link between the Sunday Closing movement and sabbatarianism threw religious interests firmly behind the temperance campaign. Belief in the legislative control of drinking thus transformed temperance from a narrow sectarian group, dominated by teetotallers, to a broadly based consensus of churchmen and non-conformists, drinkers and non-drinkers.

The Sheffield branch of the Alliance, formed in crowded and enthusiastic meetings in November 1854,[1] mobilized temperance opinion on prohibition, and sponsored lectures on the total suppression of the liquor traffic.[2]   By the late 1850's, the Alliance focussed its political policy on the Permissive Bill, or 'local veto'.   Thus a two-thirds majority of the rate payers in any locality could ban the sale of drink.[3] In towns such as Sheffield, with a strong temperance lobby, and temperamentally prejudiced against control from central government, local veto was strongly supported.   Meetings to promote the Permissive Bill in 1870 had the backing of the town's principal temperance adherents, such as W.J. Clegg, Daniel Doncaster, Abraham Sharman and D.T. Ingham, and also some clergymen.   Elsewhere, the principles of the Alliance were

1.   S.T. 25 November 1854; B.T.A. XXII, January 1855, p.10.
2.   ibid., June 1855, p.68; ibid., XXLV, December 1857, p.10.
3.   Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p.198.

opposed by important sections of the teetotal movement.[1] The Quaker J.H. Barber reflected opinion in Sheffield in his belief in the failure of moral suasion, and the necessity for agressive prohibitionist policies.[2]

Despite strong support in towns such as Sheffield, the Permissive Bill was never passed, and prohibitionism itself was stagnating by the late 1870's. Nevertheless, supporters of the Alliance, already versed in parliamentary tactics, threw themselves into the controversies surrounding the Licensing Act of 1872, which sharply reduced opening hours, and tightened the discretionary powers of the local magistrates. From the spring of 1871 to the late summer of 1872, public opinion in Sheffield mirrored the controversies over the proposed bill. The Mayor of Sheffield, brewer Thomas Moore, led vociferous opposition from the drink interest and the licensed victuallers: a petition to parliament drawn up in July 1872, and promoted by Moore and M.P. J.A. Roebuck, was alleged to have twenty-two thousand signatures.[3] Clergy and dissenting ministers sought to discuss the implications of the bill in the decorous surroundings of the Cutlers' Hall, but the real mood of the town was reflected in noisy meetings in Paradise Square, with as many as fourteen thousand people present. 'Great big brewers' men' distributed free beer, and the crowd effectively prevented the temperance interest from speaking.[4]

One effect of the 1872 Act was to focus attention on the powers of the local magistrates to determine opening hours and

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1. For example, the Gough-Lees controversy. _Ibid._, pp.211-14.
2. S.R.I. 5 March 1870; _ibid._, 25 May 1870.
3. S.D.T. 2 July 1872; _ibid._, 4 October 1872.
4. S.R.I. 25 April 1871; _ibid._, 2 May 1871.

to remove licences in the annual Brewster Sessions. From the late 1850's, temperance activists had begun to exert pressure on magistrates to restrict the numbers of licences granted. Following a memorial from temperance workers in 1857, the magistrates granted only 12 of 51 applications.[1] From 1872, pressure and counterpressure on the licensing bench increased. The alliance between the drink interest and the conservatives was firmly cemented, and under the sponsorship of the Mayor, the bench was urged to maintain later closing, as operated in London.[2] The contentiousness of the licensing issue is indicated by the number of memorials to the magistrates: in 1872, a petition from the Sheffield and Rotherham Licensed Victuallers was countered by appeals from the U.K.A., the School Board, town councillors, sunday school teachers, ministers and forty-seven congregations.[3]

Despite powerful representations from the drink interest, the spirit of the 1872 Licensing Act was upheld in Sheffield. Thus, for the first time, pubs were subjected to the same regulations as beer houses, and eleven o'clock closing on weekdays enforced. All applications for exemption from the Act were rejected at the next Brewster Sessions, and the freedom to drink until midnight on Saturdays, long sacred for the working classes, suffered a severe blow.[4] The drink interest rallied itself into a defence association, and each meeting of the licensing bench saw a rehearsal of antagonisms.

With the proliferation of groups organising around the

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1. S.D.T. 28 August 1857; B.T.A. XXIV, August 1857, p.118.
2. S.D.T. 2 July 1872; ibid., 27 August 1872.
3. ibid., 30 August 1872.
4. ibid., 2 September 1872; ibid., 19 September 1872.

drink question, memorials and petitions were regularly presented to the licensing benches. In 1875, the Sheffield Women's Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, involving women from leading nonconformist families, put forward the claims of women and children, as the greatest sufferers from the intemperate habits of men.[1] The Church of England Temperance Society, and the Wesleyan dominated Social Questions League, also entered the disputes.[2] In 1893, Sheffield Methodists mobilized a petition from 174 churches, 51 ministers, representing a total of 53 thousand adherents.[3]

Despite the apparent victory for temperance in 1872, later licensing benches differed in their approaches to the drink issue. In the Brewster Sessions of 1893, for example, only one licence was taken away by magistrates.[4] This reluctance to curtail the number of drinking places was a stimulus to the activities of the S.Q.L.: the League memorialised J.P.s, alleging that Sheffield, with one licence for every thirty-seven families, had proportionately more pubs than Leeds, Glasgow, Liverpool, Bradford, Newcastle, Hull or Huddersfield.[5] In 1894, the magistrates were alleged to have done 'practically nothing' to curtail licences, and more pressure was applied: although the League objected to 21 licences on the grounds of non-necessity, 11 of these were renewed.[6]

Clearly, the composition of the licensing bench was a key factor in the determination of its policy. Alderman Clegg

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1. S.R.I. 27 August 1875.
2. ibid., 31 August 1877.
3. The Hammer 21 October 1893.
4. ibid., 3 March 1894.
5. Ibid., 4 August 1894.
6. ibid., 22 September 1894; ibid., 29 September 1894.

complained that out of fifty Sheffield magistrates, only ten were teetotal, and urged that decisions over licences should be made only according to the criterion of need.[1] Conservative opinion in Sheffield, backed by the Sheffield Daily Telegraph, argued that teetotallers should be excluded from all decisions about licences.[2] The League tried to exploit the issue in the municipal elections of 1894, and was soundly defeated.[3]

The dominance of conservative interests on the licensing benches of the 1890's meant a bitter annual fight for teetotallers. Nevertheless, although conservative magistrates defended the right of the working man to drink, they disliked drunkenness, and considerable vigilance was exercised in the granting of new licences. Music Halls who wished to sell intoxicants had a rough ride. In 1903, a request from the Empire Palace of Varieties was fought by W.E. Clegg, and ultimately rejected by the bench.[4] There was also stiff opposition to the granting of grocers' and publicans' licences in the new working class residential suburbs. The licences held by grocers were particularly suspect, due to the increase of intemperance among women. Thus an application for an off-licence on Middlewood Road was rejected, even although there was no public house for eleven hundred yards in any direction. Licences near schools were also disputed. An application for a licence by a pub close to the Hillsborough Board School was contested by the School Board, with the support of the Hillsborough and District Association of Nonconformist Churches.

1. B.T.A., November 1894, p.179.
2. S.D.T. 22 October 1894.
3. ibid., 8 November 1894; The Hammer 10 November 1894.
4. S.R.I. 30 June 1903.

This was refused, as was an application from a substantial and attractive hotel, with an unimpeachably respectable tenant, which happened to be next to Hillsborough park and football club.[1]

Nevertheless, only the working class drinking place suffered such a sustained attack. The Hotel Leopold, later the Grand Hotel, planned in 1899 in response to the need for a first class commercial hotel in the city, was granted a licence in 1903 in spite of temperance protests, and its situation adjacent to the Central Board School. The magistrates admitted no contradiction in this, for

> 'there was a vast difference between
> the Hotel Leopold, a real hotel for
> the accommodation of visitors with no
> drinking bar, and a so-called hotel...
> merely an ordinary public house, on the
> outskirts of Hillsborough Park.'[2]

Piecemeal success in the perennial campaign for the reduction of licences was the most that Sheffield supporters of prohibition could hope for in the last quarter of the century. Another aspect of temperance policy was the campaign against the opening of public houses on Sundays, a struggle waged intermittently from the 1850's, and hotly resisted by important sections of the working population. The Sunday Closing movement brought temperance valuable support from sabbatarian interests, and from the churches. However, despite the strength of local opinion in Sheffield, the issue of Sunday Closing was a dead letter by the 1890's.

The passing of the Wilson Patten Act in 1854, although swiftly modified by the Sunday Beer Act of the following year,

1. S.R.I. 6 February 1906.
2. ibid., 22 May 1899; ibid., 12 February 1906.

imposed major restrictions on the right of the Sheffield workman to extend the carousings of a Saturday night into the day of rest.   Pubs, previously closed only during divine services, were brought into line with beer houses.   Opening hours were restricted in 1854 to 12.30 pm. to 2.30 pm. and from 6 pm. till 10 pm. in the evening.[1.]   The Wilson Patten Act was welcomed by temperance opinion in Sheffield, as the first step towards total Sunday closing.[2.]   In 1855, the extension of permitted Sunday drinking hours threw the temperance movement into a rearguard action.   In Sheffield, temperance had already gained new strength and confidence with the establishment of the U.K.A., and the Sunday closing issue provided prohibitionism with its first battle ground.   The supporters of the Alliance, campaigning to wipe out all Sunday drinking, clashed with working men and ex-Chartists in scenes, which, in their violence and exuberance, were a foretaste of the licensing controversy of 1871-72.   As in 1831-32, the concern of sections of the Sheffield working class for their rights and liberties was vociferously expressed, this time under the guidance of town councillors who claimed to represent their interests, such as Michael Beal and Isaac Ironside.   Both in and outside the temperance camp, political action was swift, unsophisticated and essentially populist, fought out on the streets through mass meetings and petitions.   The Little Sheffield Temperance Society was instrumental in organising a petition to parliament, protesting against Sunday drinking. The Town Council was undecided on the issue, and popular feeling

1.   Harrison, <u>Drink and the Victorians</u>, etc., pp.328-29.
2.   <u>S.T.</u> 11 March 1854.

took over.   Crowds of fifteen thousand attended a mass meeting
in Paradise Square, with free beer and running battles.   A
reporter from the Sheffield Times, sheltering on a brewer's
waggon, doubted 'whether such a scene of protracted and
incessant uproar was ever before witnessed in Paradise Square.'[1]

The Sunday Closing issue reached a climax in the 1860's,
with wide discussion of a Sunday Closing bill in 1862-63, and
the rehearsal of local conflicts in the evidence of some of
Sheffield's leading citizens to the Select Committee in 1867-68.
The response of prominent inhabitants to this issue was
impressive.   Canon Sale, the Vicar of Sheffield, presided over
a local committee to promote the bill, which also included
leading nonconformist teetotallers, such as Daniel Doncaster
and W.J. Clegg.   For working men, however, Sunday Closing
remained a contentious issue.   Temperance employers tried to
promote the cause among their workpeople.   At Joshua Moss and
Gamble, four fifths of the workforce signed a petition to
Roebuck in favour of the bill.[2]   Joshua Moss and Edward Smith
formed part of a national temperance delegation to the Home
Secretary.[3]

Temperance reformers realised the tactical necessity of
winning the appearance of working class support for Sunday
Closing.   In 1863, a local canvass received over 22 thousand
answers, 13 thousand of which favoured Sunday Closing.   In
1868, 130 workshops representing local and general trades were
visited, and recorded 4769 votes in favour of Sunday Closing.

1.   S.T. 3 February 1855; ibid., 24 February 1855; B.T.A. XXII,
      March 1855, p.35.
2.   S.R.I. 11 April 1863; B.T.A. May 1863, p.38.
3.   S.R.I. 4 June 1863.

This was interpreted as a victory for temperance, although 3369 were against, and 169 neutral.[1] Working men complained that those who voted were in any case unrepresentative, and that the employers imposed a coercive influence.[2] In fact, in 1863 a counter-petition against closure circulated among working men had attracted over 9 thousand signatures.[3]

With the new restrictions introduced by the Licensing Act of 1872, the Sunday Closing issue was increasingly seen in relation to the general licensing question. Although temperance interests continued to press for Sunday Closing, the heat had gone out of the issue. The churches continued to be concerned about Sunday drinking, however, and leading Anglican and nonconformist ministers dominated discussions of the matter in the 1870's and 1880's. In 1873, an auxiliary of the Manchester based Central Association for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor on Sunday, founded in 1866, was established in Sheffield.[4] The popular Canon Blakeney, Vicar of Sheffield, and leading Independents Giles Hester and John Flather, with J.W. Pye Smith and John Unwin, were among the executive members.

This organisation continued the tradition of parliamentary pressure over temperance issues. It revealed some of the fundamental tensions of the later Victorian temperance movement: many clergy who pressed for Sunday Closing took the position of Anglican Samuel Earnshaw, not teetotal but 'temperate'. This attitude was strongly attacked by traditionalists such as

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1. S.C. on the Sale of Liquors on Sunday, etc., (P.P. 1867-68, XIV) A.4524-4541.
2. S.R.I. 12 May 1868.
3. ibid., 11 April 1863.
4. Harrison, op.cit., p.214; S.D.T. 25 November 1873.

W.J. Clegg, to whom total abstinence was the only path to sobriety and salvation.[1] Nevertheless, the Sunday Closing issue, and indeed temperance in general, in its involvement of 'tippling sympathisers' had widened far beyond the bounds of sectarian teetotalism.   In the 1880's, petitions about Sunday Closing were still being sent to Sheffield's members of parliament, but the initiative over temperance was firmly in the hands of individual town councillors, medical men and clergymen; the ideology and tactics pioneered by the movement had been taken up by an impressive consensus of leading inhabitants.[2]

Another aspect of the temperance campaign was its ability to exploit the recreational needs of the Victorian working classes.   Many working men participated in the social life of pubs and taverns because there was nowhere else to go, and little else to do.   Increasingly, from the middle of the nineteenth century, most popular recreation was firmly linked with drinking, with the growth of the music halls, and the proliferation of sporting activities where alcohol was consumed. The temperance organisations joined with churches, chapels and the Mechanics' Institute in the competition with popular recreation for the control of the leisure and values of working men.[3]

The rivalry between the temperance society and the pub has already been noted.   In the pursuit of the counter-attractive role, a whole superstructure of related recreational activities

1.   For Clegg, see above chapter 19.
2.   S.D.T. 3 February 1882.
3.   Brian Harrison, 'Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England' Past and Present, 38, 1967, p.99.

was imposed upon the basic activities of temperance. The inception of teetotalism

> 'transformed temperance meetings from
> occasional gatherings of local worthies
> summoned to discuss ways of elevating
> their inferiors, into counter-attractive
> functions enabling workingmen to insulate
> themselves from public house temptation.'[1]

The need to prevent the reformed drunkard from straying back to the warmth and conviviality of the pub, to his old friends and bad influences, was the fundamental reason for this development.

It is difficult to exaggerate the crucial role of the pub for the working man, or conversely, the necessity for the sober to find an alternative source of recreation. By 1850, no respectable woman of any class would have been seen entering a pub. Whilst many of Sheffield's professional families could amuse themselves with antiquarian, literary or scientific pursuits, the chapel, the temperance society, and the network of activities which connected them were of fundamental importance to decent lower middle and working class families: women and children too were specially catered for within the range of society activities. Involvement in temperance society or chapel fostered a sense of solidarity and belonging, as well as new friends and much honest enjoyment. Teetotallers took great pride in their ability to enjoy themselves without intoxicating liquor: this in itself was a prime justification for their recreational activities.[2]

Most early temperance meetings were solely devoted to business or propaganda. By the mid-1830's, however, the Sheffield temperance society began its practice of formal

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1. Harrison, Past and Present, etc., p.106.
2. B.T.A. XXI, April 1854, p.57.

annual soirées and festivities. This followed the pattern of
social intercourse already established by the chapels, friendly
societies and philanthropic organisations. The incidence and
range of social events increased rapidly in the following
decades. The annual social event laid on by the society
became increasingly more elaborate. The first major temperance
soirée was held at the Music Hall in 1835, 'respectably, but not
numerously attended.'[1] Two years later, the format was
expanded to include a procession headed by a band to the
Assembly Rooms, followed by a soirée and a tea.[2] Gradually,
a pattern of regular teas, social evenings, plays and other
events was interspersed with the annual celebrations. The
shift in emphasis from the 'polite' soirée to more frequent
and lively social events reflected the growing involvement of
working class teetotallers, and their need for a sustained
alternative to public house conviviality. The domestic lives
of many reformed drunkards and working class converts were
drab, and the temperance movement had to make a real effort to
compensate for the gaiety and warmth of the drinking place.
Temperance entertainments thus had to be dramatic, visually
exciting and colourful, and the movement made a very real
contribution to the stimulation of popular interest in music,
drama, and natural and applied science.

Following the example of the Sunday schools, counter-
attractive meetings began to be held on occasions such as
Whitsun, traditionally a time for riotous popular festivities.
Refreshments were often provided in the grounds of a local

1. S.I. 11 August 1835.
2. ibid., 3 January 1837; ibid., 10 January 1837; Leeds
   Temperance Herald, II, January 1837, p.13.

benefactor.[1] However, the involvement of teetotallers in the massive and well-established Sunday school celebrations at Whitsun restricted the scope of this as a separate event. The idea of large open-air temperance gatherings was attractive, however. From the early 1850's, annual galas were organised by the temperance societies and the Band of Hope Union in the Botanical Gardens. The temperance galas grew rapidly in size, and in the range of attractions offered. Music and processions were an integral part of the occasion: in 1866, representatives of all the Sheffield temperance societies, the Band of Hope Union, and the various Rechabite tents marched with flags and banners to the Botanical Gardens, accompanied by four bands.[2] Mass singing of the Hallelujah Chorus, and hymns by choirs of children were also a regular event.

Temperance galas also provided much in the way of entertainment. Exhibitions of archery, and competitions for the best wild flowers and pot plants were among the other attractions. Often, one end of the garden was set aside for dancing, and games such as 'kiss in the ring' and 'the jolly miller'. The afternoon's events concluded with a mass distribution of prizes.[3] Vast numbers of people came to the galas from the earliest years, many of whom travelled great distances: this was made possible not only by the extension of the railways, but the beginning of regular horse omnibuses, which ran from the town centre and the railway stations to the Botanical Gardens from the 1850's.[4] The processions through the streets were a great attraction,

1. N.T.A. I, 1844-45, p.154.
2. B.T.A. October 1866, p.387.
3. ibid., September 1863, p.79; S.D.T. 13 July 1869.
4. J. Edward Vickers, From Horses to Atlanteans, Sheffield, 1972, pp.10,12.

with thousands of people lining the route.[1] As many as

24 thousand attended the galas themselves, including many of

Sheffield's leading families, a source of some pride for the

movement.[2] The mass appeal of the galas was also recognised

and exploited: in the words of the Sheffield Daily Telegraph,

> 'many a confirmed drinker, moderate or
> otherwise, while he is himself unmoved
> by the gushing eloquence of a Gough, or
> unconvinced by the dry argument of a Lees
> does not object to his little ones joining
> the ranks of the juvenile teetotallers,
> and singing "Down With the Bottle".'[3]

Clearly, the recreational element was a fundamental aspect

of the major temperance galas. Without the provision of music,

singing, dancing and games, the temperance gala would have failed

in its counter-attractive role. Smaller local events were also

held along similar, if more modest, lines: these were often

organised in the outlying villages to coincide with the tradi-

tional feasts. The newly formed temperance society at Park-

gate, between Sheffield and Rotherham, organised a festival in

1854, 'to allure the tide of pleasure seekers to the village

feast, into a safer channel of amusement.'[4]

Another aspect of the attempt to undermine popular patterns

of leisure was the growth of organised excursions. These had

already been established by the Sunday School Movement, and

given a dramatic new impetus by the extension of the railways.[5]

The Band of Hope Union made regular day trips, such as that to

Alton Towers in June 1866, or to Chatsworth in 1880; on the

latter occasion, tea was provided at the Primitive Methodist

1. B.T.A. 1883, p.921; ibid., September 1889, p.151.
2. ibid., September 1863, p.79.
3. S.D.T. 30 July 1872.
4. B.T.A. XXI, October 1854, p.120.
5. See above, Chapter 9.

chapel at Baslow, and refreshments laid on for the drivers and conductors to keep them out of the local pubs.[1]

Extraordinary events such as soirées, galas and trips were complemented by increasingly regular social meetings. Some of these were temperance addresses by reformed drunkards. These relied heavily upon anecdote, and were flamboyant and emotional spectacles. Whilst fundamentally propagandist in aim, there was an important recreational element in such performances: the distinction between recreation and propaganda was essentially artificial. From the late 1840's, temperance reformers learned new ways of exploiting recreational need. Social tea meetings, held intermittently in the previous decade, became a regular event. A sit-down meal, followed by temperance addresses became the usual formula. Many hundreds turned out for events of this nature, and it was common for numbers to be refused admittance.[2] Tea parties organised by the Little Sheffield Temperance Society in chapel schoolrooms attracted at least 250 people on each occasion. In 1849, 650 sat down to tea at a grand temperance soirée held on New Year's Day in the Music Hall.[3]

The success of the temperance tea meeting was guaranteed by the introduction of musical performances and other 'turns'. At a Red Hill Band of Hope tea meeting in 1854, the usual addresses were followed by recitations, dialogues, anthems and melodies, performed by young abstainers.[4] Temperance societies

1. Onward, I, 1866, p.175; Methodist Temperance Magazine, XIII, 1880, p.215.

2. B.T.A. XXII, February 1855, p.22.
3. N.T.A. V, 1849, p.22.
4. B.T.A. XXI, February 1854, p.21.

were adept at producing their own entertainment, and many
Bands of Hope formed drum and fife bands: indeed, temperance
bands were a major feature at temperance galas.[1] The opening
of the long-awaited Temperance Hall in 1856 was accompanied by
a temperance band. At the tea meeting which followed, 700
people were entertained by recitations of sundry snatches and
comical ditties, and by the brothers Harvey 'who performed very
sweetly upon the harmonium and cornet-a-piston'.[2]

Simple musical entertainment of this nature, upon piano
or harmonium, was much loved by working class audiences. By
the mid-1860's, some of the wealthiest artisans could afford
pianos themselves.[3] Songs and ditties, learned in temperance
socials, and circulated in magazines such as Onward, enabled
the working class family to make their own entertainment
together by the fireside. The need to provide music was much
stressed by the Bands of Hope, to counteract that which was
provided in the casino, the free-and-easies and the singing
saloons:

> 'our young people will have music of some
> sort, and if we do not provide good music
> for them, they will get the debasing music
> which, alas! is always to be found in such
> places.'[4]

Music could also be the vehicle of much direct propaganda, and
sentimental songs such as 'Little Ones Like Me' were widely
disseminated in Sheffield through the Band of Hope movement.[5]

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1. B.T.A. XXI, April 1854.
2. S.D.T. 6 February 1856; B.T.A.XXIII, March 1856, p.33.
3. Sidney Pollard, History of Labour, etc., pp.108-09.
4. Onward, I, 1865-66, p.33.
5. 'When our fathers love the drink,
   Madly drown the pow'r to think,
   Then they drive to ruin's brink,
   Little ones like me.'
   ibid., I, p.88.

Music and singing gave much needed vitality to temperance events, and gradually, the concept of weekly Saturday night entertainments was evolved. Meetings for singing and recitations were begun by the Park Temperance Society in 1856, to preserve their members from 'evil company and the intoxicating cup.'[1] In the 1870's, regular Saturday evening socials were held at the Temperance Hall; audiences were encouraged by free admission, although it was noticed that when songs were restricted to temperance ones, the numbers thinned considerably.[2] Nevertheless, such events were generally successful, not only in providing wholesome entertainment for teetotallers, but as part of the movement's missionary activities.[3] The Saturday socials became a regular event. Recitations also proved durable. In 1881, the promotion of temperance principles among the young was encouraged by a prize recital contest, with rewards given to juvenile teetotallers for piano playing, solo singing and recitation. All pieces were of a didactic character: nine year old Bertha Lilley of Ebenezer Wesleyan School was commended by the judges for her recitation 'Death of a Drunkard's Wife'.[4]

The temperance movement also provided much dramatic entertainment. The secretary of the Little Sheffield Temperance society worked up a performance of temperance pieces by its younger members. 'Featherstone's Juvenile Temperance Discussion' was performed several times in 1850, to packed audiences, and it was alleged that thousands were unable to gain admission. On

1. B.T.A. XXIII, September 1856, p.106.
2. ibid., February 1876, p.20.
3. ibid., May 1879, p.78.
4. S.R.I. 15 March 1881; B.T.A. April 1881, p.479.

each occasion, numerous pledges were taken.[1] Dramatic
performances were popular with highly suggestible working
class audiences.   Temperance rivalled the popular press in
exploiting their morbid interest in crime, punishment and
death.   Large audiences came to mock trials at the Town Hall
or the Adelphi Music Hall, to see Dr. Abstinence, alias
'Steadfast Teetotalism', tried and found 'not guilty'.[2]   The
'Trial of John Barleycorn' was popular in the 1850's and 1860's.[3]
The sentimentality and emotionalism of working class audiences
were given full rein by magic lantern exhibitions of Cruick-
shank's 'The Bottle'.   The audience was usually held spell-
bound by the scenes in which the 'joyous playful child' was
led to drink by a misguided father, and later seen stretched
on the death bed in a convict's cell.[4]   'The Bottle' was
perhaps the most successful temperance drama, and was repeated
many times in the 1860's and 1870's.   It was shown on one
occasion to Sunday school children, and to navvies working on
the Sheffield to Chesterfield railway in 1865:   hardened
drinking men joined with small children to show their delight
at such a performance, and the interest shown by the navvies
was such that only a proportion of them could be accommodated.[5]

The magic lantern continued to attract audiences to
temperance events until the end of the century and beyond: its
successor was the silent film.   Increasingly, however, it was
used for purposes which were less and less propagandist.

1.   N.T.A. V, 1849, p.23;   The People's Abstinence Standard
      and Moral Reformer, I, October 1850, p.176;   ibid.,
      December 1850, p.334.
2.   B.T.A. XVII, 1850, p.57;   ibid., 26 October 1861.
3.   ibid., 8 November 1862.
4.   Onward, I, April 1866, p.188.
5.   S.D.T. 27 July 1865.

Through exploiting the recreational needs of the working classes
in the interests of teetotalism, a good deal of informal
educational work was carried out by the temperance movement.
The quasi-scientific content of many temperance lectures, and
the relationship of the movement with the popular interest in
science, has already been noted.   The fascination for all
things scientific was also exploited by temperance galas.   In
1853, crowds were shown demonstrations of the workings of the
electric telegraph, and lectured on the history of the steam
engine.[1]   Illustrated talks on plants, and explanations of
mechanical models, microscopes, stereoscopes and camera obscura
were featured in other years.[2]   The Sunday School Band of Hope
Union committed itself to a programme of educational events,
and using lectures, diagrams and magic lantern slides, gave
instruction in physiology, astronomy and biblical history in
1860.[3]   In 1863, over a hundred illustrated lectures on
educational and scientific subjects were provided, many of
which were heavily attended.[4]   Illustrated travelogues of
foreign countries were a regular and popular event.   In 1866,
the Band of Hope Union was provided with an exhibition of
dissolving views of Rome and Switzerland, with a descriptive
talk by temperance lecturer J. Dyson.[5]   This formula remained
a winner for a quarter of a century or more;   in 1882, a crowded
audience in the Temperance Hall was entertained by a performance
of Uncle Tom's Cabin, followed by views of the Paris Exhibition

1.   National Temperance Chronicle, II, 1853-54, p.159.
2.   B.T.A. September 1863, p.79; ibid., November 1880, p.397;
     Onward, IV, 1869, p.240; S.R.I. 24 August 1867.
3.   Sheffield Sunday Schools Band of Hope Union, Report,
     Sheffield, 1861.
4.   S.D.T. 24 March 1863.
5.   ibid., 28 February 1866.

and the Crystal Palace.[1]

The realisation that working men went to pubs for relaxation and recreation as much as for alcohol prompted the temperance movement to provide genuine alternatives to the drinking place.   The Temperance Hall, planned in 1839 and finally opened in 1855 at a cost of £2,000, provided a necessary alternative for public meetings: at the time of its opening, it was the largest public room in Sheffield.   The money for this enterprise was raised not only from teetotallers, but the public in general, through the proceeds of bazaars, trips, theatrical entertainments and galas in the Botanical Gardens. The sale and consumption of intoxicating liquors in the Hall were specifically forbidden by trust deed; nevertheless, the Temperance Hall became the centre not only of public teetotal activities, but for other events not connected with the temperance movement.[2]

The first temperance hotels were opened in the 1830's. In Sheffield, there was a small one in Change Alley, run by teetotaller W.C. Beardsall.[3]   In general, poor management and a want of cleanliness prevented such establishments from in any way rivalling the pub.[4]   Despite such early experiments, a sustained attempt at offering cheap and acceptable alternatives to the pub did not get under way until the 1870's, in an attempt to find new ways of stemming drunkenness.

In Sheffield, temperance pubs and coffee houses sprang up across the city in the last three decades of the century.   The earliest to be opened was the British Workman public house in

1.   B.T.A. March 1882, p.632.
2.   S.I. 28 May 1839; B.T.A. XXIII, March 1856, p.33; S.D.T. 10 July 1855; ibid., 6 February 1856; Return of Endowed Charities, City of Sheffield, (P.P.1897, LXXI), pp.304-05.
3.   P.T.A. XII, December 1835, p.94.
4.   Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, etc., p.303.

1871, the first of which had been launched in Leeds in 1867.
A comparable experiment, the Stag Home, began in 1873, but
the main provider of dry pubs was the Sheffield Café Company,
which began operations in 1877, in imitation of similar schemes
in Liverpool, London and Birmingham.

Often converted from public houses, the new generation of
temperance hotels reflected a clear statement of the counter-
attractive philosophy. Local politicians such as Roebuck
continually pointed to the recreational needs of working men,
lured from the 'roaring squalling family' by the 'flaring,
glittering, brilliant gin shop'.[1] Increasingly, temperance
opinion was of the view that it was more practical to rival
the pubs, than to try to close them.[2] It was possible to
provide a house and entertainment of a home-like description,
as unlike an institution as was possible.[3] John Fisher of
Howard St. Independent chapel, a founder member of the Stag
Home, was one of many evangelicals conscious of the failure of
reform in the 1870's, and the real irrelevance of church,
chapel and temperance society for the needs of many artisans.
The failure of reformers to understand the working man, and
to adapt to his requirements, contrasted with the success of
the publican. Ultimately, the warm and welcoming pub was more
attractive to the working man in his leisure hours than chapels
or libraries.[4]

The thinking of John Fisher underlay the philosophy of
the coffee house movement in Sheffield: 'in the first place,

1. S.D.T. 10 April 1877.
2. ibid., 25 November 1873.
3. Constitution of the British Workman Public House,
   Sheffield, n.d., Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D. 2581-2.
4. John Fisher, 'The Missing Link', in Stag Home Minute Book
   1873, S.C.L., M.D. 2580-3.

we must deal with (the working man) as he is; and in the second place we must deal with him as to raise him to something better'.[1] Dealing with the working man as he was involved important shifts in attitudes to recreation. The old commitment to the education of the working classes through rational amusement lingered on: Roebuck envisaged that dry pubs would enable working men to read books and newspapers, and to walk home with a steady and serene pace.[2] The Anglican clergyman Wright hoped that artisans would spend their leisure in a rational, Christian manner, discussing what they had learned at the club with their wives.[3] Nevertheless, there had to be major concessions to working class tastes: alongside a reading room full of 'useful' periodicals, games such as billiards, skittles, dominoes and even cards were provided. The Stag Home and the British Workman pub were unable to free themselves from the idea that their role should be as agents of moral and social reform.[4] Bible classes and billiards were uneasy bedfellows: for H.J. Wilson, writing in 1880, the decline of the Stag Home was reflected in the popularity of the billiard tables, 'now the principal attraction (and) frequented by a lower class than was formerly the case'.[5]

The dry pub and coffee house movement reflected in miniature the broader relationships which were being cemented by temperance in the 1870's and 1880's. The alliance between teetotaller and non-teetotaller was essential to their success. Employers

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1. Loc. cit.
2. S.D.T. 10 April 1877.
3. ibid., 14 November 1871.
4. Fisher, op.cit.; Constitution, op.cit.
5. Letter from H.J. Wilson concerning the closure of the Stag Home, S.C.L., M.D. 2580-2.

who were moderate drinkers, such as F.T. (later Sir Frederick) Mappin gave money and support to the schemes.[1] The first house to be opened by the Café Company was at Highfield in 1877. This was given by Mappin, and received the backing of M.Ps. Roebuck and Mundella, the Mayor of Sheffield Alderman Bassett, the Master Cutler and leading clergymen, as well as the prominent teetotal families such as the Cleggs and the Sharmans.[2] The dissenter Emerson Bainbridge, who pioneered the Y.M.C.A. in Sheffield, was also involved. The vicar of Sheffield, Canon Blakeney, was also sympathetic to the movement. The Cleggs and the Wilsons backed all the dry pub schemes to be started in Sheffield in these years. Thus teetotallers worked side by side with unashamed 'moderate' drinkers, such as the working class councillor Charles Hobson, with greater identity of purpose than ever before.[3]

The management of the dry pub schemes also endeavoured in varying degrees to involve working men. The manager of the Stag Home was to be an artisan, and after the first year, elected representatives of the members were to combine with the trustees as a board of management.[4] The British Workman pub subscribed to a similar policy.[5] The Café Company, however,

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1. Frederick T. Mappin (b.1821) was one of Sheffield's most liberal benefactors. The son of a cutlery manufacturer, he later became a senior partner in Thomas Turton Ltd. He was elected to the Town Council in 1855, and became Master Cutler in the same year. He was a J.P. in 1870, a Town Trustee in 1871, and Mayor in 1877. In 1880 he became Conservative M.P. for East Retford, and M.P. for Hallam in 1885. He was knighted in 1886. Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, etc., pp.91-95.
2. S.D.T. 10 April 1877.
3. ibid., 1 September 1885.
4. Minute Book, op.cit.
5. Constitution, op.cit.

was organised on a commercial basis, with a capital of £20,000 raised in £1 shares.[1] Many leading townspeople were shareholders, but it was envisaged that working men should buy shares, which would give them an interest in the enterprise, and also induce habits of saving.[2] In its philosophy, the company was firmly committed to profit. W.J. Clegg thought it 'a nice thing when philanthropy and ten per cent went together'.[3] The company paid an annual dividend, usually of ten per cent, for twenty years or more.

From the mid-1870's, the number of dry pubs in Sheffield increased. The Stag Home and the British Workman pub were wound up or transferred to other ownership by 1881, but the Café Company continued to expand and invest. Smaller concerns, such as the Hallamshire Coffee House Company, begun in 1889, added to the provision.[4] There were also privately endowed facilities, such as the George Wolstenholme Memorial Hall in Queen St.[5] Despite these developments, in numerical terms the coffee houses were never able to rival the pubs: there were fewer than thirty of them, at a time when the number of licensed drinking places was in excess of eighteen hundred.[6]

The dry pubs made a conspicuous attempt to displace the hold of the pubs in several selected working class areas. The Café Company opened its premises in heavily populated areas such as Gower St. and the Wicker.[7] The Stag Home was converted

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1. S.D.T. 27 April 1877.
2. ibid., 9 November 1878.
3. ibid., 17 December 1878.
4. ibid., 10 August 1889.
5. Sheffield Red Book and Almanack, Sheffield 1893.
6. S.D.T. 21 December 1878.
7. ibid., 27 April 1877; S.L.R. 3 May 1878.

from the former Stag Inn in an area of slums and tenements called Pea Croft; the roughness of the neighbourhood meant occasional deputations to the watch committee for additional police protection.[1] The British Workman pub located in Princess St., Attercliffe was also in an exclusively working class district.[2] The Café Company soon adopted a policy of matching their developments to specific working class needs. The Norfolk Castle coffee house was opened next to the market in 1878, with a special section set aside for commercial dealings.[3] In the same year, a cocoa house for bathers was opened near the corporation baths in Mowbray St.[4] Bus passengers were catered for by a café in Market St. near the terminus.[5] The increasing distances between working class homes and work places emphasised the dependence of working men on the public house for midday hot dinners. Several coffee houses offering good cheap food were opened in proximity to the workshops, such as the Broad St. Café on Park Hill.[6] There is no means of estimating the extent to which 'dry' facilities were frequented by working people in preference to pubs. However, some pubs began to ape the example of the coffee houses, by offering tea and coffee in addition to alcohol.[7] The Stag Home at its peak recorded more than 12,000 visits per year, but the number of regular users would have been considerably smaller.[8]

1. Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D. 2580-1.
2. S.D.T. 14 November 1871.
3. ibid., 17 December 1878.
4. ibid., 21 December 1878.
5. ibid., 3 February 1886.
6. ibid., 17 August 1887.
7. ibid., 14 April 1879.
8. S.R.I. 9 November 1875.

In appearance, and in the range of facilities available, the coffee houses made a real attempt to rival the comfort and warmth of at least a modest pub. Each house was individually designed and fitted out. Materials such as brass and pitch pine were used to give a clean and decent atmosphere. The coffee house at Highfield boasted a red tiled floor, and individual marble topped tables.[1] The urgent demand for superior city centre eating facilities led to the establishment of the Central Café for white collar workers, and for those able to pay for a good meal.[2] This was the forerunner of an ambitious scheme for a first class restaurant and temperance hotel, for the Central Café was not big enough to accommodate beds.[3] To meet the need for teetotal residential provision, the Café Company cooperated with the Yorkshire Penny Bank in the construction of lavish premises in Fargate. The bank used the ground floor and basement, and the rest of the block was fitted up as the Albany Temperance Hotel, with an elegant restaurant, bedrooms and other accommodation.[4]

Although the Café Company made a contribution to easing the shortage of high class residential accommodation and eating places, most dry pubs were specifically for the working man. Despite the acquiescence with working class tastes in recreation, there was some limitation upon the type of person who was acceptable. The British Workman pub was intended as a place of resort for bona fide working men, 'in or out of work, but not voluntarily idle.' Entry to the public rooms was given

1. S.D.T. 10 April 1877.
2. ibid., 3 February 1886.
3. ibid., 17 August 1887.
4. ibid., 4 November 1887; ibid., 19 January 1888.

'perfectly free on good behaviour';[1] instead, the British Workman relied heavily upon voluntary contributions for income. In contrast, the Stag Home imposed some selection by charging a halfpenny for admission in addition to an annual subscription of five shillings, or sixpence a month, in advance.[2] Admission charges were also levied for special events.[3]

The facilities provided by the dry pubs were a genuine attempt to rival those used by working man in ordinary public houses. Opening hours were as long as possible, for the convenience of workers. The British Workman opened at 7 am. on weekdays, until 10 pm. or 11 pm. on Saturdays, opening again at 12.30 on Sundays.[4] Hours at the Stag were similar.[5] Café Company premises opened even longer: 5.30 am. until 11 pm. was normal.[6] Food was important, especially for the working man who wanted breakfast on the way to work, or a hot dinner at lunchtime. The Café Company provided coffee, tea, cocoa and light refreshments, and occasionally sold bread.[7] The Stag Home had a varied tarriff: coffee, tea, cocoa, lemonade and sherbet were available at 2d. or less, and there was also bread and butter, toast, and muffin and butter. Pies and bacon cost 2d., and steak and chops 6d., with an extra penny charged for cooking.[8]

An extensive range of games and entertainments was also available. Many of the Café Company's premises had one or

1. Constitution, op.cit.
2. S.D.T. 25 November 1873; Minute Book, op.cit.
3. Newspaper Cuttings relating to the Stag Home, Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D. 1965-3.
4. Constitution, op.cit.
5. Minute Book, op.cit.
6. S.D.T. 27 April 1877.
7. ibid., 17 August 1887.
8. ibid., 25 November 1877; Minute Book, op.cit.

more billiard tables, and sometimes a skittle alley.[1] The
Stag Home provided billiards, bagatelle, skittles, chess,
draughts and dominoes. Charges were made for the use of these
games, and anyone who refused to pay was excluded.[2] The Café
Company's Attercliffe coffee house had a billiard room with
three tables, and three rooms for cards, although gambling was
strictly forbidden. Smoking was allowed, however.[3] The sale
of tobacco was forbidden at the British Workman, and a separate
room set aside for smoking.[4] Two billiard rooms and a smoke
room were also provided in the prestige Albany development.[5]
Another sporting interest to be catered for was football, and
the Stag Home ran a football club in 1875.[6]

Other facilities were also provided. There was a special
effort made to break the hold of the publican over friendly
societies. The Stag Home provided a special room, for use by
working men's clubs. A branch of the temperance friendly
society, the International Order of Good Templars, used the
building, and the Stag Home had its own regular sick club.[7]
Thrift was also encouraged by the establishment of a penny
bank. Wholesome recreation was occasionally provided on
Saturday nights, when a 'threepenny club' was held from 7.30pm.
to 8.30pm.[8]

The Stag Home, and to a lesser extent, the British Workman,
succumbed to the temptation to use their premises, favourably

1. S.D.T. 10 April 1877.
2. Newspaper cuttings, etc., op.cit.; Minute Book, op.cit.
3. S.D.T. 29 October 1878.
4. ibid., 14 November 1871; Constitution, op.cit.
5. S.D.T. 19 January 1888.
6. Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D. 2580-1.
7. loc. cit.
8. Newspaper cuttings, op.cit.

situated in the middle of working class areas, as evangelical agencies. There was a tendency to use the coffee houses not just as an alternative to pubs, but for the moral and social improvement of the working classes. The Stag Home had a lecture room, and there was a certain amount of informal educational work attempted. In 1874, classes were organised in reading, writing and arithmetic.[1] Competitive readings were arranged, with a cabinet edition of Shakespearian poetry, or Dickens, for the best performances.[2] Newspapers and other reading matter were provided. The British Workman pub specially equipped a warm and comfortable room with newspapers, periodicals and useful books. The Stag Home had regular Sunday night temperance meetings, and religious services of an unsectarian nature were held in both houses.[3]

The provision of cheap, good quality food and facilities for sports and games fulfilled a real need for the working class community in Sheffield. The Café Company, committed solely to a policy of counter-attraction, was successful in most of its ventures, and made a valuable contribution to life and leisure in the last three decades of the century. The Stag Home and the British Workman pub, with their uncertain basis of financial support, and their avowed evangelical aim, were less successful. The British Workman was wound up and transferred to the Café Company in 1881. The Stag Home also had run into difficulties by 1880. Attendance in the reading room was not large, and it was acknowledged that the neighbourhood of Pea Croft was 'extremely unfavourable either to temperance work, or to cultivating

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1. Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D. 2580-1.
2. Newspaper cuttings, etc., op.cit.
3. loc.cit.; S.D.T. 25 November 1873; Constitution, op.cit.

habits of reading or study.'[1] The venture also suffered from the departure of John Fisher and other supporters. Attempts to rally support by H.J. Wilson met with no response, and on the financial side, there was evidence of mismanagement.[2] Ironically, it was John Fisher who had drawn attention to the failure of the chapels to attract working men: 'dry' pubs which tried to behave like chapels were ultimately unsuccessful.

Alcohol and the drinking place were an integral part of popular culture in Sheffield during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The working class drinker appeared to symbolise everything in popular culture which threatened the pursuit of profit, and the social order of the new industrial society. The control of working class drinking habits was essential for the disciplining of the workforce to the new rhythms of industrial production. Thus teetotalism was seen as the first step in the inculcation of religion, and education, and the values of thrift, diligence and deference to the employer. The institutional framework of the temperance movement allowed the middle class employer and the working man to cooperate in the interests of radical teetotalism. This ideology also won the support of the churches almost from the beginning, and there was a marked similarity between the techniques of the temperance movement, and those of the evangelical religion. In addition, temperance developed sophisticated techniques of moral suasion, political pressure and counter-attraction. The desire to insulate the working man from the

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1. Stag Home, Report, 1875-6, Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D.6013.
2. Wilson Collection, S.C.L., M.D.2580-2; Notes on the Stag Home, op.cit.

temptations of the public house led to the emergence of a new
range of social and cultural activities, uncontaminated by
the contact with drink.   Teetotalism also won support from
radical working class groups, especially in the Chartist
period, who found that self-discipline and sobriety were
essential preconditions for the political organisation of the
working class.

In concrete terms, the last quarter of the nineteenth
century saw a decline in the proportion of the population con-
victed for drunkenness, and a stability in the number of drinking
places.   Although drunkenness was still common among sections
of the working class, the unfettered freedoms of the old society
had been largely eroded by the growth of a new and distinctively
urban culture, and by new opportunities in sport and leisure.
Sections of the working class benefitted from rising living
standards, and the stresses inherent in rapid industrialization
had eased by the end of the century.

The role of temperance in this process is difficult to
evaluate.   There is a sense in which the diversification of
recreation and the decreasing emphasis on the drinking place
had little to do with temperance propaganda.   On the other
hand, the ideology of temperance, disseminated through church,
chapel and school, created a new guilt towards the excessive
consumption of alcohol.   Most important of all was the way in
which temperance enabled the working class teetotaller to be
integrated with the middle class employer in the institutional
structure of the temperance movement, which provided new social

activities and relationships, as well as a sense of righteous-
ness.   In this way, a key section of the working class learned
discipline and self-regulation, but reached such awareness only
through cooperation with the middle class, and the public
acceptance of its norms and values.

Part Four

Thrift

22. <u>Introduction</u>

The growth of thrift institutions, and their rapid expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century, are evidence of the cultivation of respectability. The improvidence and fecklessness which was identified as a characteristic of working class culture was gradually eroded by new habits of saving, and attitudes towards money. Friendly societies, cooperative stores, savings banks, building and land societies, patronised in varying degrees by important sections of the working classes, gave substance to the practice of providence. In 1877, national membership of registered friendly societies alone had reached two and three quarter million, with funds of over £12½ million.[1] In the same year, the Trustee Savings Banks had a membership of over 1½ million, and reserves of £45 million. Between 1870 and 1900, investors in the Post Office Savings Banks increased from 1 million to 8½ million, while the total due to depositors rose from £15 million to £135½ million.[2] By 1904, the membership of the registered friendly societies had doubled, and their reserves more than trebled in value.[3]

The increasing standards of living among many skilled working men and white collar workers in the second half of the nineteenth century made available for the first time the possibility of regular savings.[4] The need for short-term saving for immediate need, as well as long-term saving for the future, arose from the vulnerability of all sections of the working class to poverty. Few families escaped the financial burdens of child rearing, unemployment, sickness or old age. The mass unemployment resulting from cyclical depression was a disturbing new factor in the last three decades of the century. This only heightened the ineffectiveness of public and private charity, and amplified working class fears of the poor law.

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1. P.H.J.H. Gosden, <u>Self-Help - Voluntary Associations in Nineteenth Century Britain</u>, London, 1973, p.91.
2. <u>ibid</u>., pp 256-257.
3. <u>ibid</u>., p.91.
4. Geoffrey Best, <u>Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875</u>, London, 1971, p.269.

Hand-in-hand with poverty went

> 'the proletarian culture of comradeship, improvidence
> and good cheer.... which made bearable the hardships
> and hazards of an unavoidably hard existence'. 1.

For some, however, rising living standards allowed a more positive stand
against poverty. In towns and villages, a spectrum of thrift institutions
were established, collectively generated by the working classes out of a
common recognition of mutual need. It is this mutuality which marks off
the working class provident institution from the individualism of middle
class culture. Such institutions were crucial in the development of
working class self-determination. For the first time, artisan families
began to plan for the future as well as living for the present. In an
increasingly complex and competitive capitalist society, the tradesman, the
artisan and the clerk were able to take charge in a small way of their own
future. Many of the lessons of the chapel and the temperance society were
relived in the experience of the cooperative store and the friendly society.
Essentially democratic in their management, they gave their members valuable
experience in administration, and a new confidence in their ability to control
their own destinies.

Investment by small savers in savings banks and friendly societies
allowed specific amounts to be set aside against sickness or unemployment.
Shopping at the coop. promised the artisan's wife fair prices and a regular
'divi' to set against household expenditure. Such were the immediate
priorities of many working class families. Additional needs were met by
more sophisticated provident institutions. Freehold land societies, and
permanent and terminating building societies, tied investment to the long-
term prospect of buying a house, and a future of security and
respectability. The prospect of property-ownership, with a stake in the

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1. _ibid._, p.268.

future of society, confirmed the drift of many working class institutions into a 'modus vivendi with capitalism'. [1.]

This is reflected in the ideals of many Victorian working men, and was sanctified by the gospel of Samuel Smiles. According to Smiles, the advancement of the working class to independence could only be achieved by eschewing the idleness, intemperance, improvidence and low amusements inherent in the culture of the working classes, and especially, he believed, in that of the higher paid workers. Thrift, energy, resourcefulness and the two virtues of self-respect and self-help were to be the salvation of the working man. [2.] Thus

> 'the power of a penny a day saved.... was potentially a
> greater force for working class emancipation than
> Chartism, universal suffrage, or strikes'. [3.]

The philosophy of Smiles was symptomatic of the spread of the ideal of independence from the lower middle class to sections of the working class; these strata, in varying degrees, made up the membership of provident institutions. Thus, perhaps for the first time, significant sections of the working class were tied by cash investment to the social values system of the middle class, in the common pursuit of shared ideals. In this way, thrift institutions, like shared religious and educational interests, became vertical ties which integrated the social and material ambitions of sections of the lower and middle classes. [4.] As with chapel and temperance society, around thrift institutions developed networks of social relationships. The ideology of thrift and self-help was reinforced in many cases by educational and recreational activities. Thus ironically, the pursuit of individualism was made possible by mutual support and interaction.

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1. loc. cit.
2. Samuel Smiles, Self-Help, London, 1859; also Smiles, Thrift, London, 1875
3. J.F.C. Harrison, The Early Victorians 1832-1851. London, 1971, p.141
4. Best, op. cit., p.269.

23.   <u>Aspects of Poverty in Sheffield 1790-1900</u>

The need for working classes to combine together in provident institutions for their mutual protection was rooted in the vulnerability of all working families to the ravages of poverty. Contemporaries such as Dr. Holland testified to the relative lack of poverty among the Sheffield artisans during the first half of the nineteenth century:

> 'we perceive less misery, destitution and ignorance
> among the artisans... than in situations where the
> machine cheapens to the starving point the labour
> of the industrious mechanic'. 1.

Arguably, Sheffield did not develop a permanently debased class of poor in to the same extent as cities such as Manchester, going through rapid industrialisation and mechanisation in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. 2. Nevertheless, judgements about 'more' or 'less' poverty should not obscure the fact that poverty was a daily reality for much of the 'submerged' working class in Sheffield, and that the skilled artisan class was never far from its boundaires. Furthermore, the years of crisis in Sheffield were delayed, rather than averted altogether: the growth of heavy factory based industry, mechanisation and the effects of regular cyclical depression in the third quarter of the century brought increasing numbers of the working class to the margins of subsistence.

Poverty was created by two main sets of circumstances. Most working class families experienced poverty on a day-to-day basis, through the effects of sickness, accident, or old age. 3. That these factors should cause distress was largely inevitable, given the absence of universal welfare provision. The difficulties which these created were tacitly accepted, and more or less unrecorded: there was a certain inevitability about these circumstances, which linked the experience of the nineteenth century working class family with those of pre-industrial society.

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1. G.C. Holland, <u>The Vital Statistics of Sheffield</u>, Sheffield and London, 1843, p.11.
2. For Manchester, see F. Engels, <u>The Condition of the Working Class in England</u>, paperback edition, 1969. For London, see Gareth Stedman Jones <u>Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian</u> Oxford, 1971.
3. For the causes of poverty, see Michael E. Rose, <u>The Relief of Poverty 1834-1914</u>, London, 1972, pp17-20.

However, the working out of the Industrial Revolution brought short- or long-term economic dislocation to the work-force, whose labour provided one of the raw materials of economic growth. From the late eighteenth century, contemporaries were able to identify single causes of distress, which were superimposed upon the routine causes of poverty.

From the early 1790's until about 1820, a series of bad harvests led to the rise of food prices at unacceptably high rates. Wheat was a major item in the diet of the Sheffield working classes, and other foodstuffs such as meat and butter tended to follow grain prices.[1] There was a sustained upward rise in the prices of almost all items of food at least until 1809: the price of cheese in Sheffield continued at a high level well into the following decade. Recent research has specifically ascribed popular disturbances in Sheffield in 1795, 1796, 1800 and 1812 to high wheat prices.[2]

From the late eighteenth century, the staple trades of Sheffield were increasingly dependent upon export markets in Europe and America. The dislocation of trade through international and political factors contributed towards levels of poverty in the town. After 1793, the loss of foreign markets dealt a heavy blow to the expanding cutlery and luxury trades. The reintroduction of the 'Orders in Council' in 1810 and the blockade of continental markets worsened local economic distress. The increasing dependence upon the American markets again caused distress in 1862, when the American Civil War created a serious slump.[3]

The advent of world-wide cyclical depressions in the later Victorian period also meant periodic distress in the town. In good years, the number of men in the staple trades who claimed poor relief was small: but local manufacture had a heavy dependence upon a narrow range of goods, and

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1. F.M. Eden, The State of the Poor, III, facsimile edition, London, 1966, p.873; for dietary patterns in general, see John Burnett, Plenty and Want: A Social History of Diet from 1815 to the Present Day, paperback edition, 1968.
2. F.K. Donnelly, Popular Disturbances in Sheffield 1790-1820, unpublished M.A., University of Sheffield 1970, pp96-99.

3. Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield, Liverpool, 1959, p 125.

years of depression resulted in spectacular distress.[1] The second half of
the century was characterised by depressions of increasing duration. Slumps
in 1857-8, 1862 and 1866-7 had been relatively short. From 1874, however,
the dislocation of the world economy created depressions of increasing severity.[2]
The winters of 1878-9 and 1885-6 was, a dramatic increase in distress, and this
period saw the beginning of a new type of mass unemployment in Sheffield.

The nature of the economic relationships within the Sheffield trades,
and their response to market forces, was another important cause of distress.
By the 1840's, it was evident that the ability of many workmen to 'control the
laws of production'[3] was seriously undermined. Holland placed the blame
squarely upon local manufacturers, many of whom were engaging in 'production
without the slightest regard to demand'.[4] Overproduction led to a reduction
in prices: among the worst sufferers were the fork grinders, who in 1840 were
receiving payments up to 70% below the price levels agreed in 1810.[5] The
vulnerability of the artisan to this and other forms of manipulation have already
been discussed.[6] In the most depressed branches of the Sheffield trades, there
was little to choose between the pursuit of their trade at rock-bottom prices,
or the acceptance of outdoor relief.

Unemployment and short-time working also helped to increase poverty.
By the 1870's, the traditional handicraft industry had begun to be undermined
by the advent of mechanisation. The transference to machines was slow, and
fiercely resisted by the unions. By the 1880's, however, machines had become
increasingly indispensable, allegedly reducing the employment of engineers'
toolmakers by 50%, and table blade forgers by as much as 70%. Men in the light
trades, in the process of being displaced by machinery, were often chronically
underemployed. This meant that the whole basis of their security was threatened,
for they were unable to save money in good years, to tide them over the bad.[7]

1. ibid., p.39
2. S.B. Saul, The Myth of the Great Depression, 1873-1896, London, 1969
3. Pollard, op. cit., p.111
4. G.C. Holland, The Mortality, Sufferings and Diseases of Grinders, London I, p.8
5. ibid., p.31.
6. See above, Chapter 2.
7. Pollard, op. cit., pp.126-139, 181-182.

The coming of heavy industry, with its new forms of economic organisation, brought new problems to the Sheffield workman. The heavy trades increasingly depended upon an army of labourers, and others with few specialised skills. These men were outside the traditional craft organisations, and unsupported by union funds, with no hope of the partial employment which was available in the light trades. It was precisely this class of unskilled men with precarious earnings which was growing most rapidly in numbers in the third quarter of the century. In the late 1870's, some of the heavy steel works could only offer one day's work a week, and the burden of unemployment fell most heavily on those least able to protect themselves.[1]

The vicissitudes of the Sheffield trades were clearly a major cause of economic distress. Other factors, such as the loss of the principal wage earner, caused immeasurable hardship to many working class families. High death rates among the working class were due to insanitary living conditions, and the additional risks deriving from industrial diseases and accidents. These have already been discussed: clearly, the nature of local industry brought premature widowhood and poverty to great numbers of working class families.[2]

The prevalence of poverty and the increasing numbers in distress in Sheffield can be demonstrated in several ways. One way in which the community responded to an increase in poverty was institutional. For example, during the period 1790-1820, the distress and unrest in the town induced many middle class individuals, motivated by Christian philanthropy, to establish ad hoc schemes for the relief of the poor. To this end, public subscriptions were established in 1800 and 1801.[3] The awareness of poverty was one factor behind the establishment of a wide range of organised charitable associations, such as the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, and the Aged

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1. ibid., pp.110-111, 181-182.
2. See above, chapter 2.
3. S.L.R., 13 February 1800; ibid, 1 April 1800; ibid., 15 December 1801

Female Society.[1] Soup kitchens and distress funds were a well-tried response to the plight of the distressed. In 1862 and 1866-7, soup kitchens financed by public subscription were set up in the poorest parts of the town. In the severe winter of 1879, a relief fund spent £12,000 on aid to the poor. Issues of soup and bread to poor children continued on a regular basis through the years of the depression. Temporary relief employment was provided by the Duke of Norfolk, the corporation and the unions in difficult years.[2]

The rising numbers in need of assistance was one factor responsible for the rapid increase in Poor Law Relief, and the ultimate failure of this system to accommodate the distressed. The cost of the Poor Law began to rise in the late eighteenth century, rising from £4,096 in 1788, and peaking at over £10,000 in 1797. Expenditures of £18,831 in 1809, £27,005 in 1813, £30,102 in 1818 and £35,166 in 1820 represented other crisis years. In the 1830's, the rate was lower, supposedly reflecting the independence and resourcefulness of the Sheffield artisans.[3] Nevertheless the general trend continued upwards, with £55,000 spent in 1843, and £47,000 in 1849, most of which was devoted to outdoor relief for victims of the trade depression.[4] The Poor Law was incapable of dealing with the poverty caused by the mass unemployment of the late Victorian period: many skilled workmen felt bitterly the humiliation of asking the guardians for help. In spite of this, outdoor relief increased by 50% between 1899 and 1906.[5] However, distress funds organised by voluntary effort, permanent private charities and relief works, pressed for by the Trades Council, helped to supplement the Poor Law system during the critical years at the end of the century.[6]

Such were some of the institutional responses to poverty. The evidence of contemporaries, especially during the last three decades of the century, also bears witness to the appalling conditions endured by some

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1. See above, chapter 7.
2. Pollard, op. cit., pp.110-111.
3. Figures from S.L.R.
4. Pollard, op. cit., p.40
5. ibid., pp.182-183.
6. ibid., pp.111-112.

sections of the working class. At the end of 1883, the <u>Sheffield and
Rotherham Independent</u> ran a series of articles on Sheffield's squalid homes.[1]
This was part of a new interest in articles exposing slum conditions.[2] The
paper drew attention to the existence of

> 'a demoralized class, so low in the social scale as to have no
> change of clothes, no apparel except their soiled and
> worn-out working days' gear, and no vestige of self-respect
> in their words, acts or deeds'. [3]

Some of the most pertinent observations about poverty were made by visitors
to Sheffield from across the Atlantic, such as the American consul, Dr.
C.B. Webster, who wrote about Sheffield in the mid-1870's.[4] A reporter
from Toronto about the turn of the century thought that the poverty in
Sheffield was unimaginable within the limits of human experience.[5] The
working class continued to be vulnerable to cyclical depression and
unemployment. A survey made in the winter of 1931 found that even when
minimum criteria of subsistence were used, over one sixth of the working class
were clearly below the poverty line. The report stated succinctly that the
resources of poor families were insufficient to cover their minimum
requirements in respect of rent, food, clothing, heating, lighting and
household utensils, without any allowance for recreation, conventional
luxuries, savings, or the expenses of holidays or sickness.[6]

There is no doubt that this evidence from the twentieth century
could have described the quality of life for many of the poor of Sheffield
during the previous hundred years. However, the experience of Sheffield in
the third quarter of the nineteenth century was no worse than that of other
cities. The American Consul observed that there was little to choose between

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1. <u>S.R.I.</u> 22 December 1883, and subsequent weeks.
2. See also <u>S.D.T.</u> 3 March 1905
3. Quoted in <u>B.T.A.</u>, 1881, p.591.
4. <u>S.R.I.</u> 11 January 1876.
5. Newscuttings, Carpenter Collection, S.C.L., box 3, no. 24, n.d.
6. Sheffield Social Survey Committee, <u>A Survey of the Standard of Living
   in Sheffield</u>, Sheffield, 1933, pp.29-30

Sheffield and other large towns in respect of health, comfort, morals and education.[1] Thus, although the quality of life in Sheffield had deteriorated since the 1840's, it was no worse than elsewhere. Although generalised experience conceals the worst depths of individual poverty, there were some local factors which helped to mitigate levels of distress. One of these was the tradition of spreading available work in the light trades. Thus, during the depression of 1842-3, 63% of the adult population were able to continue in partial employment, and only 4% of the population were described as destitute, compared with 20% in the whole of the industrial areas. Furthermore, the strength of the local trade unions enabled them not only to make unemployment payments equal to those of the Poor Law Guardians, but to sponsor agricultural and other types of relief work.[2] Although a number of unskilled unions collapsed in the 1880's, the remaining organisations made a not inconsiderable contribution to the alleviation of distress in this decade.[3] The per capita cost of poor relief in Sheffield was increasing, but nevertheless was below that of the country as a whole.[4] And in general, as has been observed, real earnings in Sheffield reflected a steadily rising standard of incomes in the second half of the century.[5] In particular, the years between 1865 and 1899 were ones of substantial improvement in the material standard of living for men in the staple trades.[6] During periods of boom, artisans made real gains by enforcing higher price agreements, or improving hours and working conditions. These improvements were witnessed by contemporaries: in 1833, manufacturer Samuel Jackson asserted:

> 'from what I have seen of the manufacturers of England,
> I believe that the workmen of Sheffield are better clothed
> and better fed, and live in better houses than the workmen
> in any other part of the country, or in any other part of
> the world'. [7]

1. S.R.I. 11 January 1876.
2. Pollard, op. cit., p.39
3. ibid., pp.11-12.
4. ibid., p.40
5. See above, chapter 2.
6. Pollard, 'Real Earnings in Sheffield 1851-1914', Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, IX, 1957, p.62.
7. S.C. on Manufactures, Commerce and Shipping, (P.P.1833, VI), A.2917.

Half a century later, an almost identical observation was made to the [1]
Select Committee on the Sweating System by former grinder John Wilson.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the incidence and extent of poverty
worsened between the 1840's and the 1880's. The submerged poor, often living
below the subsistence line, and at no time able to contemplate saving,
increased in numbers, and arguably may have formed a larger proportion of
the working class at the end of the nineteenth century than at the beginning.
The skilled artisans were vulnerable to the effects of overproduction and
depression. Some members of this class made real gains in their standard of
living. Others may have been unequal to the struggle to maintain their
status and joined the ranks of the semi- and unskilled workers. However,
rising real wages among some sections of the working class, and the
insecurity created by the ravages of poverty and mass unemployment on an
unprecedented scale, created the necessary preconditions for the expansion
of a thrifty and provident working class élite.

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1. S.C. of the House of Lords on the Sweating System, Third Report,
   (P.P. 1889, XIII,) AA.25,199.

24.   The development of Thrift Institutions 1780-1900

The effects of urbanisation and industrialization, superimposed upon the traditional hardships of daily life, brought increasing numbers of the working classes into contact with poverty in nineteenth century Sheffield. Fears about the future were reflected to some extent in savings: the ability of a section of the population to provide for themselves led to the establishment of some important thrift institutions. Friendly societies began in Sheffield in the 1720's, and went through a period of rapid expansion in the first half of the nineteenth century. Trade unions also proliferated: these had an important role to play in the provision of benefits, and indeed, the distinction between trade unions and friendly societies based upon single trades was blurred in the nineteenth century. In 1819, the Savings Bank was established, which has maintained a continuous existence until the present day. Rising real wages for some from the middle of the nineteenth century stimulated the proliferation of building societies, and a new type of 'permanent' society in the form of freehold land societies. Another reflection of this was the development of the cooperative movement: the main period of consumer cooperation began in Sheffield in the 1860's, and the cooperatives had become a substantial force in the city by the 1880's. Two of these movements, the friendly societies and the cooperatives, have been selected for special attention, and their role in the creation of respectability will be discussed in separate chapters.[1]

In one sense, investment in the formalised provident institution represents only a proportion of local saving. The penny banks in chapels and sunday schools, the Christmas clubs and the burial and collecting clubs which flourished in working class communities, reflected the need of many working class families for small, short-term and easily accessible savings. Nevertheless, an examination of statistics will show the strength of the local thrift institutions, as part of a resilient local tradition of saving.

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1. see below, chapters 25 and 26.

The friendly societies were the most continuous method of saving in the town. Societies were recorded from the second decade of the eighteenth century, and there were at least 35 societies at work in the 1790's. The development of the Sheffield societies will be discussed in detail below: nevertheless, it should be said here that the number involved locally in friendly societies was impressive. In the early 1840's, at least 14,000 people, or one seventh of the total population, were able to make mutual provision for sickness and death in this way. The rapid expansion of the Affiliated Orders during the second half of the century brought friendly societies within reach of the homes and workplaces of most working men. In 1911, there were 130,166 people, of one in three of the total population of Sheffield, in friendly societies in the city.[1]

Consumer cooperation also made an impact upon working class lives in Sheffield, especially for those too poor to find money for long-term investment, but who could still gain from the cooperative dividend. By the end of the century, there were 25,925 members of cooperatives in Sheffield and its immediate vicinity. By 1910, cooperative membership in Sheffield reached 45,000, and increased rapidly after this date.

Savings Banks, in particular the Sheffield Savings Bank, offered an important facility to the provident. The first bank was established in Norfolk St. in 1819: it was one of 39 begun in other towns in the same year, but has been described as 'easily the most important' of its contemporaries.[3] The Bank thrived from its earliest years. By 1820, there were 265 depositors, and funds of £4056. By 1843, the number of investors had risen to 5889, with funds of £165,985. Half a million pounds was reached in 1870, and in 1886, deposits totalled £1 million, with 32,500 depositors. Funds and membership doubled again in the following thirty years, reaching

1. See below, chapter 25
2. See below, chapter 26
3. H. Oliver Horne, A History of Savings Banks, London, 1947, p.85; R.E. Leader, A Century of Thrift - An Historical Sketch of the Sheffield Savings Bank, London, 1947; Sheffield Trustees Savings Bank, A Hundred Years of Thrift, Sheffield, 1969.

£2 million and 64,000 investors in 1916.[1] The last quarter of the century
saw the expansion of the Bank's facilities. Following experiments in
Liverpool, Exeter and elsewhere, localised penny banks in cooperation with
the School Board were set up in 1876.[2] By 1918, there were 219 school
banks in Sheffield, with over 50,000 depositors, and recording over a
million transactions. Investment by schoolchildren in these banks exceeded
£52,000.[3] The working classes were given access to savings banks in other
ways: attempts to establish branches in the 1850's had failed through
mismanagement, but the experiment was repeated successfully at the end of the
century.[4] The first branches to open were in thriving working class
communities of Attercliffe (1900), Heeley (1901), in Infirmary Road (1904),
and Burngreave Road (1911).[5]

Building and land societies flourished in Sheffield: the
conversion of small savings to permanent capital in the form of land was
attractive to the small entrepreneur and the ambitious artisan. Terminating
building societies proliferated: these involved regular subscriptions to a
common fund. Advances for house building were determined by auction, going
to the individual who would pay most for the privilege of a loan. These
societies were initially short-term associations for the purpose of house
building, and terminated when each member had acquired property. They were
essentially ad hoc organisations for mutual benefit, and like friendly
societies, placed much emphasis on the conviviality of dinners and public
house gatherings of members.[6] The first terminating building society in
Sheffield was founded by John Ryalls in the 1830's. The capital of the
society was derived from £80 shares, and between 40 and 50 members assisted

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1. Figures from Leader, op. cit., pp.11,17,34; Pollard, op. cit., p.109;
   Sheffield Trustee Savings Bank, op. cit., p.3
2. Horne, op. cit., p.296; see above chapter 15
3. Leader, op. cit., p.36
4. ibid., p.22.
5. ibid. p.37
6. Gosden, op. cit., pp.147,156; Cleary, op. cit., 40-41, 56-58.

to buy houses.[1]   The popularity of such societies assured their survival.
Some terminating societies were run in series, to accommodate fresh members,
without the need to start a new association.   In 1853, there were 12 such
societies in Sheffield.[2]   Between 1854 and 1871, 28 new societies were formed.
These had 3,570 members, and advanced an estimated £1,053,518 in this period.
Most were small scale ventures, with less than 200 members, generally
advancing less than £50,000.[3]

The tradition of the terminating societies was maintained by the
Starr-Bowkett and Richmond societies.   The Starr-Bowkett societies, introduced
into Sheffield in 1876, enabled a large sum to be borrowed for a short period,
in return for a long-term investment of a small amount.   The advance was
interest free, to be spent on property, and was balloted, although the unlucky
members had to wait a considerable time for the money for another advance to
be accumulated.[4]   Each Starr-Bowkett society had 500 members, and were
ultimately terminated after each member had built a house.   There were 4 such
societies in Sheffield in 1893.[5]   Richmond societies, pioneered by Edwin
Richmond, in his capacity of building society secretary, flourished in
Sheffield.[6]   These were a variation of the Starr-Bowkett principle, and
ballotting was not allowed.   The Richmond societies were begun in 1884: by
1893, there were 92 such societies registered, with a total membership of
9967, and assets of £139,689.[7]

The terminating societies were rivalled by a new type of 'permanent'
building society, which appeared in Sheffield in the 1840's.   These societies
separated the investor from the borrower.   Permanent investment was possible,
and loans and mortgages available to buy existing properties, with longer
and more flexible terms for repayments.   Some societies also ran small
savings banks, and encouraged deposits as a means of raising capital.[8]

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1. R.C. on Friendly and Benefit Building Societies, First Report, (P.P.1871, XXV), p.224.
2. Cleary, op. cit., p.45
3. R.C. on Friendly and Benefit Building Societies, First Report, (P.P.1871, XXV), p.224.
4. Gosden, op. cit., pp.168-170; Cleary, op. cit., pp.79,100,110-111,114-115
5. S.C. on Building Societies, Report, (P.P.1893, IX), AA 4327-4332
6. Cleary, op. cit., pp.110-113; S.C. on Building Societies, Report, (P.P.1893 IX), AA 4333-4368.
7. ibid. A4335, IX
8. Gosden, op. cit., pp.153-164; Cleary, op. cit., pp 47-48, 58-59

The first permanent building society in the city was the Sheffield and South
Yorkshire Benefit Building Society, established in 1849. By 1871, there were
12 societies of this type.[1] The Sheffield Mutual and Permanent Society was
formed in 1858, and 10 other societies had been established between 1863 and
1869. The Sheffield and South Yorkshire was the biggest, with 1142 members, and
had advanced over £312,000. The other societies were much more modest, with
membership of 320 or less, and in general had not advanced more than £30,000.[2]
Societies of this type proliferated in the 1870's. Nevertheless, some
societies got into difficulties through mismanagement and unwise investments,
and the Sheffield and South Yorkshire crashed for this reason in 1886.[3]

A type of permanent building society which made a distinctive
contribution to the landscape of the city, and helped to popularise the
permanent principle, was the freehold land society. These involved the
subscription of share capital, which was used to buy an estate of land, to be
divided into lots for housing purposes. The cooperative basis of the land society
meant that land could be purchased at advantageous terms, in return for a
regular subscription.[4] Thus the Sheffield Reform Freehold Land Society
advertised plots, individually worth between £70 and £100, for £30, in return for
ten shillings a month over five or six years.[5] Many societies continued in
existence after the completion of building, to regulate building alterations
or to maintain services.

Among the earliest to use this principle in Sheffield were trade
associations. In 1848, the Edge Tool Grinders acquired a 68 acre farm at
Wincobank, and the Britannia Metal Smiths 11 acres at Gleadless. On the
initiative of Isaac Ironside, the Board of Guardians began a land scheme at
Hollow Meadows.[6] In the same year, the Upperthorpe Cooperative Land and

1. R.C. on Friendly and Benefit Building Societies, First Report, (P.P.1871, XXV), p.224
2. loc. cit.
3. See for example S.R.I. 6 April 1877; ibid., 20 April 1877; 3 May 1877; 5 May 1877; 15 February 1881; 8 July 1882; Cleary, op. cit., pp.126-127
4. Cleary, op. cit., pp.49-54; Gosden, op. cit., pp.153-154; S.M. Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development 1840-1918, with Particular Reference to the Pennine Towns', unpublished Ph.D., University of Sheffield, 1974; Gaskell, 'Self-Help and House Building', Local Historian, X, 1972; Gaskell, 'Yorkshire Estate Development', Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, XLIII,1971.
5. Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development', etc. p.117.
6. ibid., p.115; W.H.G. Armytage, Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England 1560-1900, London, 1961, John Salt, 'Isaac Ironside and the Hollow Meadows Farm Experiment', Yorkshire Bulletin of Economic and Social Research, XII, 1960, pp.4551; S.I., 22 April 1843; ibid. 27 May 1843; 29 July 1843, 23 March 1848.

Building Society purchased an estate, which was divided into 32 lots of
one rood for building purposes.[1] The late 1840's and early 1850's saw
the proliferation of these societies in Sheffield: among the societies
launched in these years were the Walkley Land and Building Society, the
Reform Freehold Society and the Parkwood Spring Building and Benefit
Society.[2] By 1862, there were a total of 38 societies in existence, some
of which had run into series. There was a heavy concentration of societies
in the Birkendale, Upperthorpe and Walkley area, a sloping site to the west
of the town centre which was attractive for building. Societies had also
sprung up in Heeley, Brightside, Carbrook, Grimesthorpe, Nether Edge and
Hillsborough.[3] A typical characteristic of the Sheffield societies was
their smallness: it has been suggested that 60 acres represented the maximum
size in these years.[4] However, in 1862, apart from the 55 acre Carbrook
estate, all societies were below 40 acres. Some were very small indeed:
the Bellfield Estate was only 3 roods 26 perches, laid out into 11 plots,
and there were 14 others below 10 acres in size. Nevertheless, the land
societies by this time had made a not inconsiderable impact. Between them,
the 38 societies had acquired 564 acres, at a cost of £126,295, with a
further £39,452 expended on roads. The number of plots was 3154, and the
total cost given as £165,746. Upwards of twenty miles of roads had been
laid out.[5]

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1. S.L.R. 19 June 1848
2. S.T. 27 January 1849; ibid., 24 February 1849; 4 January 1851; S.R.I.
   4 January 1851; ibid., 15 November 1851; S.L.R. 25 January 1850; ibid
   25 August 1850; 10 November 1851; Charles Hobson,'Walkley – A Fifty
   Year Old Workingman's Garden Suburb', Town Planning Review, III, 1912
   pp.39-45; J.H. Stainton, The Making of Sheffield 1865-1914, Sheffield,
   1924, pp.180-197; Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development', etc., pp.113-121;
   Gaskell, Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, etc., pp.158-163. The deeds
   for some early land societies are in S.C.L. : see especially Parkwood
   Springs Benefit Building Society, Abstract of Title, 1850; PC 317,
   Heeley Freehold Estate, Deeds of Covenant, 1852, WD 474, Carbrook
   Freehold Land Society, Plan n.d.
3. Pawson and Brailsford, Illustrated Guide to Sheffield, 1862, reprinted 1971,
   p.98
4. Gaskell 'Housing and Estate Development', etc., p.121
5. Pawson and Brailsford, op. cit., p.98

The land societies possibly lost some impetus in the later 1850's and 1860's: a second period of development started in Sheffield in 1872. In this year, the Dykes Hall estate at Wadsley and the Normanton Springs Land Society were set in motion, and followed by estates at Totley Brook and Meersbrook. [1] The societies were increasingly being exploited by speculators to provide middle class housing, however. The profits made by the trustees of societies brought the system into disrepute: land jobbers converted the freehold estates into leasehold, by selling the ground rents. In 1888, it was said that there were few solvent societies, and that the working classes of Sheffield had lost over a million pounds in the previous ten years through building societies and clubs. [2]

Building societies still maintained their principle of lending money for house purchase, although advances were increasingly made to manufacturing and commercial concerns in the last quarter of the century. Another type of society making advances, not necessarily for housing, were the funding societies. These grew out of money clubs, and by 1874, had reached a greater development in Sheffield than elsewhere. These funding societies represented terminating building societies in many ways, but lent money against all sorts of security, and not only for the purposes of land purchase. These were run in series like terminating societies: the most numerous and well established in 1874 were those run by Messrs. Tasker, known locally as Tasker's Clubs. The 33rd of these was commenced in 1871. Societies of this type committed the member to monthly payments of five or ten shillings, to the value of the shares taken. The shareholders were then paid off with interest, and the society wound up. During the life of the society, borrowers could receive advances against the capital of the society: this

1. Gaskell, 'Housing and Estate Development, etc. p.133-143: Also see in S.C.L. Normanton Springs Land Society,Trust Deio, 1872, WD588; Third Woodland View Freehold Land Society. Membership and Rule book, Accounts, MD 1483; Totley Brook Freehold Land Society, Minute Book, Accounts and Papers, MD22224-8; Brocco Bank Freehold Land Society, Rule book, Sheffield 1874; Ryecroft Freehold Land Society, Regulations, Sheffield 1874; Third Woodland View Freehold Land Society, Rules, Sheffield 1874; Beighton Freehold Land Society, Rules, Sheffield 1872; Endcliffe and Brocco Land Society, Rules, Sheffield n.d. Meersbrook Bank Estate, Rules, Sheffield, n.d.; Stainton op.cit,pp.180-197.
2. S.C. on Town Holdings, Report, (P.P. 1888, XXII), p.247 Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development', etc., p.133

system allowed small amounts to be obtained at short notice.[1]   Societies
of this type proliferated in the 1970's. In January 1875, the Sheffield
and Rotherham Independent carried advertisements for 9 such funding societies.
Most had professional secretaries and managers, but some were still located
in public houses, and placed an important emphasis upon conviviality. The
Pack Horse Funding Society, located at the Pack Horse Inn, Snig Hill,
announced the formation of its fifth society. Another example of this type
was the Twentieth Norfolk Ten Pound Club, lending £5,000 in sums between £5
and £500 in return for fortnightly investments of three shillings.[2]

In terms of the capital and the numbers involved in them, Sheffield's
thrift institutions made a major contribution to habits of providence. It is
important to understand the social basis of these institutions. Arguably, in
terms of membership, savings banks, cooperatives, friendly societies and
building societies of all types attracted consistent support only from the
élite of the working class. Moreover, they were also used by elements within
the middle class, who needed easily accessible local facilities for small
scale saving and speculation. In addition, some of these institutions
flourished with the active patronage and support of employers and
philanthropists, cognisant of the economic and social benefits of a thrifty
and provident workforce, and concerned with the alleviation of poverty for
humanitarian reasons.

For the working classes, the propensity to save was derived from the
economic realities of every day life. It is clear that the high wage earned
by some skilled men in times of good trade did not always lead to high
saving. The hard living, free spending habits of the Sheffield artisan were
legendary: high wages were commonly thought to lead to intemperance and
'reckless improvident habits'.[3]   The extravagant tastes in food on the part
of some artisans has already been referred to.[4]   Such habits betrayed the

1. R.C. on Friendly and Benefit Building Societies, Reports from Assistant
   Commissioners for the Midlands, (P.P. 1874, XXIII), pp.203-204.
2. S.R.I. 4 January 1875.
3. S.C. of the House of Lords on the Sweating System, Third Report,
   (P.P. 1889, XIII), A. 25,199.
4. See above, Chapter 2.

resilience of older traditions. The whole rhythm of the Sheffield trades, and the relationship between work and leisure, was not conducive to the personal constraint required for the regular weekly saving of small sums of money. Uncertainties in trade, irregular hours and the intermittent nature of the occasional high wages also contributed to this. In the 1830's, manufacturer Samuel Jackson thought that it was the highest worker who was in fact the worst off. A saw grinder with two sons might earn as much as seven pounds a week, but

> 'if he works one week he is frequently three weeks in
> spending the amount of his earnings, and till he has
> spent them, he seldom returns to work', 1.

For these reasons, it was the workman earning perhaps twenty six to thirty shillings a week who would work industriously, live frugally, and save considerable sums. The bulk of savings was supplied not by those who brought home high wages when trade was good, but by those who enjoyed a lower but regular income.

Evidence for this may be drawn from several of Sheffield's thrift institutions. The Sheffield Savings Bank had 48 artisans or their wives among its first hundred depositors. [2] About half the savers were other than artisans: this proportion was estimated at 56% in 1840, 42% in 1857, and 48% in 1860-1861. [3] Of the non-artisans, domestic servants were the most important category. 33 women who invested in 1819 are thought to have been drawn from this group. [4] During the 1850's, servants comprised between 10% and 15% of the total number of investors. [5] The weakness of the artisan group often had beneficial effects upon the level of deposits: during the depression of the early 1840's, the level of savings remained almost unaffected, and Holland correlated this with the small number of artisan investors, arguing that this was the group most likely to withdraw capital in

1. S.C. on Manufacturers, Commerce and Shipping, Report, (P.P. 1833, VI), A.2917
2. Horne, op. cit., p.85
3. Pollard, op. cit., p.
4. Horne, op. cit., p.95
5. ibid., p.97

times of economic need. Of Sheffield's 5,000 working cutlers, Holland found only 221 or 4% who invested in the Savings Bank. The number of silver plate workers and other craftsmen, among the elite of Sheffield's artisans, was 'miserably small'. In contrast, male and female servants and labourers made up a fifth of the total. In Holland's opinion, 'the principles on which Savings Banks are established are not well understood by the labouring classes'. Small independent shopkeepers and tradesmen did take advantage of the facilities offered by the bank, however: 6 drapers, 3 fishmongers, 2 fruiterers, 15 grocers, 12 hairdressers, 9 opticians, 8 shopkeepers and 26 victuallers invested savings: there were also 18 schoolmasters and 25 schoolmistresses.[1] This tendency for the bank to be exploited by other than the labouring classes for which it was intended was clear from the earliest years. There was considerable profiteering by anonymous depositors, and the rules had to be altered in 1824 to prevent this.[2] The Northern Star, published in Sheffield in 1818, contained some stringent criticism of banks, because

> 'instead of their being depositories for the hard-earned money of the labouring branches of society, they are converted into banks for the exuberant wealth of the higher classes of the community'. [3]

Unlike other thrift institutions, the savings banks sprang not from working class self-help, but from middle class philanthropy. The idea of a savings bank was backed by most leading employers and gentlemen in the town. There were no working men among the convenors of the Savings Bank in 1818. These included men such as Hugh Parker, banker and J.P., Rowland Hodgson, retired merchant and philanthropist, William Shore junior, banker, John Read, silver refiner, James Montgomery, journalist and poet, Samuel Roberts, silversmith, and George Bennet, retired bookseller and philanthropist.[4] The scheme found immediate support from the Tory Sheffield Mercury, and other

1. G.C. Holland, The Vital Statistics of Sheffield, Sheffield and London, 1843, pp.130-137.
2. Leader, op. cit., pp.11-13
3. NorthemStar, XVI, September 1818, pp.180-181
4. Leader, op. cit., p.51; S.M. 21 November 1818; S.I. 1 December 1818

local papers.[1] The opening stock held by the bank was swelled by donations of 30 guineas from the Duke of Norfolk, and 20 guineas from Earl Fitzwilliam, who became the patrons of the bank.[2] The running of the concern was entrusted to 46 directors and 14 clergymen, 'buttressing the business acumen of layment with the moral influence of the Church'.[3] There were also 20 trustees, 4 of whom were ministers. Thomas Asline Ward was one of the directors of the Bank, and James Montgomery held the chairmanship of the bank from 1824, until his death thirty years later.[4]

Building societies and land societies also failed to become mass movements for the mobilisation of working class savings. A historian of building societies has suggested:

> 'Clearly, building societies were not wholly working class
> in their origins. From the first, the lower middle classes
> were well represented among their membership'.[5]

Arguably, the membership of building societies was drawn from limited social groups because they demanded the payment of not insubstantial amount of money on a regular monthly basis. Thus artisans earning high but irregular wages, and vulnerable to the vicissitude of trade depression, could rarely have contemplated sustained involvement in building societies. Thus borrowers from the Victoria Permanent Building Society in 1875 had to commit themselves to taking £120 shares, subscribed for in monthly payments of ten shillings.[6] Starr-Bowkett and Richmond Societies generally involved lower payments, and were aimed at the working class small saver; however, the extent to which they were successful in this is unclear. It is likely that the only type of society which made much impact with the working class were the small funding societies and money clubs, which had proliferated at an impressive rate by the 1870's, and were less likely to attract middle class capital.

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1. S.M. 21 November 1818; ibid., 5 December 1818
2. Leader, op. cit., p.5
3. ibid., pp.6-7
4. ibid., p.7
5. Cleary, op. cit., p.17
6. S.R.I. 4 January 1875

High payments were also usual among freehold land societies.

Members of the Walkley Land and Building Society in 1849 were expected to pay

two shillings a week for the cost of the land, or five shillings for the land

and a house.[1]   The high cost of legal fees and expenses, and road dedications

also tended to exclude working people. According to Robson, the cost of roads

resulted in a £30 plot becoming £60, and a £60 plot costing £120. He was

especially critical of the 'exorbitant demands' made by Sheffield Corporation

for the construction of roads in the later nineteenth century. In some cases,

the Corporation's charge for roads was at least equal to the original cost of

the plot. Some who were unable to pay such charges withdrew from the schemes,

and saw their plots auctioned at perhaps only a quarter of their values.[2]

For these reasons, it has been suggested that

'those who benefitted from the activities of the Freehold
Land Societies were hardly working class in the commonly
accepted sense'. [3]

The irrelevance of the freehold land societies to the ambitions of most

working men was clear by the 1860's. The societies lost credibility as organs

of self-help, and promoted speculation in land and property. Many working men

involved in land societies in the early days were unable or unwilling to build

houses on their plots, and never took up residence on their estates. Other

investors purchased blocks of property purely as an investment. Many of the

same names reappeared on trust deeds: these included individuals from outside

Sheffield, whose motives were entirely speculative. Thus in 1870, only 18

of the 205 landholders on the Second Whitehouse Estate used the plots for their

own purposes: of these, only one had built a house, and the remainder used the

land solely for gardens. On some estates there were resident owner-occupiers

who could in no way be described as working class. In 1870, there were only 21

1. S.T. 27 January 1849; ibid., 24 February 1849, 4 January 1851
2. Hobson, op. cit., pp.43-45; Stainton, op. cit., p.196; Gaskell 'Housing
   Estate Development', etc., p.127
3. S.D. Chapman, History of Working Class Housing, Newton Abbott, 1971, pp 242-
   243.

resident allottees on the two Whitehouse estates, and at Fir View and

Freedom Hill: these were 4 gentlemen, 9 manufacturers, 2 merchants, 1 auctioneer,

1 accountant, 1 wholsesale druggist, 1 tradesman and 2 publicans.[1] Now,

admittedly, there were some developments which appeared to be entirely

working class. Terraced houses were built on the Second Carbrook estate, at

a density of five houses per acre.[2] However, in the context of the

increasing speculation in this type of property, and the separation of

ownership and residence, such developments were probably speculative ventures

by non-resident landlords.

The social basis of friendly societies and cooperatives in Sheffield

will be discussed in detail below.[3] It will be seen that these were clearly

'working class' institutions, in that they sprang from that class, in response

to the need for mutual defence against the short-term exigencies of day to day

living. Nevertheless, these received middle class support in the second half

of the nineteenth century. Land and building societies also met with the

approval of middle class reformers. Essentially concerned with long-term

goals, these had few working class members, and were dominated by small

tradesmen, entrepreneurs and speculators. Although the extent of working

class involvement varied, these societies helped to integrate the ambitions

of the aspiring working man with the norms and values of the petty capitalist,

and to articulate an ideology of thrift.

The establishment of friendly societies, cooperatives, savings banks

and building societies represented an awareness on the part of their middle

and working class supporters of the economic, moral and political benefits of

thrift. These benefits were both individual and social, and short-term as

well as long-term in the perspective.

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1. Based on Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development, etc., pp.122-128
2. Pawson and Brailsford, op. cit., p.98
3. see below, chapter 25.

Perhaps the most obvious benefit bestowed by membership of thrift institutions was the short-term economic gain. The accessibility of the savings bank, the regular cooperative dividend and the protection of the friendly society gave some immediate security against unemployment, sickness and old age. In this sense, involvement in thrift institutions helped people to maintain their economic and social position in the face of hardship by providing a 'safety net'. Only gradually did the prospect of using thrift institutions to achieve long-term improvements in status and comfort become a possibility. The economic and individual benefits of saving were strongly expressed by the promoters of the Sheffield Savings Bank. The basis of the scheme was the idea that

> 'industrious Mechanics and Labourers might derive great
> comforts in the time of Old Age and Sickness, by having
> an opportunity of laying by the surplus of their earnings
> from time to time, and that many might thereby be enabled
> to make small Provision for their Families.' 1.

Thus poverty and wretchedness for the working class might be abolished. Middle class interest in friendly societies patronised by them in the early nineteenth century was expressed in similar terms: these aimed

> 'to make existence not only tolerable but comfortable,
> in ordinary times, to the poorest families in this
> privileged country'. 2.

Cooperative ventures such as land societies and distributive stores were motivated by attempts to bring economic benefits to their membership. An obvious benefit of the cooperative store was that it made the spendings of the worker go further. 3. Thrift Institutions offered a sound return on investment: a shilling invested each week in the Savings Bank would become £20 in seven years. 4. The prospect of four per cent return on investment was one of the attractions of the freehold land society. 5.

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1. S.M. 21 November 1818; ibid., 5 December 1818;
2. S.I. 14 July 1812
3. William Rose, A Brief History of the (Sheffield and Ecclesall Cooperative) Society and Thirty Nine Years Progress 1874-1913, Sheffield, 1913, p.9
4. S.M. 5 December 1818;
5. S.T. 4 January 1851

In practice, contemporaries made little distinction between the economic and moral benefits of thrift. The most obvious link between the two concepts derived from the extent to which thrift was conducive to the cultivation of the economic ideal. The Sheffield Mercury praised savings banks for encouraging a spirit of industry through 'the multiplying powers of compound interests'.[1] An improvement in the economic position of the worker also meant an improvement in his respectability: independence through self-help was the ultimate goal. The respectable artisan and the middle class reformer were unanimous in their support of the value of independence for the working man. A man who could help himself through investing in savings banks or friendly societies had no need of charity.[2] In particular, he could help to alleviate the burden on the rates, a factor of some importance during the steep rise in poor law expenditure in the first thirty years of the century.[3] The benefits of thrift were succintly stated by A.J. Mundella, in an address to the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows in 1874:

> 'if... we cultivate habits of industry and temperance and thrift,
> depend upon it there is a much brighter day for Englishmen. The
> working classes will be more independent, and there will be less
> of that poverty and suffering which we have seen so often amongst us'. [4]

Thrift and independence could help a man to better himself in a positive way: Rowley Hill, vicar of Sheffield and a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters thought it to be self-evident that any man who could put by five out of every twenty shillings would be on his way to a good position.[5]

The freehold land and building society movement helped to enrich the perspectives of respectability, by attempting to create a new and idealised dimension in the life style of the 'respectable' artisan. Some of the early land society schemes aimed at the construction of detached dwellings, standing on their own plot of land, and assertive of their independence. There is a sense in which some of the early societies involved their members in a retreat from the city, into an individual arcadian dream, although this has been

1. S.M. 21 November 1818
2. ibid., 5 December 1818
3. S.R.I. 18 August 1874
4. loc. cit.
5. ibid., 11 January 1876

1.

overemphasised at the expense of other motives. The wish to cultivate the land partly derived from Owenite and Chartist philosophies, expressed by O'Connor and others in the 1840's. The Chartists envisaged land schemes out of sound political and economic motives: the image of the independent artisan cultivating his own land after his daily toils was an attractive one, however, and much used by middle class supporters of land societies. Nature was to be the key to the moral elevation of the working class:

> 'Bring man into daily contact with the beauties of nature, and you assist in developing and bringing into life and action the higher faculties of his nature; he possesses a stake in society; he is elevated in his own estimation, and therefore becomes more careful in the ordinary actions of his life; ....a laudable spirit of emulation arises between himself and his neighbours as to who can produce the choicest and earliest specimens of plants and flowers; nature, surrounding him with her choicest gifts, trees, plants and flowers, all new to him are beautiful.... he returns from the workshop and the warehouse with anticipated pleasure, and society is benefitted by the change; he acquires a taste for more pure enjoyments; his moral feelings are elevated; he becomes enabled to appreciate the language of nature, and lay to heart the moral truth she inculcates'. 2.

The potency of this relationship with nature has led to a considerable idealisation of the arcadian delights of the land society. Hobson presented a utopian picture of the working class freeholder, producing high class vegetables, fruit and flowers, at peace in the bosom of his family, encamped upon their garden plots, 'sitting under their own vine and fig tree, none daring to intrude'. 3. In the 1850's, however, some artisans were cynical about the delights of a relationship with nature. 'A Working Man', writing in the Sheffield Times in 1851, was critical about many aspects of land societies. A man cultivating his allotment purely for pleasure was faced with journeys of up to four miles to get vegetables for his Sunday dinner; once a house had been built, he became a town bred man with a rural home, and the prospect of long journeys to work in wet weather, and uncomfortable meals in the workshop. 4.

1. Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development,' etc., p.119
2. S.T. 4 January 1851
3. Hobson, op. cit., p.41; see also Stainton, op. cit., p.196
4. S.T. 18 January 1851

Nevertheless, the ideal of 'country residence combined with easy facility to town' was an important factor in the suburbanisation of Sheffield in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, in which the land societies played a not inconsiderable part.[1]

Thus it was hoped that involvement in thrift institutions would bring the working class to a new moral world. On a more prosaic level, it was intended that provident societies would also counteract any behaviour which distracted from this aim, such as the dissipation of earnings in immoral activities. The antithesis of the thrifty and provident working man was the drunken lout who spent all his money in the public house. This was recognised from the beginning by the supporters of the savings bank, who argued that

> 'every shilling or pound that is spent in a public house, etc.,
> is not merely the loss of such a sum, but of double or treble
> that amount'. [2]

Of course, drink was an essential complement to the activities of most friendly societies; building and land societies also placed some emphasis on the importance of conviviality, with regular meetings in public houses, and dinners of roast beef, plum pudding and ale.[3] Most middle class people who supported this type of society had important reservations about the consumption of alcohol. Rowley Hill took the conventional view in 1876, when he urged the necessity of placing friendly societies on a sound financial basis by avoiding the public house: in nine out of ten cases he believed that for every shilling put by, another was spent on drink.[4] Support for freehold land societies was expressed in a similar way: Alderman Vickers observed how gratifying it would be for a workingman to breathe the fresh air of the countryside after the labours of the day, and 'how little disposed he would be to spend his labours in a public house'.[5] The money formerly spent in the dram shop would be diverted by the land society to the beautifying of home and garden.[6] Thus privatised and family centred activities would be substituted for drunkenness and

1. S.R.I. 3 January 1874; Gaskell 'Housing Estate Development' etc., pp.134-140;
   Stainton, op. cit., pp.180-197
2. S.M. 5 December 1818
3. S.T. 4 January 1851
4. S.R.I. 11 January 1876
5. S.T. 27 January 1849
6. S.T. 4 January 1851

debauchery. Of course, attitudes to the role of drink in provident institutions suffered from the schizophrenia towards drink exhibited by some middle class reformers: thus at a public lecture chaired by the mayor in 1861, C. Hardwick of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows 'maintained the right of a working man to visit his lodge once a month or a quarter to spend his twopence, if he chose, on a glass of beer', arguing that there was nothing to complain of in the drinking habits of friendly societies, so long as their activities were under the jurisdiction of the magistrates. [1]

A fundamental component of the ideology of thrift was political; although it is reasonable to assume that involvement in thrift institutions was a necessary stage in the political maturation of some working men, the political attitudes expressed by these institutions were generally those approved and sanctioned by the middle classes. The supporters of cooperation believed it to be

> 'not a private enterprise, or a mere dividend machine, but...
> an instrument for the elevation of the working classes open
> on equal terms to everybody'. [2]

However, cooperation should be the means by which the interests of masters and men should be made identical: T. Llewellyn of the South Yorkshire District Cooperative Association believed that this could best be done by admitting workers to participation in profit and management. Other cooperators and trade unionists urged that capital should only be spoken of with respect, representing as it did the fruits of past labour. [3] Perhaps the most direct statement about the role of the cooperatives in diverting the working classes away from direct political action was made by the working man who founded the Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative in 1865. Their attitudes showed not only their hopes for cooperation, but a deeply rooted fear of the consequence of militant industrial action. Thus cooperatives

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1. S.R.I. 9 March 1861
2. Rose, op. cit., p.17
3. S.R.I. 12 April 1886

    'would do away with as many of the turmoils and strikes to which
(sic) is a curse to England. How many diabolical attempts at
murder there has been (sic) through trades unions how many there
have been sent to prison. What poverty and misery it (sic) has
caused. How many hard working honest men have been compelled(sic)
through fear of their lives been (sic) took to give up their work.'

Thus, in the thinking of these cooperators, trade union action could only mean

privation and debt for many 'who have never been able to redeem themselves, or

if they (did) it as took them (sic) months and years to do it'.[1]

    The potential of thrift institutions for reconciling the working man

with the vested interests of capitalism were early exploited by the savings

banks: the security of society rested on the maintenance of public credit, and

the preservation of the constitution:

    'Every depositor is thus led to perceive that he has a stake in
the country. He has something to lose; and consequently it is in
his interests to maintain things as they are; and to guard against
those revolutionary convulsions which would shake the foundations
of private property and public credit.[2]

One of the advantages of savings banks was that their whole basis was

individualistic, thus undermining the politically dangerous mutuality and

identity of interests fostered by friendly societies.[3]   It may be no

coincidence that the foundation of the Sheffield savings bank, like that of

the Mechanics Institution and other instruments of middle class reformism,

followed hard upon the heels of popular disturbance.[4]

    It was the freehold land societies which contained the most clear

statement of political aims. The hey-day of the land societies coincided with

and indeed sprang from the political idealism of the 1840's; in contrast, the

cooperative movement, which in theory should have been fired by a comparable

ideology, came to maturity in Sheffield as late as the 1880's, when political

ideals were on the whole outweighed by the demands of mass retailing.

    As has been suggested, the freehold land societies derived in part

from Chartism. Sheffield Chartists such as Briggs, fired by O'Connorite ideals,

urged the Sheffield trade societies to engage in land schemes, in order to bring

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1. Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative Society, Address on Cooperation, 1865,
   MD 6091
2. Northern Star, XVIII, November 1818, p.342
3. loc. cit.
4. For political unrest, see F.K. Donelly, 'Popular Disturbances in Sheffield'
   1790-1820, unpublished MA, University of Sheffield, 1970. For the Mechanics
   Institute see above, chapter 16.

down prices:

> 'Although God had said that man should live by the sweat of his
> brow, he did not mean that man should live by the sweat of
> another man's brow. The natural labour for man was on the land'. [1]

The land colonies established at Gleadless, Norton and Hollow Meadows were in
a very real sense conservative: while conducted on a cooperative basis, they
sprang from the philosophy that 'the people were not their own capitalists,
but this plan would be a stepping stone towards it'. [2] These elements within
Chartism passed into the land society movement, through people such as Briggs
and Gill. Working class supporters of land societies were concerned to secure
for their people a greater share of political power, rather than to attempt the
alteration of the political balance by direct action. Thus the movement
'appealed to the middle class ideals, and to the prospect of the social
regeneration of the working classes'. [3]

Freehold land societies received their greatest impetus in the late
1840's and the early 1850's, because they appeared to offer working men a
direct route to the franchise. [4] In 1832, the right to vote in county
elections was vested in all individuals holding a forty shilling freehold.
Working men, fired by Chartist ideals and with their aspirations frustrated in
1832, and the liberal interest, seeking to wrest power from the landed class
during the Anti-Corn Law agitation of the early 1840's, saw the freehold land
society as a means to this end. The political purpose of the land society was
promoted by James Taylor from Birmingham in 1848-49, following the
establishment of these societies in the Midlands. [5] Most of Taylor's views
found ready acceptance among working men anxious for the vote, and among
middle class reformers, who supported an extension of the franchise, and
realised that membership of a land society was a cast-iron guarantee of the
social responsibility which had to be exhibited by working men, before they
could comfortably be entrusted with the vote. There was no better evidence of
respectability than the effort expended in the acquisition of a freehold:

1. S.I. 23 March 1848
2. ibid., 27 May 1843
3. Gaskell, 'Housing Estate Development', etc., p.118
4. ibid., pp.115-117
5. S.R.I. 23 December 1848; S.T. 24 February 1849, for James Taylor and
   freehold land societies in Birmingham, see Chapman, op.cit., pp.240-241

'Every man valued the highest that which he had made the greatest sacrifice to obtain.... the enjoyment of property and the influence of a vote obtained in this way were perhaps more prizeable than if obtained in any other way'. 1.

James Taylor brought home to politically conscious working men in Sheffield the possibilities opened up by the exploitation of freehold land societies: although 'only a working man', Taylor boasted that he had voted for three counties and one borough, and aimed to qualify for West Yorkshire also, for 'he loved to whack the Tories'.[2] This was a political philosophy with which leading Sheffield liberals such as T.A. Ward, Edward Smith, Samuel Bayley and Robert Leader could find no fault; middle class support for land societies was guaranteed, and Sheffield's Tories lent their support to the movement in the early 1850's. Many working men may have been moved as much by material as by political ambitions, however: 'A Working Man' wrote disparagingly about the doubtful privilege of 'giving a vote at every contested West Riding election'.[3] The continued development of land societies in the 1860's and 1870's had no connection with any working class political ambitions.

1. S.T. 27 January 1849.
2. S.T. 24 February 1849.
3. S.T. 18 January 1851.

25.   Friendly Societies

In Sheffield, the tradition of the friendly society and the 'box club' was long standing. The earliest societies were formed among the single trades. The first to be recorded was the Tailors' Society in 1720. This was followed by associations of Filesmiths and Cutlers in 1732, Carpenters in 1740, Grinders in 1748, Masons in 1766, and Scissorsmiths in 1791.[1]   Such societies were often short-lived, but represented the first attempts at cooperation by workingmen, allied by the same craft, and by mutual concern at self-protection. Defence against sickness and death was only one manifestation of common trade interests: the artisan regarded his trade union as far more than just an insurance company, and his loyalty to his craft was strong.[2]   The distinction between the friendly society and the trade union offering friendly benefits was blurred. Many societies, through their concern for collective bargaining and price regulation, became embryonic trade unions.[3]   The contribution which trade societies made to the provision of friendly benefits and the encouragement of a sense of providence was strong, and for the purposes of this study, trade societies have been included along friendly societies.

By the 1790's, friendly societies had become an established institution in Sheffield. There were at least 50 societies in existence in 1786, equipped with masters and clerks, enjoying regular meetings at public houses.[4]   In 1797, Sir F.M. Eden observed that almost every Sheffield 'manufacturer' was a member of a friendly society.[5]   The societies played a prominent and colourful part in the opening of the Sheffield General Infirmary in 1797: at least 35 societies were represented in the public celebrations.[6]   There is no doubt that the friendly society helped to nurture and to focus the emerging working class consciousness; however, while the 1790's saw important steps in the emergence of a radical working class, the high prices and social distress in

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1. South Yorkshire Notes and Queries, I. p.31
2. Pollard, History, etc. p.148
3. P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875, Manchester 1961, pp.55-56; Gosden, Self-Help; Voluntary Associations in Nineteenth Century Britain, London, 1973, p.14
4. An Account of the Societies in Sheffield, and the Sums Paid Last Year from Their Annual Feast Days in 1785 to the Same Ending 1786, Sheffield, 1786 S.C.L. MP 145L
5. Sir F.M. Eden, The State of the Poor, III, facsimile edition, 1966, p.873
6. S.L.R. 4 October 1797

these years was not conducive to the formation of friendly societies.[1]
Only three were founded between 1790 and 1794, although 28 had been begun
before 1780, and no fewer than 11 had been founded in the 1750's.
Nevertheless, the strength of the friendly societies in the working class
community was revealed during this decade: their response to the economic
distress was the setting up of a cooperative venture for the production of
corn, which was maintained with varying success until 1811.[2]

Despite government vigilance over working men's societies, the numbers
of friendly societies increased from the early nineteenth century, under the
watchful eye of the local magistrates: they encouraged independence and self-
reliance, and helped to relieve the burden on the poor rate.[3] 'General'
societies, drawing members from a number of trades, had begun to appear in
Sheffield in the 1750's. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the
rapid growth of this type of association, and local societies of this type
were the main form of friendly society organisation until about 1840.[4]
Prominent among these were the Providence (1754), the Revolution (1788), the
Prince of Wales' (1790) the Fitzwilliam (1822) and Rawson's (1828). The
churches also entered the field: the Wesleyans founded a society in 1813,
and the Church of England followed suit in 1828. This development was part
of the churches' evangelical policy. Using the sunday school movement as a
vehicle, juvenile societies were formed on the model of adult societies to
promote infant providence. Although women's societies were generally not
significant, some associations for artisans' wives did exist, such as the
Female Benefit Society, established in 1795.

All these societies were still in active existence in 1840. G.C.
Holland recorded 56 local societies, of which only five were trade societies.
These were the masons', scissorsmiths', silversmiths', braziers' and
filesmiths'. Some had impressive numbers of members, and this was generally

1. E.P. Thompson, _The Making of the English Working Class_, paperback edition,
   London, 1966, pp.457-462
2. W.E. Spencer, 'The Club Corn Mill 1795 - A Venture in Cooperation',
   unpublished ms., 1959, S.C.L. MP. 145L;
3. Gosden, _Self-Help_, etc., pp.156-159
4. _ibid._, p.11

reflected in the amount of capital which they possessed. The Tradesmen's society had 931 members, and £4101 in capital. The Masons' society had 680 members, and £3060 in capital. 470 women belonged to the Female Benevolent Society, which had funds of £2050. Most societies had memberships of between 100 and 300. However, it was not so much membership, but the relation between the numbers of members and the capital which was the main indication of strength, in the days when actuarial science was imperfectly understood. Among the most stable society was the Revolution, with a controlled membership of 200, and capital of £6708.[1]

The most significant new factor in the middle years of the century was the development of the Affiliated Orders, which came to dominate the scene by 1870. Local branches, known as 'lodges' formed part of a larger 'district', and the orders had important central resources. Characterised by seeming exclusiveness and secrecy, and with a reliance on symbolism and ritual learned from the Freemasons, the orders emerged from their strong regional base in Lancashire and Yorkshire into national organisations.[2] In Sheffield, where freemasonry was already established, the orders had gained a footing by the end of the eighteenth century.[3] The order of Oddfellows was instituted in 1796, and groups of Oddfellows formed and reformed from this time. There was a branch of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows in Sheffield by 1824.[4] In the late 1830's, following the threat to working class self-respect implied in the Poor Law Amendment Act, the secret orders multiplied. In 1840, Dr. Holland noted 31 lodges in connection with the Manchester Unity. The largest of these, the Philanthropic, had 323 members, and there were four others with over 100. The Druids, The Freemasons, and minor orders such as the Tessarians and the Philanthropic Brotherhood were also established, and the temperance friendly society, the Independent Order of Rechabites, had 40 members.[5]

1. G.C. Holland, The Vital Statistics of Sheffield, Sheffield and London, 1843, pp.209-210.
2. Gosden, Self-Help, etc., pp.27-30, 98-104; Gosden, Friendly Societies, etc., pp.26-48.
3. Douglas Knoop, The Story of the Royal Brunswick Lodge, Sheffield, 1793-1943, Sheffield, 1943: John Stokes and David Flather, The History of Royal Arch Masonry in Sheffield, Sheffield, 1922; J.R. Clarke, A History of the Britannia Lodge, Sheffield, 1961.
4. Sheffield Red Book, Sheffield, 1902: T.W. Siddall, Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows - Story of a Century 1824-1924, Sheffield, pp.5-6
5. Gosden, Self-Help, etc., pp.69-71; Holland, op. cit., p.214

Despite the unwillingness of many friendly societies to provide him with information, Dr. Holland estimated the numerical strength of the friendly society movement in Sheffield in the early 1840's.[1] The total number of members in local societies was probably about 11,000, with accumulated stock of at least £70,000. A further 3,000 were active in the secret order. Thus no less than 14,000 people in Sheffield, at a time when the population stood at 111,091, were members of friendly societies.[2] This was one seventh of the total population: it is not unreasonable to assume that friendly societies encompassed between a third and half of the working artisans. This figure is especially impressive, because it relates to membership in a period of serious depression, when many men would have been unable to keep up their subscriptions. Indeed, in some trades, especially those with the reputation of being 'superior' crafts with high wages, a high proportion of the artisans belonged to friendly societies. Thus three quarters of the edge tool trade, and nine tenths of the saw grinders were members of a club. Even among the spring knife cutlers, whom Holland argued were in a degraded condition, two out of three workmen belonged to a sick club.[3]

Between 1840 and the Royal Commission of 1871-1874, friendly societies in Sheffield expanded and consolidated their position. A number of the local societies noticed by Dr. Holland continued to accumulate wealth, despite regular divisions of capital. These were generally well-conducted, and usually met away from the public houses.[4] Nevertheless, new members were not forthcoming, and the superior type of local society had seriously declined by the end of the century. Other societies, based upon specific trades, flourished, often overlapping the functions of a trade union. The returns from Sheffield to the Registrar of Friendly Societies in 1874 listed 19 societies, 5 of which were clearly trade societies. The largest were the

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1. Eden recorded the reluctance of friendly societies to disclose information in 1797: Eden, op. cit., pp.873-874
2. Holland, op. cit., pp.214-215; The Sheffield Workingman's Advocate, published in 1841, estimated friendly society membership at 12,000: see IV, 20 March 1841, p.3
3. Holland, op. cit., pp.170, 178, 182
4. R.C. on Friendly and Benefit Building Societies, Reports of Assistant Commissioners, (P.P. 1874, XXIII) part 2, p.305

File Grinders' Benefit Society with funds of £820 and membership of 188, and the Locomotive Steam Enginemen and Fireman's Society, with £982 and 164 members. Smaller societies also existed for brewers, masons and engineers.[1] The division of labour in the tool and cutlery trades, and the strong sense of craft loyalty, was reflected in the number of trade societies providing friendly benefits. During years of depression, these societies made a prodigous effort to keep their members out of the workhouse, and their strength is indicated by the size of their payments: for example, in the years 1837-1842, £16,000 was paid out by table blade grinders in support of their members, and sums in excess of £3,000 were found by other societies, including those in the file trades, the edge tool grinders and forgers, the saw makers and the Britannia Metal and plated workers.[2] During the 1880's, the amounts paid out by trade societies substantially relieved the pressure on the poor rates, and large contributions were made to local hospitals and charities.[3]

Other minor types of friendly society were flourishing by the 1870's. These gave working class families a specific type of protection, and were often short-lived. Dividing or 'Birmingham' clubs divided stock annually, and provided a means of short-term saving for festivities such as Christmas. The concern to provide themselves and relatives with a decent funeral was a normal and deep-rooted anxiety for most 'respectable' working class families, Local burial clubs, providing insurance solely for funerals, helped in this direction. One burial club, formed in 1845, had nearly 4,000 members, and a capital of £2370 in 1874. Seven of the dividing clubs had formed a district organisation, the United Friendly Funeral Society, with 200 members, to provide a sounder basis for their activities. Burial clubs were also common amongst the trade unions: a burial club among the file grinders, a trade with a high mortality, arranged not only for death claims to be paid, but acted as a loan

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1. Reports of the Registrar of Friendly Societies in England for the Year ending 31 December 1874, (P.P. LXXI), appendix, p.200
2. Pollard, History, etc., p.p 72-73
3. ibid., p.149

1.

club for individual members.   Short-term funding societies had also

emerged, with capital contributed by share-holders lent out at interest,

with reversion of the profits.   Hundreds of thousands of pounds was estimated

to have been invested in Sheffield's funding societies in 1874, deriving not

only from individual share holders, but from friendly societies and trade

2.

unions.

By the 1870's, the affiliated orders were the strongest form of

friendly society.   A large district of Druids had 1983 members in 1871, and

capital of £2916.   The development of the orders was impeded by mismanagement,

3.

and the lack of financial skills.   However, by 1902, the Affiliated orders

were supreme.   Orders such as the Manchester Unity were attractive to

betterpaid workers, and proliferated among the skilled trade of Sheffield.

The orders offered a security which the smaller local societies had been

unable to match, and the provision which they made for mobility, through the

provision of clearance certificates, fitted the needs of the mobile industrial

4.

worker.   In 1902, the affiliated orders had over 260 lodges in Sheffield

meeting predominantly in public houses in the centre of the city, in the

vicinity of the steelworks, and in the artisan suburbs such as Hillsborough,

Pitsmoor, Walkley, Crookes, Attercliffe and Darnall.   Strongest was the

Sheffield based Equalised Independent Druids, instituted in Sheffield in 1885

claiming a total membership of 45,000, a capital of £122,000, and 102 lodges

in the city.   The Manchester Unity and other orders of Oddfellows had 66

lodges.   Also strong were the Ancient Order of Foresters, formed from the

Royal Order of Foresters in 1834: in sixty years, the number of Foresters'

lodges in Sheffield had risen from 2 to 38.   The Temperance order, the

Rechabites, formed in 1835 and with only 40 members in 1840, had established

29 lodges across the city.   A minor teetotal order, the Sons of Temperance,

5.

had 12 lodges, and over 1500 members.   The Sheffield United Friendly

1. R.C. on Friendly Societies etc., (P.P. 1874, XXIII), part 2, p.202
2. ibid., p.203
3. ibid., p.202
4. Gosden, Self-Help, etc., pp.46-47
5. Sheffield Red Book, Sheffield, 1902, pp.91-101; Holland, op. cit.., p.214;
    Siddall, op. cit., p.20.

Societies Council, formed to watch over and promote the interests of the friendly societies and their membership consisted solely of representatives of the Affiliated Orders. The local societies had faded quietly from the scene, in the manner of the Revolution Sick Society, which, faced with an ageing membership and dwindling funds, voted its own dissolution in 1892.[1]

The membership of friendly societies has been described as overwhelmingly working class, with almost no middle class members:

'few of the members of friendly societies had a higher social status than that of clerks, or small tradesmen; most were artisans'. [2]

Clearly, the friendly society was specifically designed for working men who sought insurance through mutual cooperation. In Sheffield, however, some middle class people did invest in friendly societies, at least until the 1840's.[3] In the late nineteenth century, white collar and supervisory grades joined friendly societies, and the affiliated orders such as the Manchester Unity and the Foresters took their leadership from businessmen and other employers.[4]

Nevertheless, in Sheffield, the friendly societies were built upon the firm foundations of a skilled, well-paid and independent artisan culture. Whilst the affiliated orders were increasingly dominated by employers and self-made men, the leadership and control of the local societies rested firmly in the hands of the local artisans, usually filling society offices in rotation.[5] Generally, the range of occupations elegible for friendly society membership was circumscribed, due to the nature of actuarial science: the balance between contributions and benefits was delicate, and too many members in dangerous occupations dangerously weakened the soundness of the financial structure. Thus the Norfolk Society of Gentlemen Tradesmen would admit no soldier, sailor, miner or delver in 1819.[6] Their revised rules of 1849 also excluded pensioners, grinders, policemen and watchmen.[7] The Sheffield Economical

1. S.L.R. 14 May 1892
2. Thompson, op. cit., p.460
3. Holland, op. cit., p.208
4. Gosden, Friendly Societies, etc., p.89-92
5. For local example of friendly society democracy, see The Articles to be Observed and Kept by the Members of a Friendly Society, Distinguished by the Name of the Tradesmen's Society, Sheffield, 1810; Gosden, Friendly Societies, etc. p.88
6. Rules and Orders to be Kept by the Norfolk Society of Gentlemen Tradesmen, Sheffield, 1819, p.7
7. Rules and Orders to be Observed by the Norfolk Society, Sheffield, 1849, p.6

Independent Order of Oddfellows would admit no-one employed in mines or leadmills.[1] The Independent Order of Rechabites excluded dry grinders, whose high rate of mortality was well known.[2] Workers in excluded trades sometimes formed their own societies, such as the Brightside Local Miners' Society, which existed in 1858.[3] Labourers and lower paid workers were also sometimes excluded: the Tradesmen's Society in 1810 would accept no-one who earned less than 12/- per week.[4]

Men from a wide variety of Sheffield trades joined friendly societies; in practice, those from dangerous occupations could usually find societies who would take them. In 1805, the Masonic Society had on its books 1 scissorsmith, 4 cutlers, 2 platers, 1 tilter, 1 founder, 1 screwmaker, 1 hoopdrawer, 2 butchers, 1 tailor, 1 hosier, 1 victualler, 6 publicans, 1 bricklayer, 1 draper, 1 optician, 1 grocer, 1 constable, 2 hatters, 2 joiners and 4 merchants.[5] In the 1840's, the Royal Jubilee Society drew members from the whole range of the Sheffield trades, and also included farmers from neighbouring villages.[6] G.C. Holland investigated the trades of members of seven sick societies in 1840. Only the Bethel Society had capital of less than £100. The Revolution Society was the wealthiest, with capital of £6,708. Membership of societies was drawn from 979 trades, mainly the staple industries. The largest category were the 276 cutlers, 141 of which were in the Tradesmen's Society. There were also 91 'manufacturers', 75 filemakers, 73 clerks, and 62 silversmiths. There were also 107 grinders, but these were concentrated into three societies, 79 in the Tradesmen's: this society also had all the 36 colliers who were listed.[7]

Holland rightly observed the difficulty in determining social class from the occupations of friendly society members. His 267 cutlers included

1. General Constitutional Laws of the Sheffield Economical and Independent Order of Oddfellows, Sheffield, 1858, p.2
2. R.C. on Friendly Societies, etc., 2nd Report 2nd Minutes of Evidence (P.P. 1872, XXVI) A 17,357
3. Rules and Contribution Book of the Brightside Local Miners Society, Sheffield, 1858
4. The Articles to be observed and kept by the Members of a Friendly Society Distinguished by the Name of the Tradesmen's Society, Sheffield, 1810, p.7
5. John Stokes, Sheffield Masonic Benefit Society, Sheffield, 1921, p.11
6. Names, Trades, Residences, etc. of Members of the Royal Jubilee Society, Sheffield, Sheffield, 1848
7. Holland, op. cit., pp.211-213

masters as well as journeymen. It is clear that in the early nineteenth century, men from professional backgrounds as well as manufacturers and superior tradesmen involved themselves in societies. In 1805, the Masonic Society included 4 merchants, an attorney and a gentleman.[1] Thomas Asline Ward and Joseph Levick, 'gentlemen', as well as a clergyman from Selby, were contributory members of the Royal Jubilee Society in 1848.[2] In 1840, Holland found that while some clubs were composed exclusively of artisans, others had a large proportion of master manufacturers, shopkeepers and persons of independent property. The Revolution Society was the elite in this respect, including among its membership an architect, attorney, auditor, 2 gentlemen, 2 schoolmasters and 2 surgeons.[3]

Middle class membership gave friendly societies a desired respectability and status. Their role was generally passive, however, and important only in that it helped to guarantee the continued stability of the society. Societies where masters, manufacturers and gentlemen were well represented were thought by Holland to be strong, for

> 'many of the members, even when illness is very protracted, never dream of falling back upon such resources'. 4.

Some societies maintained their superiority by restricting membership. The Revolution would admit no more than 200 members. Applicants had to be nominated and balloted, and the entrance fee, formerly half a crown was two guineas in 1840. The Royal Jubilee followed a similar policy. Waiting lists for these societies were often long. It was common for members of the Revolution Society to nominate children at birth, or before the age of ten years. During its lengthy existence, the Revolution included men of high social standing such as J.H. Abraham, schoolmaster and scientist, Luke Palfreyman, lawyer, William Todd, printer of the Sheffield Mercury,

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1. Stokes, Masonic Benefit Society, etc., p.11
2. Names, etc. For Thomas Asline Ward, see above, p.29.
3. Holland, op. cit., pp.211-213
4. ibid., p.208

manufacturers Thomas Ibbotson and S.S. Brittain, magistrate Charles Atkinson , Alderman Charles Peace, and Thomas Jessop, steel manufacturer and mayor of Sheffield 1863-1864.[1] Another way of maintaining status and stability was through the involvement of honorary and non-benefiting members. The Royal Jubilee followed this practice from its inception in 1809. Among this type of member were town regent William Butcher, surgeon John Carr, solicitor William Unwin, Thomas Asline Ward, and the Jessop and Levick families.[2] The wealth from such people helped the Revolution and the Royal Jubilee societies to accumulate their riches. The Female Benefit Society, formed in 1795, and widely patronised by the wives of manufacturers, attracted 110 honorary members out of 300 within its first year.[3] Sometimes, middle class benevolence took a more personal form: the Rawson Sick Society, established in 1828, was founded by the daughter of the late Thomas Rawson, and launched with a capital of £500.[4]

As elsewhere, the middle classes also came to dominate the affiliated orders. These were usually upwardly mobile self-made men. High Chief Ranger of the Foresters, Thomas Abbott, was an orphan at the Boys' Charity School, and rose to be inspector of schools in Sheffield. This was accompanied by life-long involvement with the Foresters, which he had joined at the age of eighteen years.[5] In 1903, the High Court of the Foresters in Sheffield included as its president the lord mayor, J. Wycliffe Wilson, the Master Cutler, A.J. Hobson, Sir Charles Skelton, members of parliament Batty Langley, Samuel Roberts and Charles Wortley. Alderman W.E. Clegg and Archdeacon Eyre were also prominent.[6]

Rigid selection of potential members also helped to protect the financial viability of the friendly society. Limitations placed upon age restricted entry to the young and healthy, who were least likely to make demands on 'the box'. Eighteen years was the usual minimum age. Some societies

1. Sheffield Independent, 19 July 1919; Rules and Regulations of the Royal Jubilee Society, Sheffield, 1840, p.5
2. Names, etc.; R.E. Leader, 'Sick Clubs and Friendly Societies', S.C.L., IC-157
3. S.I. 12 August 1796
4. Leader, Sick Clubs etc., p.172
5. Ancient Order of Foresters Guide to Sheffield, Sheffield, 1903, p.58
6. Ibid., p.45

such as the Norfolk, accepted men at sixteen years.[1] In the Amicable Lodge

of Oddfellows, entrants had to be twenty one years or more.[2] The upper age

limit was often was young as 25 years, as with the masons in 1812.[3] The

Prince of Wales Society in 1831 imposed an upper limit of 28 years.[4] A

maximum age of 45 years obtained in the numerous Oddfellows lodges.[5] Given

the high mortality rates in many of the Sheffield trades, friendly societies

who admitted a substantial proportion of members above the age of twenty five

years incurred the risk of a heavy burden on the funds. This had to be

reconciled with the need felt by older working men for the protection of a

sick club. From the middle of the century, societies began to admit older

members. This was covered by the development of a graduated scale of entrance

fees and contributions.

Many of the better managed societies survived for several decades or

more, and indeed set great store by their longevity. However, societies which

sustained themselves for lengthy periods tended to have an increasingly

elderly membership. This was made worse by the restrictions on the numbers of

new entrants,which meant that an ageing society was relatively undiluted by

younger men. G.C. Holland analysed the ages of membership of nine societies

in 1840. Four were fairly recent, having been founded between 1813 and 1828.

The remainder were eighteenth century in origin: the oldest, the Providence

society, was established in 1754. The total membership of these societies

was 2436: 800 of these were between 30 and 39 years, and a further 1173 over

the age of 40 years, including 241 over 60 years. The scissorsmiths society,

founded in 1791 also had an older membership: 100 of its 250 members were over

50 years of age. More recent societies, such as the Church of England Society,

had a younger age structure.[6]

1. Rules and Orders, etc., p.7
2. A Brief History of the Amicable Lodge of Oddfellows, Sheffield, 1857, p.6
3. Rules and Orders to be Observed and Maintained by the Mason's Society, Sheffield, 1812, p.6
4. Rules to be Observed and Kept by the Members of a Friendly Society Called the Prince of Wales Society, Sheffield, 1831, p.8
5. Oddfellows, Brief History, etc., p.6; Siddall, Story of a Century, etc. p.7
6. Holland, op. cit., p.211

Societies with ageing memberships became increasingly vulnerable, not just because of heavy demands upon capital, but because they failed to attract new members. The young were reluctant to expose their investment to the claims of older members. In this situation, Holland thought the demise of the society was inevitable.[1] There were other disadvantages to belonging to a society of this type: despite the wealth of many of the older clubs, the company of older men was considered less congenial. Thus in 1874, the Volunteers' Society, established eighty years earlier, with nearly £1700 invested in railway shares, had a dwindling membership of 56, an average age of between 55 and 56 years, and had had no new members for nine years.[2] This contrasts with the healthy position recorded by Holland in 1840, when the society had 250 members.[3] Those societies with an increasingly old membership often took matters into their own hands, and disbanded, the younger members reforming, leaving out those who were a burden to the funds.[4]

The relative exclusivity of many friendly societies was reflected in high entrance fees and contributions. It is a measure of the prosperity of the labour aristocracy in Sheffield that so many artisans were able to afford them. By charging high entrance fees, societies exploited their popularity, and increased their reserves. Societies such as the Revolution, with restricted membership, high entrance fees and a superior membership who made few demands on their funds were in a position to amass substantial capital, and thus avoided the instability of some of the poorer societies. In essence, the soundness of a society depended upon the ability to maintain the delicate balance between entrance fees and contributions, and the payment of benefits.[5]

The early societies founded in the eighteenth century usually had a modest charge for admission. The Revolution charged half a crown in its early years.[6] In 1812, the Masons charged five shillings, with a reduction for sons.[7] Some societies introduced much higher charges. The Revolution raised

1. ibid., p.208
2. R.C. on Friendly Societies, etc. (P.P. 1874 XXIII) p.203
3. Holland, op. cit., p.209
4. R.C. on Friendly Societies, etc., (P.P. 1874 XXIII), p.203
5. For details of membership, contributions and benefits of 15 major societies in the 1850's see S.L.R. 31 March 1855
6. Rules, Articles and Orders of the Revolution Club, Sheffield, 1789, p.6
7. Rules and Orders to be Observed and Maintained by the Masons' Society, Sheffield, 1812

its fee to two guineas.[1.] This sum was also charged by the Church of England Society in 1862.[2.] Perhaps the highest fee of all was the three guineas charged by the Prince of Wales Society in 1831.[3.] Other societies retained a more modest entry fee, however. This applies to the sick and funeral societies formed by working men on the shop floor. The workmen in the tilting shop at Thomas Firth's charged only a shilling in 1856.[4.] Some societies managed to maintain a low fee until the end of the century: the Choral Society charged a maximum of five shillings in 1896.[5.]

With the demand from older age groups for the protection of the club, friendly societies learned to compensate for higher risks by adjusting entrance fees. The Oddfellows was one of the earliest societies to adopt the sliding scale. The Manchester Unity had a charge of a guinea for members under 40 years, but increased this to five guineas for those between 41 and 45 years.[6.] Some Oddfellows lodges introduced more complex schemes. For example, the Palestine Lodge in 1863 charged those under 21 years five shillings and sixpence, whilst those between 30 and 35 years paid twelve shillings. A surcharge of sixteen shillings a year was levied for those entering between 16 and 40 years.[7.]

Regular contributions, payable on a fortnightly or monthly basis, were also levied. Holland thought that monthly contributions were too small in general, especially in view of the ways in which they were spent.[8.] The most usual contribution, at least until the middle of the century, was a shilling or fifteen pence, of which several pence was immediately spent on drink. In the Revolution Club, the rule was 'one shilling and twopence to the box and twopence spent'.[9.] The Norfolk Society of Gentlemen Tradesmen had similar rules.[10.] In

1. S.D.T. 19 July 1919
2. Church of England Sick Society, Rules, Sheffield, 1862
3. Rules to be Observed and Kept by the Members of a Friendly Society Called The Prince of Wales Society, Sheffield, 1831, p.9
4. Rules for the Government of the Sick and Funeral Fund, Established for the Benefit of the Workmen Employed by Thomas Firth and Sons, Sheffield, 1856, p.2
5. Rules and Orders of the Sheffield Choral Sick and Funeral Society, Sheffield 1896, p.7
6. Siddall, op. cit., p.7
7. Laws, Rules and Regulations for the Government of members of the Palestine Lodge of Oddfellows, Sheffield, 1863, p.3 See also Rules of the Dixon Benevolent Lodge, Sheffield, 1868, p.10; General Constitutional Laws, etc.p.6
8. Holland, op. cit., p.207
9. Revolution Club, Rules, etc., p.5
10. Norfolk Society, Rules, etc., p.11

general, trade societies also levied high contributions. For example, the table blade forgers in 1849 levied contributions of between two and five shillings a week. The amount varied according to the financial need of the union, and this flexibility was typical of many trade societies.[1] The link between contributions and conviviality was hard to break. However, the societies gradually improved their stability by introducing graded contributions, according to age. The burden placed upon older members, many of whom had been contributing since youth, made sliding scales unpopular. Demands for graduated contributions failed more than once among the Foresters in the 1870's, and such a scheme was not implemented until the following decade.[2]

The two fundamental benefits made available by friendly societies to their members were financial support during sickness, and money for funeral expenses. Benefit was rarely available to new members, however: members of the Masonic Society could claim no benefit for one year after joining.[3] The amount of sickness benefit was reduced, according to the length of the illness. A common allowance in the middle of the century was ten shillings or half a guinea for the first three months, diminishing to five shillings a week thereafter. This was the case with the Royal Jubilee in 1840, and with the Church of England Sick Society in 1862.[4] Critics such as Holland thought that benefits were generous.[5] As early as 1799, the Charitable Society allowed ten shillings for 24 weeks.[6] Sometimes, payments were increased if funds were healthy. In 1812, the Masonic Benefit Society allowed twelve shillings a week for twelve weeks, nine shillings for nine weeks, and six shillings thereafter, but this went up if funds increased to more than £1,000[7] Trade societies commonly provided high benefits: between five and eight shillings a week, with between two and three shillings for a wife, and one and two shillings for an apprentice, were usual.[8] However, payments were a drain on the funds, and the

1. Pollard, History, etc., p.72
2. Foresters, Guide, etc., p.67
3. Articles of Agreement Made by Persons Forming the Masonic Benefit Society, Sheffield, 1812, p.6
4. Royal Jubilee Society, op. cit., p.5; Church of England Sick Society op. cit., p.3
5. Holland, op. cit., p.207
6. Orders to be Observed, Maintained and Kept by all of the Charitable Society Sheffield, 1799, p.4
7. Masonic Society, Articles, etc., p.14
8. Pollard, History, etc., p.72

amount paid in benefit declined from the 1860's.[1]   Another form of benefit was provided by the Female Benefit Society: in 1803, a monthly payment of twopence secured relief of half a guinea during the lying-in month.[2]

Payments made for funerals were a crucial aspect of the work of the friendly society, in the context of working class anxieties for a decent funeral. The Tradesmen's Society provided pall bearers and ceremonial for the funerals of their members.[3]   The Oddfellows provided palls, sashes, and white gloves, and these could also be hired out to non-members.[4]   The amount of benefit payable for a funeral related again to the length of membership. The Norfolk Society in 1819 paid £2 for the death of a member of one year's standing, and £8 for four years.[5]   The Royal Jubilee allowed as much as £17, plus a collection among the members, for an individual of eighteen years standing.[6]   Funeral benefits were also available for members' wives. In the Tradesmen's Society, a member of three years who lost his wife was given £2.[7] The sick society organised by furnacemen at Dannemora Steel Works allowed £1 for the death of a wife, and ten shillings for the expense of burying a child.[8]

Gradually, the payment of benefit became more sophisticated. This was especially the case with the affiliated orders. By 1872, the Rechabites were paying a superannuation allowance, found only in the Sheffield district, and were providing half pay for life in cases of prolonged sickness, without need for special contribution.[9]   The Ancient Order of Foresters had a widows and orphans' fund, re-established in 1856 after an earlier collapse: in 1863, 13 widows received between nine shillings and two pounds twelve shillings each.[10] The 1890's saw more developments. By 1900, the Foresters had established a fund for accident compensation, and assurance was also allowed on the funeral fund. The provision of pensions was another important aspect of the societies'

1. ibid., p.148
2. S.I. 8 September 1803
3. Rules and Orders to be Observed by the Benevolent Society of Tradesmen, Sheffield, 1806, p.7
4. Siddall, op. cit., p.14
5. Norfolk Society, Rules, etc., p.12
6. Royal Jubilee Society, Rules, etc., p.7
7. Society of Tradesmen, Rules, etc., p.13
8. Dannemora Steel Works Furnace and Sick Society, Sheffield, n.d.
9. R.C. on Friendly Societies, etc., 2nd Report and Minutes of Evidence (P.P. 1872, XXVI), AA.17,364-17,371
10. Ancient Order of Foresters, Sheffield and Hallamshire District, Minutes of District Meeting, Sheffield, 1863, pp.9-11.

work, Trade Societies, such as the Filesmiths allowed a small pension in the middle of the century.[1] Some local societies, such as the Prince of Wales, allowed a pension at 70 years of age in the 1830's, in return for the relinquishing of benefit.[2] The Foresters began a pension scheme in 1891. A payment of £26.5.0. secured a pension of ten shillings per week. All new Foresters' courts had pension funds. In 1902, the order paid out £2907 in sickness benefit, and £875 in funeral benefit: however, £348 was spent on widows and orphans, £300 on pensions, £482 on medical attention, £150 on accident compensation, and £56 on benevolent grants.[3]

The complex system of contributions and benefits must be seen in the context of the order and solidarity which the Sheffield friendly societies strove to achieve. This emphasis on self-discipline and community purpose was shared with the trade unions, and reached far back into the eighteenth century. Involvement in the activities of friendly societies gave the artisan experience of moral training:

> 'the discipline essential for the safe-keeping of funds, the
> orderly conduct of meetings and the determination of disputed
> cases, involved an effort of self-rule as great as the new
> disciplines of work'. [4]

This ethic of self-help and mutual aid is reflected in the names of many of Sheffield's friendly society branches. Some were named after benefactors or places, but others, such as the Rechabites 'Work and Win', the Foresters' 'Fruitful Vine', and the Oddfellows' 'Friend-in-Need', symbolised some of the aspirations and fears of the artisan culture from which they sprang.[5]

Part of this self-regulation was reflected in the meticulous attention to procedure and etiquette which characterised friendly society meetings. There was usually an elaborate hierarchy of officers and stewards often with as many as 12 assistants. These were elected in rotation, and shared responsibility for 'the box', usually a chest with up to four keys. There was also often a beadle, with responsibility for visiting the sick.

1. Pollard, History, etc., p.72
2. Prince of Wales Society, Rules, etc., p.17
3. Foresters, Guide, etc., pp.68-69
4. Thompson, op. cit., pp.457-458
5. Red Book, etc., pp.89-101 for the names of societies in Sheffield.

This was a healthy democracy in action: the officers themselves were subject to fines for failing to perform their duties to the letter.[1]   Such activities gave vital organisational and administrative training to generations of Sheffield artisans.

Some of the affiliated orders approached the degree of secrecy and ritual which characterised Freemasonry. In the Sheffield United Order of the Ark, a password was necessary to enter the lodge, meetings were held in secret, and fines of ten shillings were levied for divulging their whereabouts to a stranger. This tradition, deriving from government hostilities to societies in the 1790's, generated a closed and suspicious nature among friendly societies well into the nineteenth century: habits of secrecy were still being enforced by the Ark as late as the 1850's.[2]   Despite this secrecy, however, many lodges hastened to affirm their loyalty to the constitution. Whilst friendly societies may have been covers for trade union or quasi-revolutionary activity during the first half of the nineteenth century, they were also sensitive to the political climate, especially the attitude of the authorities. The Ark, established during the Chartist period in the mid-1840's, made an attachment to crown and government a condition of benefit.[3]

Many of the rules of friendly societies were intended to ensure an atmosphere of harmony and good order in society meetings. Mutual brotherhood was the ideal, and those who transgressed the well-defined pattern of behaviour were subjected to fines. Rules allowed an important measure of control over the membership, and helped to maintain public respectability. Thus, in the words of the Sheffield Iris

> 'every breach of honesty and charity shall operate to the
> ignominious explusion of the offender, moral and religious
> sanctions are strengthened - the decorums of society are
> preserved more inviolate - and those meaner minds, who may
> have little perception of the beauty of rectitude, are kept
> within the pale of duty by counteractions of interest'. [4]

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1. See for example, Tradesmen's Society, Articles, etc., pp.5-6, 9.
2. Laws of the Sheffield United Order of the Ark, Sheffield, 1857, pp.9, 12.
3. Ibid., p.3
4. S.I. 17 July 1806

The political and religious sensibilities of members were protected, and public order maintained, by rules which imposed fines for political toasts or sentiments, or engaging in religious controversy.[1] More common, however, were strictures against improper behaviour. Drunkenness and gambling were held to be particularly detrimental to the peace of a society. Members of the Charitable Society in 1799, were fined sixpence for making wagers, and for coming 'disordered in liquor'.[2] Drinking and conviviality were of course an essential function of friendly society activity, during regular club meetings, or feast days. However, a firm distinction had to be drawn between agreeable brotherhood and disruptive drunkenness. The Mason's society fined members five shillings for fighting and disturbance on feast days.[3] Swearing and indecency were also forbidden: the Brightside Local Miners' Society fined its members twopence for this offence.[4] There were also rules forbidding any activity which distracted from the central purpose of the society. Business transactions, and the reading of books and newspapers were usually forbidden.[5] Respectable dress was also important, especially with the early societies. Artisans who attended meetings of the Charitable Society in 1799 were fined threepence if they came with their aprons on, or 'otherwise than decent'.[6] In the second half of the century, the affiliated orders adopted a brisk and professional attitude to insurance, as befitted their power and numerical strength. Nevertheless, small dividing societies such as the Choral Sick and Funeral Society still levied fines for disturbance or swearing in the club room as late as 1896.[7]

The need to protect their funds from abuse meant that societies imposed strict conditions upon those applying for benefit. This process allowed the code of conduct of the self-respecting artisan, already defined within the context of club meetings, to be imposed upon regular daily life. The rules of the club clearly defined what was socially acceptable behaviour for its

1. Ark, op. cit., p.10
2. Charitable Society, op. cit., p.6
3. Mason's Society, Rules and Orders, etc., p.9
4. Brightside Local Miners Society, Rules and Contribution Book, Sheffield 1858
5. Ark, op. cit., p.10
6. Charitable Society, Orders, etc. p.6
7. Choral Sick and Funeral Society, op. cit., p.12

artisan members, and what conduct deserved exclusion. Through this code, the friendly society gave protection and support to the 'honourable' artisan, whilst the workman who transgressed the ethic of industriousness and impeccable personal conduct was cast out from the benefit. In this way, the friendly society helped to define working class attitudes toward poverty and unemployment, and to draw the distinction between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor.

Thus, the friendly society was essentially for the provident and self-respecting workingman. Those who lost status through poverty or crime, by admission to the workhouse or the debtors' prison, were excluded from benefit. Members who incurred need through moral lapses were also denied relief: the Tradesmen's Society excluded any member found to have venereal disease.[1] The Foresters' widows and orphans fund would only provide for children born in wedlock, and widows themselves were maintained only if they conducted themselves with propriety, and remained unmarried.[2] In the late eighteenth century, societies such as the Charitable and the Revolution disallowed payments for wrestling, fighting, and excessive drinking.[3] Drunkenness and violence remained the most usual reasons for exclusion from benefit, although persons suffering accident or illness through debauchery or immorality were also denied relief.[4] The smaller societies maintained some quaint restrictions on benefit throughout the century. The Choral Sick and Funeral Society excluded from relief any member bringing sickness or lameness upon himself.

> 'by wilfully exposing himself to danger, or by drunkenness, fighting, (except in self-defence), wrestling, jumping, hopping, racing, footballing, poaching, or any unlawful or immoral practice'. [5]

Members in receipt of benefit had their personal behaviour placed under the closest scrutiny by the society. Many societies organised a system

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1. Tradesmen's Society, _Articles,_ p.10
2. _Rules of the Sheffield and Hallamshire District Branch of the Ancient Order of Foresters' Friendly Society,_ Sheffield, 1891, p.21
3. _Orders to be Observed, Maintained and Kept by all the Charitable Society held at the Three Travellers,_ Sheffield, 1790, p.3; Revolution Club, _Rules,_ etc., p.8
4. Ark., _op. cit.,_ p.14, Church of England Sick Society, _op. cit.,_ p.3
5. Choral Sick and Funeral Society, _op. cit.,_ p.10

of sick visiting, which discouraged malingering as much as bringing comfort
to the afflicted. It was important that members in receipt of relief should
modify their social activities in accordance with club rules. Members who
left their homes after 7 pm. in the winter or 9 pm. in summer were commonly
fined, or even lost their benefit.[1] The Church of England Society fined or
excluded any member found working, getting drunk, or behaving in a disorderly
manner, whilst under club pay.[2] The Royal Jubilee Society included gambling
in its list of prescribed social activities.[3] The Oddfellows denied benefit
to any found 'intoxicated, fighting, dog-fighting, playing any game for money,
shooting or poaching.'[4] Gambling houses and brothels were placed out of
bounds by the Norfolk Society.[5]

Some friendly societies had functions supplementary to the provision
of sickness and funeral benefit. This was often the case with the single
trade society, organised in the workshop. The Dannemora acted as an informal
savings bank, offering loans against surety, with interest at a shilling in
the pound, and repayments of a shilling a week per pound borrowed. Such
societies fulfilled at least some of the functions of trades unions. Within
the Dannemora, the self-regulation and discipline of the work gang was at
least as important as the provision of benefits. A system of 35 fines was
enforced. Thus any man 'leaving his ingots wedged up at night' was fined
fourpence, and sixpence for 'not getting his share of clay in'.[6] Such
societies could also act collectively in relation to the employers. In 1869,
the saw handle makers' mutual aid society thanked Messrs. Brittain and Co. for
continuing their orders to workmen, despite a recent trade dispute.[7] Sometimes
the distinction between trade union and friendly society was nominal, as in
1906, when the Friendly Society of Ironfounders negotiated on behalf of the
two Sheffield branches with the Engineering Trades Employers Association

1. Choral Sick and Funeral Society, op. cit., p.11; these rules also applied
   in the Methodist sick society at Surrey St. chapel. See above, Chapter 10.
2. Church of England Sick Society, op. cit.
3. Royal Jubilee Society, op. cit., p.6
4. Palestine Lodge, op. cit., p.9
5. Norfolk Society, Rules, etc., p.11
6. Dannemora, op. cit.
7. Saw Handle Makers' Mutual Aid Society Broadsheet, Sheffield, 1869, S.C.L.
   MP.341S; S.R.I. 2 February 1869

Hadfields and Firths for a two shilling rise in weekly wages.[1]

Although the Sheffield friendly societies were capable of responding collectively to social and political idealism, their development was individual, and their horizons often mundane. Between 1795 and 1811, however, high bread prices combined with a new sensitivity to political possibilities to promote the first and last attempt at cooperation among the societies. In August 1795, a committee was formed from 16 societies to establish the Club Corn Mill, under the influence of men such as Edward Cartwright, a member of the Constitutional Society.[2] Each society invested twenty shillings per member, and the capital was used to obtain a corn mill on the Don at Neepsend. By grinding flour themselves, the societies hoped to provide each member with a stone of flour per week at prime cost, plus half a stone for servants, apprentices and dependent relatives.[3] The foundation stone of the Mill was laid in November 1795, accompanied by processions of friendly society members with bands and flags. Such an occasion allowed the fullest use of symbolism: the clubs marched with an arch decorated with ears of wheat and garlands of oats mixed with laurel, and a medallion of a child with a loaf in its hand, and the motto "now we shall get bread". The events passed under the scrutiny of Colonel Athorpe and the Sheffield Volunteers, and the crowds dispersed peaceably.[4] Such an enterprise was evidence of the wealth and self-confidence of the societies: the project paid a 5% dividend in 1799. However, there was mismanagement, projects for a cheap shoe warehouse and cheap milk failed, and the mill was let and the remaining stock divided in 1811.[5] In future, the sick clubs returned to their individual activities, and declined to involve themselves collectively in politically ambitious schemes for the salvation of the working class.

1. Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Report on Negotiations for a Two Shillings per Week Advance, Sheffield, 1906
2. For the Constitutional Society, see above, Chapter 2.
3. S.I. 21 August 1795
4. An Accurate Account of the Proceedings on the Occasion of Laying the Foundation Stone of the New Corn Mill, Sheffield, 1795, pp.3-6
5. S.I. 23 July 1811, John Holland, The Tour of the Don, London, 1837 vol. 1, pp.188-189

The friendly societies sought to channel and control the moral behaviour of the artisan, working alongside church, chapel and temperance society in their competition for the leisure activities of the working man. However, friendly societies had significant advantages over 'middle class' agencies. From the earliest years, their activities were firmly set in the context of recreation and conviviality. Societies met at public houses: at least until the second half of the nineteenth century, there were few alternatives. The relationship between club and pub was close. Indeed, the friendly society grew naturally out of pub culture.[1] Members and officers of societies were also regular customers of the publican. It was common for landlords to have custody of 'the box', and to be entrusted with one of its keys. Innkeepers had much to gain from offering hospitality to a club, through room rents and increased sales. The rule of 'one shilling and twopence to the box and twopence spent' made club nights remunerative.[2]

Despite temperance pressure, the relationship between the friendly society and the pub remained sacrosanct. Many of Sheffield's oldest pubs harboured societies. In 1786, 48 of the town's 50 friendly societies met in drinking places. These were all in the town centre, in the vicinity of the Market Place: houses such as the Hen and Chickens in True Love's Gutter, the Bay Childers on High St., the Black Lion on Snig Hill, and the Tontine on Haymarket gave hospitality to local clubs. The Rose and Crown on High St. accommodated as many as 5 societies at this time.[3] The Golden Ball on Campo Lane and the Black Swan on Snig Hill were also associated with friendly societies.[4] The system of 'lodge liquor' did not prevail so much among the affiliated orders.[5] Nevertheless, in 1868, 23 of the 27 Foresters courts were meeting in public houses. The location of these meeting places reflects the growth of artisan suburbs such as Walkley: pubs near the steel works, such

1. There was also the same relationship between the trade union and the pub. See above, chapter 18.
2. Revolution Club, Rules, etc., p.5
3. Account of the Societies, etc., MP 145L
4. Rules and Orders to be Observed and Kept by the Benevolent Society of Tradesmen, Sheffield, 1806, p.1
5. R.C. on Friendly Societies, etc., (P.P. 1874 XXIII) p.203

as the Cricket Ball on Saville St. East, and the Wellington on Brightside
Lane were among many in the east of the city who accommodated friendly
societies.[1]

The comradeship and conviviality of the society was an integral part
of the fortnightly or monthly meeting of the club, when dues were collected
and official business transacted. Most societies had annual feasts, sometimes
to celebrate the division of stock, festivities such as Christmas, or the
anniversary of their foundation: annual celebrations of this kind, with
opportunities for eating, drinking and relaxing, were firmly rooted in the
seasonal festivities of pre-industrial culture. The cost of feasts was born
by individual contributions. The Royal Jubilee charged two shillings for a
dinner and liquor ticket to celebrate their annual feast each October.[2]
Often, however, a proportion of the cost of festivities was paid for out of
stock. The Norfolk Society charged a shilling for drink, but the cost of the
dinner was taken out of the society funds.[3] This was also the custom with
the Oddfellows.[4] Club feasts were undoubtedly opportunities for unfettered
enjoyment. Joseph Mather's song, the 'Guinea Club Feast', celebrated with
the 'tipping of bumpers to loosen our hides', shows the uninhibited festivities
which characterised such an occasion, and the central role of drink in this.[5]
Club feasts also gave rise to specially written songs. Often these were about
local political events, such as the Chartist uprising of 1840, but the theme
of drink and conviviality was more central. Songs by John Smith, written for
the anniversaries of the Revolution Sick Society, had gone through three
editions by 1857.[6]

However, the friendly societies took care in their public and private
celebrations to maintain a balance between the pleasures of conviviality,

1. Ancient Order of Foresters, Sheffield and Hallamshire District, Minutes of District Meeting, Sheffield, 1848, p.12
2. Royal Jubilee, Rules, etc., p.10
3. Rules and Orders to be Observed by the Norfolk Society, Sheffield, 1849
4. Palestine Lodge, op. cit., p.11
5. John Wilson, The Songs of Joseph Mather : to which is added a Memoir of Mather, and Miscellaneous Songs Relating to Sheffield, Sheffield, 1862, pp.57-58
6. John Smith, Songs Written For and Sung at the Anniversary of the Revolution Sick Society During the Last Forty Years, 2nd edition, Sheffield, 1841

and the consciousness of status and reputation. They were careful to
safeguard the good order of such occasions by an extension of their code of
conduct. Thus the masons imposed a five shilling fine for fighting or other
disturbances on club day.[1] Public demonstrations of the respectability,
solidarity and substance of the societies was also an important part of annual
feasts. In the 1820's and 1830's, the Jubilee Society culminated its
celebrations with 'dinner on the table at 2 o'clock' at the George Inn,
Market Place. This followed a solemn procession of its members through the
streets for a sermon at the Parish Church. Prestige was given to the days
events by the attendance of prominent figures, such as the Vicar of Sheffield,
Dr. Knight, and leading manufacturers.[2]

Gradually, the relationship between the friendly society and the public
house began to be eroded. It was common for societies to move their
allegiance from pub to pub, as their numbers grew, and as they sought more
respectable accommodation. Thus the Revolution Society moved from the Crown
and Cushion in Sycamore St. to the Kings Head in 1804, and on to the George
in 1809.[3] With the growth of the temperance movement, the relationship
between club and pub came under close scrutiny. Some working class radicals
were critical of the power of landlords: the Working Mens' Advocate, published
in 1841, accused the publican of pocketing cash which should have gone to
build up the capital of the friendly society. Thus it was argued that many
staunch supporters of sick clubs were denied benefit in time of need, through
the dissipation of funds on drinking and feasting.[4]

This was a view shared by middle class reformers and churchmen. The
friendly societies took matters into their own hands, and as early as the 1780's,
well before temperance opinion was articulated, at least two societies met
away from public houses. The obvious and indeed almost the only alternative

1. Masons' Society, Rules, etc., p.9
2. Broadsheet of the Annual Feast of the Jubilee Sick Society, Sheffield
   1823, S.C.L., MP58-M; ibid., 1832, MP59-M; ibid., 1835, MP.60-M
3. S.D.T. 26 July 1902
4. Sheffield Workingman's Advocate, IV, 20 March 1841, p.3

to the pub were premises connected in some way with religious observances.
In 1786, there were societies meeting in the Wesleyan Chapel,on Norfolk St.,
and in Scotland St. Independent chapel.[1] The Church of England Sick Society,
established in 1828, met away from the public houses: any member attempting to
remove the society to a pub was to be excluded, according to the rules of the
society.[2] Nevertheless, some societies endowed by middle class individuals
continued to meet in pubs. The Rawson Society met in the Three Tuns on
Orchard St.

It was not until the middle of the century that appreciable numbers of
friendly society members began to meet away from pubs. The trend begun by
the Church of England Society was continued by the Rechabites, which was
established on the teetotal principle. In 1868, 4 of the 27 Foresters lodges
met in churches or schoolrooms, attached mostly to Anglican premises, although
one court met in the Independent schoolroom on Queen St.[3] By 1872, some of
the richest and best conducted societies were meeting away from pubs. These
included not only those societies connected with religious bodies, but seven
of the town's most prestigious societies: these were the Revolution, Rawson,
Royal Jubilee, Resolution, Rodney, Fitzwilliam and Female Benefit societies.
Among these were clubs originally established in pubs, which had later moved
away into other accommodation. Significantly, however, this move was thought
to have been accompanied by a decline in popularity. The Royal Jubilee had
previously met in the Black Swan, and had been a popular club, with 300
members in 1840.[4] A six month waiting period prior to election had been
usual. However, in 1872, membership had declined to 200, and the club had lost
members steadily since meeting in private houses.[5]

1. Account of Societies in Sheffield, etc.
2. Church of England Sick Society, op. cit.
3. Ancient order of Foresters, Sheffield and Hallamshire District, Minutes
   of District Meeting, Sheffield, 1868
4. Holland, op. cit., p.209
5. R.C. on Friendly Societies, etc., (P.P. 1874 XXIII), p.203

The retreat from the public house may have been only a partial reason for the decline of such societies, however. The affiliated orders expanded rapidly in Sheffield in the second half of the century: yet the tendency to meet away from pubs is also clear in this type of society. In 1902, 90 of the 102 Druids lodges still met in pubs. However, 29 Rechabites tents, and 12 divisions of the Order of the Sons of Temperance carried on their business without recourse to the public house. 23 of the 38 Foresters' courts also followed this example. The increasing professionalisation and complexity of friendly society business may have contributed to this. Another reason may have been the proliferation of alternative accommodation. Mission rooms, schoolrooms and church halls increased in availability. There was also a tendency to patronise the 'dry' pubs of the Cafe Company, temperance halls, and the premises of political groups, such as the Labour Club at Walkley.[1]

Such a tendency may have marked the beginning of the eclipse of the recreational role of the friendly society: with the spread of organised sport and other leisure activities, the friendly societies lost their hold as providers of mutual companionship and enjoyment. At the same time, the local societies were unable to meet the demands of a sophisticated system of welfare benefits. The moralistic attitudes adopted by some of the older societies may have alienated prospective membership. In some societies, the heavy hand of middle class patronage was evident, not only in the church societies, but in the old established Female Benefit Society. This was praised by the Sheffield Iris as a 'liberal example of public patronage', and was initiated and guided by middle class female benevolence.[2] Its annual festivities lacked the robustness of other friendly society celebrations. Honorary and benefit members, all neatly dressed, walked in procession to a service at the parish

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1. Red Book, op. cit., pp.90-101
2. S.I. 12 August 1796

church. This was followed by tea drinking at the Cutlers' Hall, and an
evening of 'innocent conviviality'. [1.]

In general, however, the most vital friendly societies were those
which offered opportunities for relaxation and companionship on a regular
basis. Some clubs followed the example of church and chapel in pursuing
a deliberate recreational policy. Opportunities for uncontrolled enjoyment
became curtailed, however, as friendly societies supplemented the annual
drinking bouts with ham teas and entertainments. Thus in 1902 the Foresters
Court of the Fruitful Vine embarked upon a social tea in St. Paul's schoolroom,
Attercliffe, with recitations, songs and addresses, and solos on the piano,
violin, concertina and banjo, a formula indistinguishable from that of church,
chapel or sunday school. [2.]

The friendly societies followed the example of the religious agencies
in more ways than one. The educational role of the chapel and sunday school
expressed through mutual improvement societies, and the more formal provision
of lecture courses, has already been discussed. The affiliated orders in
Sheffield made some attempt to improve the education and understanding of their
members, and to provide for mental, as well as material needs. No
particularly distinctive adult education movement sprang from friendly
societies - yet small ad hoc discussion groups and mutual improvement
societies sprang up and died away as the need for them fluctuated. In 1830,
the Oddfellows began a programme of papers and lectures, to be read on lodge
nights, on history, science, literature and related topics: thus the desire
for self-improvement which had led to artisan involvement in the Mechanics
Institution also had more modest expression among the friendly societies in
that year. [4.] Such activities were not general among the societies, however.
Other societies made a less ambitious but equally necessary contribution to
popular education by disseminating information about the function of the
friendly society. Thus in 1863, the Foresters established a quarterly lecture

1. ibid., 11 August 1797
2. Broadsheet, Court of the Fruitful Vine, Sheffield, 1902, S.C.L. MP.612M
   see above, Chapters 7 and 9.
3. Harrison, Learning and Living, etc. p.54
4. A Brief History of the Amicable Lodge of Oddfellows, Sheffield, 1857, p.11

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of the movement to its membership.   Papers on such subjects continued to

be given in the 1860's. These allowed fundamental problems of management to

be discussed: James Brumby of the Norfolk Court read one of the first papers,

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entitled 'are initiation fees and contributions sufficient to pay benefits?'

Towards the end of the century, the Sheffield United Friendly Societies Council

made a valuable contribution to the training of their membership in actuarial

science. In 1901, papers were read to monthly meetings on subjects such as

'investment of funds', and 'transfer of property and mortgages'. Some papers

did have wider implications, however: discussions on old age pensions,

pauperism and the need for outdoor relief helped to educate and prepare the

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attitudes of friendly society membership for the coming of the Welfare State.

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1. Foresters, _Minutes_, etc., 1863, p.4
2. Foresters, _Guide_, etc., p.65; Foresters, _Minutes_, etc., 1868, p.6
3. Red Book, _op. cit._, p.90

26.   Cooperation

The development of the cooperative movement is best explained in
terms of the consecutive phases of community building, between the mid-
1820's and the failure of the Queenwood experiment in 1846, and shopkeeping,
following the example of the Rochdale Pioneers in the late 1840's.[1]   In
Sheffield, cooperation only became a force in the city with the rapid
expansion of the distributive stores in the 1880's.[2]   Even in 1889, each
individual in Sheffield spent only £0.39 in cooperative stores. This may be
contrasted with sums of between £2 and £4 in many Lancashire towns, and amounts
in excess of £5 in the heartland of cooperation, the valleys of the central
Pennines.[3]

Nevertheless, cooperation was an important, if discontinuous thread
in the development of Sheffield's working class tradition of solidarity, thrift
and self-help. The first cooperatives have been described as 'isolated
attempts on the part of groups of people to provide themselves with necessaries
at a reasonable price.'[4]   In Sheffield in the 1790's, working men organised
cooperative ventures on at least two occasions. These were an expression of
their class solidarity, in the face of rising prices, and the dominance of
vested interests in local markets. On the initiative of the sick clubs, a
colliery was opened in opposition to that of the Duke of Norfolk in 1793.[5]
Two years later, the friendly societies were again instrumental in the
establishment of the Club Corn Mill in 1795.[6]

Such attempts at organised cooperation were transient and short lived.
However, under the influence of Robert Owen, cooperative enterprises emerged in
many industrial towns during the 1830's. These early cooperatives were firmly
linked to the Owenite utopia of agrarian communities, sharing common

1. Sidney Pollard, 'Cooperation: From Community Building to Shopkeeping', in ed.
   Asa Briggs and John Saville, Essays in Labour History,London,1960,p.74,passim.
2. Pollard, History of Labour,etc., p.108; G.D.H. Cole, A Century of
   Cooperation, Manchester, 1944, pp.158,177.
3. This is based on a map showing total cooperative sales in 1889 per 1000 of the
   population of the parliamentary constituencies. Beatrice Potter, The
   Cooperative Movement in Great Britain, London, 1918, p.x.
4. A.M. Carr-Saunders, P. Sargant Florence, Robert Peers, Consumer Cooperation in
   Great Britain: An Examination of the British Cooperative Movement, London
   1938, p.25.
5. F. Hall and W.P. Watkins, Cooperation, Manchester, 1934, p.41; T.S. Ashton and
   Joseph Sykes, The Coal Industry in the Eighteenth Century,Manchester,1929,p.66
6. Hall and Watkins, op. cit., p.41; see above Chapter 25.

ownership of production. Such ventures represented an escape from poverty, an

appeal to past community sentiment, and a constructive plan for the future.[1]

The purpose of the Owenite cooperative stores was to raise capital for utopian

experiments; essentially, 'the grocery store appeared as an antechamber to the

millenium'.[2]

The ideas of Robert Owen made themselves felt in Sheffield. In 1833,

there were cooperative stores in Sheffield at Hartshead, West Bar Green and

Pye Bank, which almost certainly derived from the Owenite influence, grafted on

to a resilient local tradition of mutuality.[3] In the 1840's, the ideas of

Owen and G.J. Holyoake were the guiding force behind Isaac Ironside's Hall of

Science, opened by Robert Owen in March 1839, and the Sheffield Workingmen's

Advocate, begun in 1841.[4] However, the ideal of cooperation was but a single

aspect of Owen's complex social philosophy: there were other ways in which the

moral and physical excellence of the people might be achieved. Despite the

personal link between Isaac Ironside and the Queenwood experiment, the Sheffield

Hall of Science did not appear to involve itself in cooperative activity. Under

the guidance of Ironside, it concentrated rather upon educational and

propagandist activities: in Sheffield, at any rate, the New Moral World was to

be achieved by education, rather than by store-keeping.[5]

Later attempts at cooperation in Sheffield owed little to the Owenite

ideal. A natural basis for cooperative organisation was the relationships and

the community of interest forged in the workplace. Some of the cooperative

ventures of the late Victorian period were the spiritual descendants of the

Club Corn Mill of 1795. In 1865, for example, high meat prices led workers at

Messrs. Cammells to organise a cooperative meat store with some

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1. Carr-Saunders, Florence, Peers, op. cit., pp.25-30; Cole, op. cit., pp.15-38; Hall and Watkins, op. cit., pp.48-81.
2. Frank Podmore, Life of Robert Owen, London, 1906, p.391
3. William White, History and General Directory of the Borough of Sheffield, Sheffield, 1833.
4. See above, Chapter 16; see also John Salt, 'The Sheffield Hall of Science', Vocational Aspect; XXV, 1972, pp.133-138.
5. Ironside was a member of the Central Board of Queenswood in 1843. Salt, op.cit., p.133

success.[1] Through the trade union movement, groups of organised workers also ventured into producer cooperation, especially during the last three decades of the century. These were 'no longer idealistic attempts to alter the social structure, but little more than extensions of collective bargaining'.[2] The spring knife cutlers had a tradition of cooperative action, having formed a cooperative store in 1851, which was presumably short-lived.[3] The purpose of this had been to supply its members with good quality goods at cheap prices. However, cooperative action could also be a response to the demoralisation of the trade. In 1875, attempts by Joseph Rogers to reduce the prices paid to outworkers resulted in a strike, supported by the Spring Knife Cutlers Protection Society. Many of the strikers were organised into a producers' cooperative, in the interests of mutual protection. As the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent commented, 'it was the only way in which they could match the masters, who seemed to be taking advantage of them on every hand'.[4]

Several other producers' cooperatives were set up in the metal trades. The Sheffield Cutlery Cooperative Production Society, founded in 1873, operated from the Unity Works, Eldon St. The Filesmiths formed a cooperative for their unemployed members with funds from the South Yorkshire miners, which survived until 1880. The Trade Union Cooperative Cutlery Society was founded in 1898 after a strike. The Sheffield Federated Trades Council sponsored a sheep shear cooperative, established at Brunswick Works, Eldon St. in 1894. This achieved a strong hold over the Australian market, as well as invading South America. By 1900, only two other cooperatives seem to have been formed outside the metal trades, however. A House painting and Decorating Cooperative was founded in 1894; there was also a Newsagents' Cooperative based upon Change Alley.[5]

In general, this type of producer cooperation was not a major force in the city in the late nineteenth century. Henry Vivian of the Labour

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1. S.L.R. 22 November 1865; S.R.I. 23 November 1865; ibid. 28 November 1865
2. Pollard, History, etc., p.222
3. S.R.I. 25 January 1851
4. ibid. 22 April 1875.
5. Registrar of Friendly Societies, Annual Report (P.P. 1901, LXXXI) pp.68-73; Pollard, History, p.222; S.R.I., 6 November 1860.

Association for Promoting Cooperative Production told the Royal Commission
on Labour in 1895 that progress in Sheffield was slow, and cooperatives were
driven to trading upon the open market.[1] The numbers involved in this type of
enterprise were tiny. In 1900, the newsagents' cooperative was the largest,
with 108 members. The Cutlery Cooperative had only 60, and a total profit of
£64. The Trade Union cooperative actually made a loss in 1900.[2]

Such experiments in cooperative production were often ad hoc and short-
term devices. The main force of cooperation in Sheffield began with the
consumers' movement. By the early 1860's, four separate cooperatives had been
established in the outlying villages of Oughtibridge, Stocksbridge, Malin
Bridge and Handsworth Woodhouse. These were a natural development in small
and relatively self-contained communities, which relied heavily upon mining or
steelworks, such as Samuel Fox's at Stocksbridge, for the principal employment.[3]
These were essentially local enterprises, serving a limited market, but all
except the Malin Bridge cooperative were still in existence at the end of the
century. The largest of these, grandly entitled the Stocksbridge Band of Hope
Industrial Cooperative Society,[4] boasted 2222 members and annual sales in excess
of £62,500 in 1899. The other ventures were smaller. Handsworth Woodhouse had
a membership of 650 and sales of £12,893 in the same year, whilst the smaller
Oughtibridge Coop. had 389 members and a turnover of £10,859.[5]

In Sheffield itself, successful and permanent consumer cooperation
began in this decade. In 1861, cooperative stores were opened in Devonshire St.
and at West Bar Green, the latter in connection with the Ancient Order of
Foresters.[6] The earliest permanent store was the Sheffield Cooperative Society,
established on Trippet Lane in 1865. This was followed by the Brightside and
Carbrook Cooperative Society, opened in Carbrook St. in 1868. The Ecclesall

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1. R.C. on Labour, Fourth Report, (P.P. 1893-4, XXXIX), 7670
2. Registrar of Friendly Societies, op. cit.
3. Joseph Kenworthy, History of the Stocksbridge Band of Hope Industrial
   Cooperative Society Ltd. 1860-1910, Manchester, 1910; Women's Cooperative
   Guild, Congress Souvenir, Sheffield, 1950, pp.26-27.
4. In spite of the title, there was no connection with temperance.
5. Report of Workmen's Cooperative Societies in the United Kingdom, (P.P.
   1901, LXXIV), pp.82-86; Registrar of Friendly Societies, op. cit., pp.64-73.
6. S.R.I. 9 March 1861; ibid. 18 May 1861

Cooperative, serving the south-west of the city, was begun in 1874.[1]

All these ventures commenced from modest beginnings. The Brightside
and Carbrook begun by a dozen artisans in a small shop in Carbrook, showed a
steady growth, with a surplus of £40 after eight months, and opened its first
branch at Wincobank in 1876.[2] The Ecclesall Cooperative made similar progress,
with £71 profit in its first year. It began to establish branches in the 1890's.[3]
The Sheffield Cooperative began with a working capital of £151, and made over
£582 profit in its first year.[4] The Ecclesall and Brightside ventures forged
ahead between 1885 and 1890. During these years, membership of the Brightside
and Carbrook increased from 540 to over 2,000, with an annual turnover rising
from £12,217 to £53, 693. In 1895, membership had grown to just under 6,000,
and was nearly 12,000 in 1899,[5] with sales of £312,817. Although Sheffield had
no major cooperative store in 1880, by 1900, the Brightside and Carbrook with
over 13,000 members had become the fifteenth biggest in the country.[6] Its
rival, the Ecclesall Cooperative, showed a similar pattern. Between 1885 and
1890, membership increased from 783 to 1458, reached 4635 in 1895, and nearly
9,000 with a turnover of £161,278 in 1899.[7]

Not all cooperatives achieved this kind of success, however,
Membership of the Sheffield Cooperative declined in the 1880's, allegedly due
to mismanagement. At the end of the century, it had only 1804 members, and a
turnover of £8,178.[8] The venture had no hope of competing with the thriving
Brightside and Carbrook and Ecclesall stores, and merged with the latter in
1907.[9] In this way, the two giant cooperatives, achieved their ultimate
domination of the city. Relations were friendly, however: in 1900, in an
attempt to substitute cooperation for competition, the stores divided the city

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1. Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., pp.17,21; William Rose, A Brief History
   of the (Sheffield and Ecclesall Cooperative) Society 1874-1913, Sheffield 1913
2. Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., p.17
3. ibid., pp.21-22; Rose, op. cit., p.16
4. Rose, op. cit., p.123
5. Report on Workmen's Cooperative Societies (P.P. 1901, LXXIV) p.78
6. Cole, op. cit., p.213. The biggest was Leeds, with 48,000 members, and
   three other coops. had between 24-27,000 members.
7. Report on Workmen's Cooperative Societies, etc. p.80
8. Rose, op. cit., p.125
9. ibid., pp.56,126.

between them. The Brightside and Carbrook agreed to restrict itself to the north and east of the city, while the Ecclesall concentrated on the south and west, and neither would open a store within a quarter of a mile of the dividing line without the consent of the other.[1] As in other towns, schemes for amalgamation were discussed, but bore no fruit, and the two ventures went their separate ways.[2]

Thus, by the end of the century, 22,664 people were members of the three cooperative stores in Sheffield, and a further 3,261 belonged to the localised ventures in Oughtibridge, Stocksbridge and Handsworth Woodhouse.[3] In the following decade, cooperative membership in Sheffield rose to 45,000, and continued to increase after this.[4] The policy of establishing branches had taken the practical benefits of cooperation into almost every working class district of the city. The system of branches was encouraged by the policy of diversification. The first trade was always in groceries. Thus the Ecclesall Coop. began by purchasing practical commodities most often used by working class families, opening with

> 'three or four bags of flour, butter, sugar, a whole cheese,
> a tin of lard, a dozen tins of sardines, tea, coffee,
> tobacco and snuff'.[5]

Boots and shoes and drapery were usually the next departments to be added. The Cooperatives extended their activities to include coal, butchery, bakery, tailoring, furniture, a laundry and funeral services, and savings banks. By 1891, the Brightside and Carbrook had established branches at Wincobank, Grimesthorpe, Brightside and Attercliffe, and there were a total of eight stores in addition to its headquarters. During the 1890's, a chain of stores in Darnall provided drapery, butchery, bakery, furniture and shoes. By the end of the decade, the Brightside and Carbrook had expanded into Hillsborough and Pitsmoor.[6] The territorial expansion of the Ecclesall Cooperative was

1. Rose, op. cit., p.43
2. ibid., p.57; Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The Consumers' Cooperative Movement, London, 1921, p.72
3. Report on Workmen's Cooperative Societies, etc., pp.78-86
4. Rose, op. cit., p.56
5. ibid., p.16
6. Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., pp.17-19

slower. In 1891, it realised the wisdom of carrying its branches nearer to the homes of the members. A grocery branch was organised in the working class district of London Road, and demand was so great that queues formed outside the shop, and trams were held up.[1] The cooperatives continued to expand in the vicinity of St. Philip's and St. Mary's, in Crookes, Gleadless and in the Park. Developments in Broomhill and Abbeydale brought the cooperative movement and the benefits of the 'divi' into the more salubrious residential suburbs.[2] The acquisition of prestige multi-department stores in the city centre was beneficial for public relations, as well as profit. Developments such as the Sheffield and Ecclesall Cooperative on Ecclesall Road, opened in 1913, and the Brightside and Carbrook site in the city centre made a substantial contribution to retail facilities in Sheffield.

Despite their preeminence as retail organisations, the cooperative stores inevitably entered the field of cooperative production. This derived from the demand which they helped to create, and the need to supply their members with the lowest price goods. The Stocksbridge, Brightside and Carbrook and Ecclesall Cooperatives thus became producers as well as distributors. The investment in production was substantially less than in distribution in all cases: thus in 1900, the Ecclesall Cooperative spent only £900 on production, and just short of £10,000 on distribution.[3] With the growth of the C.W.S., much of the onus of production passed from individual stores to the Central Wholesale organisation. This in turn stimulated local enterprises, and in 1913, the C.W.S. began the cooperative production of jackets and overalls in Trippet Lane.[4]

The early twentieth century saw the arrival of the cooperative stores into the competitive world of the High Street. Cooperative involvement in Sheffield remained essentially working class, however. Sidney and Beatrice Webb

1. Rose, op. cit., p.29
2. ibid., pp.32, 38-39.
3. Registrar of Friendly Societies, etc., pp.64-71.
4. Percy Redfern, The story of the C.W.S. 1863-1913, Manchester, 1913

stated that the membership of the cooperative movement was 'overwhelmingly manual working class in character'; in big cities, clerks, teachers, minor officials and junior professionals were attracted into the movement from the 1890's. However, even where middle class members joined, 'the preponderance of members always remains with the wage-earning class'.[1]

In Sheffield, every cooperative venture was pioneered by working class people. The Handsworth Woodhouse Cooperative was begun by miners.[2] Employees of Samuel Fox figures largely in the establishment of the Stocksbridge Cooperative.[3] The Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative was founded by twelve artisans, employed at W. Jessop and Sons' steelworks, who formed a cooperative and saving society in connection with their young men's improvement class.[4] The founders of the Ecclesall Cooperative were a group of workmen employed at Chesterman's Bow Works, off Ecclesall Road, in the manufacture of tape measures, rules and tools. Chesterman's employees were the first committee of the Ecclesall Cooperative, and most of the first 45 members were employed by the firm. These included skilled men such as William Roome, tape measure maker, and Benjamin and William Stacey, engineers all from Pomona Street, a neat and pleasing street of artisan housing adjacent to the works. Nevertheless, the case of the Ecclesall Cooperative shows that men drawn from the managerial class often provided guidance and financial support. Ezekiel Chesterman, the firm's manager, was treasurer, and the president was Frank Smyth, also a manager, from nearby Highfield. Ezekiel Chesterman played a crucial role in the survival of the cooperative in the early days. The concern made a loss in 1875, and Chesterman averted disaster by advancing a loan of £100 and acting as guarantor against its borrowing.[5]

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1. Webbs, op. cit., p.47
2. Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., p.26
3. Kenworthy, op. cit., pp.36-40.
4. Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., p.17; Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative Society, MD6091, Rules and Minute Book.
5. Rose, op. cit., pp.9, 15, 17-18

As the cooperatives increased in size, the employment of professional salaried staff in place of part-time voluntary workers was essential for their continued expansion. Nevertheless, control of the cooperative remained at all times with the members, who were entitled to elect the management committee. The democratic constitution of the cooperative was guaranteed by equality of voting, irrespective of the value of purchases. Stock was bought from shares subscribed by members. Loan capital was also accumulated, but the system of equal votes prevented individuals who had supplied substantial shares or capital from dominating the running of the organisation. New-comers were placed upon an equal footing with the founders, and the availability of unlimited shares, always at par, prevented speculation.[1]

The control of this structure thus lay with a membership that was overwhelmingly working class. The cost of shares was a few pence. These were bought in instalments, with the balance deducted from the dividend. In the Ecclesall Cooperative, the minimum contribution towards the purchase of a £1 share was twopence a week. Each member was to hold a minimum of one share, and democracy was ensured by allowing no-one more than five shares.[2] The need to raise extra capital for expansion often necessitated increasing the minimum holding to a £2 share; this was often fiercely resisted by the membership, and the much-needed extension of the Ecclesall Cooperative in the mid-1880's was delayed because the members refused to raise the minimum holding above £1.[3]

In their day-to-day functioning, the cooperative stores achieved a perfect balance between enlightened self-interest and mutual cooperation. The philosophy of consumer cooperation involved moral principle as well as profit. The Sheffield stores took a responsibility for the moral and social education of their working class membership, as well as improving the quality of their lives.

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1. Webb, op. cit., pp.4-8
2. Rose, op. cit., p.15
3. ibid., pp.24-25

Perhaps the most obvious and indeed the most successful role of the cooperatives was the moral training of the late Victorian working class in the values of thrift and providence. In the first instance, cooperative stores attracted the respectable artisan and his wife, alienated by high prices and shoddy goods in other shops, and possibly with a genuine commitment to the gospel of cooperation.[1] They were able to attract and retain such custom because under proper management, the benefits to the working class family were obvious. The best quality goods were supplied at the lowest prices, increasingly within easy reach of most artisans' homes. Through the 'divi', the more that was purchased, the more was returned. Profitability also meant rising dividends. The Ecclesall and Brightside and Carbrook Cooperatives initially gave a dividend of a shilling in the pound against purchases. By the 1880's, this had risen to two shillings.[2] Even allowing for the deduction of share contributions, this provided the working class family with a valuable lump sum at quarterly intervals. For many families, this was a windfall for which there was no precedent. It was especially useful during times of bad trade in the 1880's and 1890's, when contributions to friendly societies could not be withdrawn, and investments in building societies and savings banks were relatively inaccessible. The dividend enabled immediate expenditure on family necessities, or encouraged investment in more long term means of saving open to the working class, such as building societies. Thus the artisan who learned to shop at the cooperative store saw not only immediate returns for his investment, but a long term prospect for the gradual improvement of his economic position.

Once a member of a cooperative store, the working class family was encouraged to be thrifty in other ways. The Handsworth Woodhouse, Sheffield,

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1. Unfair trading by existing shopkeepers was a major stimulus to the establishment of the Stocksbridge Cooperative; Kenworthy op. cit., p.36
2. Rose, op. cit., p.21; Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., p.22

Brightside and Carbrook and Oughtibridge Cooperatives gave credit;[1] some

cooperators had long memories, however, and remembered how the credit given to

the poor in the 'tommy shop' and in the corner shops of the working class

districts made the workman economically dependent upon the purveyors of

overpriced and poor quality goods. The Stocksbridge and the Ecclesall

cooperatives both took a firm stand against credit. In the 1890's, the latter

affirmed the importance of cash trading: 'more than a "business", it is a

principle'.[2]

  With the accumulation of funds in the Sheffield cooperatives in the

1890's, other constructive ways of aiding working class saving were found. In

1900, the Brightside and Carbrook began a house building scheme.[3] This was

followed by Ecclesall in 1901, who lent £2,000 in its first year of operation,

and advanced a total of £16,000 during this scheme.[4] The Ecclesall also

established a penny bank at the turn of the century, as

> 'to encourage thrift is a doctrine of cooperation, and to instil
> this principle into young minds is essential for the good of the
> movement'. [5]

The demand for a Penny Bank was correctly gauged. 90 members deposited £459

in the first quarter. By 1913, membership was over 2500, and deposits had

risen to £5,302.[6] As trade increased with the C.W.S., the profits built up

by the wholesale society enabled a national banking system to be established

with branches in all the major towns.[7]

  The cooperatives also tried to pursue a benevolent policy towards its

workforce: the numbers in cooperative employment could be substantial, for

the Ecclesall Cooperative employed 400 in 1913.[8] The stores gave the

temperance movement no formal support, but regarded the traffic in liquor

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1. Registrar of Friendly Societies, etc., p.71
2. ibid., pp.64-65, 70-71; Rose, op. cit., p.30
3. Women's Cooperative Guild, op. cit., p.18
4. ibid., p.24
5. Rose, op. cit., p.45
6. ibid., p.43
7. Webb, op. cit., pp.98-101
8. Rose, op. cit., p.110

with repugnance, and no alcohol was sold. [1] An Easter Monday tea party

organised by the Sheffield Cooperative in 1879, with a special licence for

alcohol, was criticised for providing an incentive to vice and immorality. [2]

The Ecclesall Cooperative closed for band of hope galas, to allow employees to

participate in the day's events. [3] The cooperatives always sought the best

conditions for their employees. From 1894, the Ecclesall Cooperative reduced

working hours on Saturdays, closing at 8 pm, instead of 9 pm. [4] The store also

took steps towards welfare provision for its workers, by contributing to an

insurance fund. [5] The practice of giving six weeks' full wages during sickness

was also adopted. [6] Annual bonuses were given to the staff, but ultimately,

this practice was discontinued and a rise in wages given instead. [7] Some

cooperators disapproved of bonus schemes: Stocksbridge refused to implement

these, and in addition, ensured that its staff were members of the Amalgamated

Union of Cooperative Employees. [8] Ultimately, however, the wish to protect the

financial interests of the members cut across those of the employees: many

cooperatives discussed the minimum wage question, but the Ecclesall cooperative

declined to act, feeling that it would lose business if it paid a fair wage in

excess of local custom to girls employed in traditionally low paid work such as

dressmaking. [9]

The Ecclesall Cooperative also took an active interest in the welfare

of the community. It regarded aid to the needy as a public duty, and gave

recommendations for medical treatment. [10] During the 1890's, it began

regular donations to local hospitals. [11] It also wished to give £100 to the

striking engineers in 1897, but had to abandon this idea, as there was no

constitutional machinery for donations of this sort. [12] The larger

cooperatives were able to act with some force over decisions which threatened

the well-being of cooperative retailing. In 1894, the Ecclesall Cooperative

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1. Webb, op. cit., p.74
2. S.R.I. 23 April 1879
3. Rose, op. cit., p.25
4. ibid., p.31
5. loc. cit.
6. ibid., p.71

7. ibid., p.56
8. Kenworth, op. cit., p.135
9. Rose, op. cit., p.66
10. ibid., p.31
11. ibid., pp.30, 43
12. ibid., p.40

sent a deputation to parliament to stop private enterprise from assuming the name 'cooperative'. It also memorialised the Chancellor of the Exchequer to alter taxes on some food commodities.[1] The traditional concern with the welfare of employees led the newly amalgamated Sheffield and Ecclesall Cooperative to send a resolution to the government over old age pensions in 1908.[2]

In deference to the Owenite tradition, the cooperatives attempted to play a positive role in community education.[3] Most had an education committee, and in theory, allocated up to $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the profit on such purposes. This could be used to provide a free library and reading room, evening classes in literature, science and art, popular lectures and entertainments, and propaganda about the cooperative movement, and the technical training of employees in skills such as book-keeping.[4] In practice, the amount of educational work undertaken by the cooperatives declined as state provision increased: the success of the cooperative movement as a mass retailing enterprise was inevitably accompanied by the fading of the Owenite deal. At Stocksbridge, the general committee openly showed their dislike of educational work, and developments in this field were crippled for lack of an education committee.[5] In 1900, the Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative, with a profit of just under £44,000, spent only £230 on educational purposes. The Ecclesall Cooperative, with a profit of over £20,000, allocated only £55. Stocksbridge, with a profit of £10,000, spent only £10, and Oughtibridge spent nothing at all on education.[6]

Nevertheless, the Sheffield cooperatives did take some steps towards providing educational facilities for the working class. At Stocksbridge, a working men's club and reading room were established. There was also a library, which sought to serve local needs with volumes on mining, building construction

1. ibid., p.31
2. ibid., p.58
3. Hanson, Learning and Living, etc. pp.105-108
4. Webb, op. cit., pp.36-37
5. Kenworthy op. cit., pp.140-142
6. Registrar of Friendly Societies, etc. pp.64-71.

and engineering.[1] The Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative had a library at Wincobank. In 1898, this had a full range of volumes on history, biography, geography, theology, natural history, science and politics. The biggest section, however, was popular fiction. The usefulness of the library must have been seriously diminished by its restricted opening hours, one hour only on a Saturday afternoon.[2] In general, the development of the free libraries in Sheffield from the 1850's lessened the usefulness of the copperative libraries.

During the 1880's, the Ecclesall Cooperative began to organise quarterly discussions on the objects of cooperation.[3] Provision on a more regular basis was delayed until the turn of the century, when an education committee was recommended. As elsewhere, however, much of the initiative rested with the Cooperative Women's Guild, established in 1902. Branches were established in Sheffield during the first decade of the twentieth century, and occasional lectures and discussions organised in cooperation with the Workers' Educational Association.[4]

The Sheffield cooperatives were probably more successful at arranging social and recreational events. These were important for the promotion of solidarity, and loyalty to the cooperative ethos. The Ecclesall Cooperative held an annual tea party. This became something of a public relations exercise:

> 'with a good substantial tea at a popular price, followed by a
> good entertainment and speeches of the propaganda kind, the gentle
> swell of new members was often felt as a result of these festivities'.[5]

The 'coming of age' of the Ecclesall Cooperative was celebrated in March 1895 with a sit-down tea for 1000 in the Drill Hall, followed by a concert and glee party with presentations, and W.E. Harvey M.P. as principla speaker.[6] The practice of holding annual teas languished, and was 'almost forgotten' by 1913, in the face of competition from mass recreation. Annual excursions proved more popular, however. In 1892, the Ecclesall Cooperative began the practice of a drive in the country, for employees, committee and officials. This gave way to a

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1. Kenworthy, op. cit., pp.138, 141
2. Brightside and Carbrook Cooperative Society, Wincobank Branch, Catalogue of the Library, Sheffield, 1898.
3. Rose, op. cit., p.25
4. ibid., p.119
5. ibid., p.36
6. ibid., p.30

day at the seaside, initially for about 80. By 1913, the cooperative was not only organising a drive for 130, but a trip to Liverpool for numbers in excess of 500.[1]

The need for provident institutions thus arose out of the poverty which characterised every day life in Sheffield, and was worsened by a series of short-term economic dislocations during the nineteenth century. The awareness of poverty, and the unchanging vulnerability of the working class to its ravages, led to attempts to maintain or improve living standards over a short-term or long-term basis. To this end, friendly societies, cooperatives and building societies arose out of Sheffield's artisan culture. Middle class efforts provided savings banks for the use of the working classes. In general, however, habits of saving were alien to most artisans in the nineteenth century. The savings banks and building societies attracted funds from small tradesmen, entrepreneurs and speculators. It was the friendly societies and cooperatives which were most closely identified with working class culture. Provident institutions made almost no impact upon the poor. Nevertheless, they were instrumental in providing key sections of the working class with a material stake in society, and were crucial in the nurture of habits of self-help and thrift. The attraction of provident institutions was seemingly that they gave independence: nevertheless, they re-educated the working man in new values. Thus the artisan learned to become a petty capitalist, and assimilated some of the norms and values of the middle class.

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1. ibid., p.30

27.   Conclusions

Stuart Uttley, a Sheffield trade union leader who looked back over the achievements of the century in 1902, wrote with pride about the improvement in the local working classes.[1]   The effect of middle class influence is shown in his values and attitudes, and the language which he used. There is no doubt that life for the bulk of the working classes in Sheffield at the beginning of the twentieth century could still be blighted by poverty, disease and the grimness of the environment: this was the Sheffield that horrified George Orwell in the 1930's.[2]   The 'respectable' artisan was conditioned to see a very different picture, however: the aspects of the culture which he selected for praise were the impressive appearance of the workmen, the good order of public assemblies, the improved educational facilities, the thrifty savings in trades unions and friendly societies, the self-denial of ambulance work, sunday schools and charities. He also noted with pride the extended role of working men in public affairs, with six members on the town council, and working class representatives on the School Board, the Board of Guardians, and other public committees. The problems which he still believed should be overcome were those familiar aspects of working class culture identified and attacked by middle class reformers for the past hundred years: betting, drinking, undue love of sport, and illiteracy.[3]

Men such as Stuart Uttley were the product of a process of conditioning which had become deeply rooted in English culture since the late eighteenth century. The industrialisation and urbanisation of Sheffield had involved the community in traumatic change. Out of this process a new class society had emerged, but the economic interests of middle class and working class were at variance with each other. In the interests of capitalism, the new relationships had to be regulated: acquiescence with the new social and economic order and the cooperation of classes within it had to be secured.

1. For Stuart Uttley, see above, chapter 7.
2. George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier,(paperback edition), 1962. p.95.
3. S.W.N. 28 June 1902.

This was not achieved without tensions. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the emerging working class consciousness became aware of the irreconcileability of its interests with those of capital, and occasionally, this was expressed in open hostility. However, another process at work was the steady assimilation of deferential elements within the working class to the norms and values prescribed for them for the middle class. This process was especially dymanic in Sheffield, where the economic relationships which characterised the city led to the blurring of the distinctions between manufacturer and working men, and where cooperation between the classes was a natural product of these relationships.

The ethic of respectability was thus the servant of capitalism, uniting together the 'respectable' with employers and tradesmen, vis-a-vis the 'rough'. The values which respectability took and refined for its own ends were those which worked best in the service of capitalism. Diligence, thrift, punctuality, regularity, sobriety and deference to superiors were the characteristics of the man who was 'respectable'. A civilised and disciplined workforce was essential to the pursuit of profit, and the maintenance of social order. Working men learned these values by involvement in middle class institutions, in the activities of church and chapel, in temperance work, and through education. Some values, such as thrift, made good practical sense, and provident working men created their own thrift institutions. Paradoxically, literacy and self-confidence also served the institutions created by urban working class culture to serve their own ends.

However, despite the assertions of Stuart Uttley, the ethic of respectability had been modified substantially by changing social and economic conditions in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The focus of reformism was shifting from moral indoctrination to environmental improvement. In spite of the efforts of voluntary organisations, the raising of working

class living standards was seriously hampered by the unwholesome conditions in which many were still forced to live. The problems of bad housing and disease obstinately refused to solve themselves, and by 1870, were recognised as a serious affront to the health of the community, the pockets of the ratepayers, and the growing civic consciousness. Although the churches, school boards, licensing benches and temperance societies continued to attack popular culture, much of the energies of the middle class were channelled into local politics and government. In Sheffield, much was heard about slum clearance, sewage disposal, and the municipalisation of public utilities. In this context, the ethic of respectability was outliving its social usefulness. Moral imperatives were no solution to the problems of the late Victorian city. In the new concern for environmental improvement, the language of respectability retreated from public policies, although still remaining a fundamental component of middle class ideology.

The effectiveness of the ethic of respectability was also modified by new developments in working class culture. The period of the 'great depression' had coincided with cheaper food prices, rising real wages, and improvements in standards of comfort. Most people who had benefitted from improved living standards preferred to devote their greater leisure and money to recreation and entertainment, such as football, bicycling and other sports, to holidays, and later, to the cinema. Changes in the economic structure meant that the appeal of self help was becoming less attractive. It was increasingly unrealistic for a working class boy to aspire to become a manufacturer through hard work and thrift. The improvement in real wages and the growth of consumer commodities tended to reduce the propensity for saving. The generation of working class men and women who were growing up between 1870 and 1900 also had little need for 'middle class' institutions. They had received an elementary education and a measure of social training in childhood,

increasingly in a secular environment. Technical education was offered in

the same context. The churches and the voluntary societies had lost their

monopoly of education and recreation. Increasingly, they had less and less

to offer an urban generation totally accustomed to town life, who had been

spared many of the stresses of rapid economic and cultural change, and had

greater articulation and self-confidence than their parents had possessed.

Therefore, by 1900, an active participation in activities socially

sanctioned by the middle classes was less necessary for an urban population,

which was increasingly developing its own culture, neither 'rough' nor

'respectable'. In social and political terms, this process has been

described as

> 'a gradual though decisive change in the attitude of working
> class leadership to the existing organisation of society,
> and a loss of deference to the political instruments, and
> social ideals forged by the middle classes'. 1.

Thus the formative elements of the working class began to look away from

dependence on the middle class way of life as a standard of social decorum.

One result of this was 'a massive working class society, neither submerged,

nor an appendage to middle class society'. 2. The proportion of working men

who were politically active were small, and had to show impeccable

respectability and deference to middle class standards. The Trades Council

and the Labour Association acquiesed totally with the power structures of

capitalism and put all their energies into cooperation with the Liberal party.

Support among working men for secularism and socialism, essentially

philosophies without middle class approval, were small: neither John Ruskin

nor Edward Carpenter could make much impact upon the Sheffield artisan.

In general, the working class, having failed to develop a socialist

perspective, retreated away from politics, except for nominal support of

trade unions.

1. E.R. Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City, paperback edition,
   London, 1969, pp.160-161.
2. ibid., p.161.

It may well be the case that the years between 1870
and 1900 saw 'something akin to the remaking of the working class',[1]
but in a way which was politically acquiescent to the continued
existence of capitalism. In some ways, this new society escaped the
stranglehold of middle class values. Its members were capable of
drinking in moderation, of generally ignoring established religion,
except for weddings and funerals, and of spending an increasing
proportion of their leisure in recreation and hedonism, rather than
in good works, and the pursuit of useful knowledge. Its dominant
institutions were not church or chapel, or Mechanics' institute, or
even trade unions or friendly society, but the pub, the music hall
and the football ground. Only a small minority sought inclusion in
the middle class power structure, through politics or religion.[1]

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1. For late Victorian and Edwardian working class culture, see
    Hoggart, op. cit; Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum,
    paperback edition, 1971.

Society in Sheffield was nevertheless conditioned by the values
and institutions of the middle classes. Of course, it is clear that many
of the instruments of the middle class value system were in abeyance by the
end of the nineteenth century. More numbers than ever before lay beyond the
reach of the churches, and the tendency towards atheism or indifference had
not altered in the course of the century. The temperance movement had
failed to achieve prohibition, or even to stem the spread of licensed
drinking places. There had been some sound achievements in the field of
elementary education, if only because it had been substantially removed by
the state from the sphere of voluntary activity. Voluntary adult education
had collapsed by the end of the century, unable to meet the increased demands
for advanced scientific and technical education. Thrift institutions made
some headway, as standards of living rose: for many people, however, poverty
was still unabated.

Nevertheless, middle class institutions had made a contribution to
the perspectives of the individual, and his relationship with the city, and
with society. Some working men, fired by the ethic of self-help, had
prospered, and had risen out of their class, helped by favourable economic
circumstances, or their own business acumen. Men such as these were the raw
material of the class of small masters, entrepreneurs and tradesmen, who were
so characteristic of the staple trades of Sheffield. Other working men did
not rise socially, but through involvement in middle class institutions
gained literacy and self-confidence. These were also the qualities which
served the institutions of working class self-determination, the trades unions,
friendly societies and cooperatives. New social relationships in chapel,
temperance society or friendly society, and the fresh perspectives which these
brought, helped to make life bearable, and marked off the 'respectable'
working man from the contamination of the surrounding slums.

In cultural terms, respectability and its institutions also made their mark, although its impact is difficult to evaluate. Clearly, the old popular culture of pre-industrial Sheffield no longer existed by 1900, although some of its vitality had passed into late Victorian working class culture. The demise of the old ways may have been partly due to an attack on them by middle class values. On the other hand, the social and economic circumstances of city dwelling, which created the need for the ethic of respectability, independently caused deep seated changes in popular culture, which had to alter in response to the dictates of industrialised urban life. But undeniably, respectability and its institutions did make a substantial contribution to the new community, even if it cannot be held responsible for the disappearance of the old. Churches, chapels, friendly societies, cooperatives, mechanics' institutions, sunday schools, building societies, savings banks, temperance societies and so on enriched the fabric of urban life, with the new relationships and activities which they generated. Railway excursions, social teas, lectures, temperance galas, glee parties and concerts brought fresh forms of enjoyment to replace the older popular festivities, and helped to soften the burden of propaganda. Thus the isolation and rootlessness of the migrant, the insecurities of the artisan in the face of economic pressure, were soothed and healed by the new communal experiences.

At the same time, the Sheffield working class, its political consciouness so promisingly forged between 1790 and 1830, was ultimately diverted from a radical critique of capitalism. An additional achievement of the ethic of respectability and its institutions may have been the depoliticisation of the English working class. It has not been possible within the limits of this study to analyse the revolutionary potential of the working class. On the other hand, it may be that political consciousness failed to come to maturity for the same reasons that respectability was so attractive - because the formative elements within the working class were

already committed to individualism, materialism and deference to the economic ideals of the bourgeoisie.

It is arguable, however, that the new working class culture at the end of the nineteenth century was still conditioned by the values of the middle classes, which were modified and assimilated by that culture for its own ends. One result of this was that 'working people ceased to believe that they could shape society in their own image. Capitalism had become an immoveable horizon.'[1] The urban working classes had learned to accept the routine of daily work and long hours, and accepted any reduction of these with gratitude. Despite the advent of socialism, they learned to recoil from political militancy, and to show deference to employers. The elevation to middle class status and power through commercial success was infrequent by the end of the century, but an increasing standard of living provided compensation in terms of greater comforts and cheaper commodities. Controlled recreation and annual holidays compensated for the loss of the old freedoms. Large sections of the working classes continued to behave in ways that earned them the disapproval of the churches, and self-improving workingmen in the old mould of Stuart Uttley. But for all of this, they had assimilated some of the prescriptive values of middle class morality. Respect for work, deference to social superiors, condemnation of excessive idleness, drunkenness, indebtedness and promiscuity became stereotyped and uncomprehended working class attitudes. The establishment of a consensus conformity in urban culture was the greatest achievement of the ethic of respectability.

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1. Stedman Jones, op. cit., p.499

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