<u>Social and Cultural Constructions of Communities in</u>

<u>South Yorkshire Colliery Settlements: The Mining Households</u>

<u>of the Darfield and Wombwell District, c.1851 - 1900</u>

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Social and Cultural Constructions of Communities in South Yorkshire Colliery Settlements: The Mining Households of the Darfield and Wombwell District, c.1851 - 1900

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Much of the literature relating to the history of miners has been written from a union orientated perspective. In this study a broader understanding of the lives of miners and their families is sought. Notions of community and communal belonging are central throughout the investigation.

The extent of migration is considered. Clear evidence of residential clustering of migrants is uncovered. This had a significant impact upon community development within the settlements.

The study acknowledges the centrality of the workplace in mining communities. Primary evidence suggests, though, that the mining workplace was not a cohesive social unit. Divisions within the workplace were as significant as those between capital and labour. Longstanding, rigid divisions between grades of mining employees were uncovered which impacted upon their lives outside work.

An examination of women's lives within the settlements questions the general assertion that they played an economically passive role within mining settlements. Women participated actively in the public life of the settlements

through their involvement in mining disputes and other communal expressions of approbation, such as rough music.

Religious and leisure activities revealed much about how individuals sought to construct their own identities and those of their settlements. Both boundaries of belonging and the triumph of custom over capitalist relations were affirmed through events such as the annual feast celebrations.

The study reveals the composite nature of community belonging. Individuals engaged in a multiplicity of communities ranging from the micro-community of the family to the macro-community of the nation. The nature of individuals' communal participation was determined by factors such as their: age; gender; workplace position; and marital status. Communal belonging was fluid. Particular aspects of communal identity fluctuated in significance depending upon circumstance.

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A Map Indicating the Location of Settlements Referred to

in the Study

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                                                  Gt. Houghton
                                                  •            •
BARNSLEY                                                       Thurnscoe
                           Ardsley          Little
•                             •             Houghton
   Worsbrough                                   •        Billingley
     Dale                                                •
       •                              •Darfield
                                    •
   •                            •  Snape Hill
                              •  Low Valley
   Worsbrough              Wombwell
     Bridge                  •              •
        •                 Wombwell           Broomhill
       Blacker            Main            •
       Hill                              Brampton

   •  Birdwell •      •        •             • West
       Platts     Jump   Heming-             Melton
       Common            field                        •
                                                       Wath-upon-
                                                        Dearne
   •           •          •
   Hoyland     Hoyland     Elsecar
   Common      Nether
                                                    •
                                      .             Swinton
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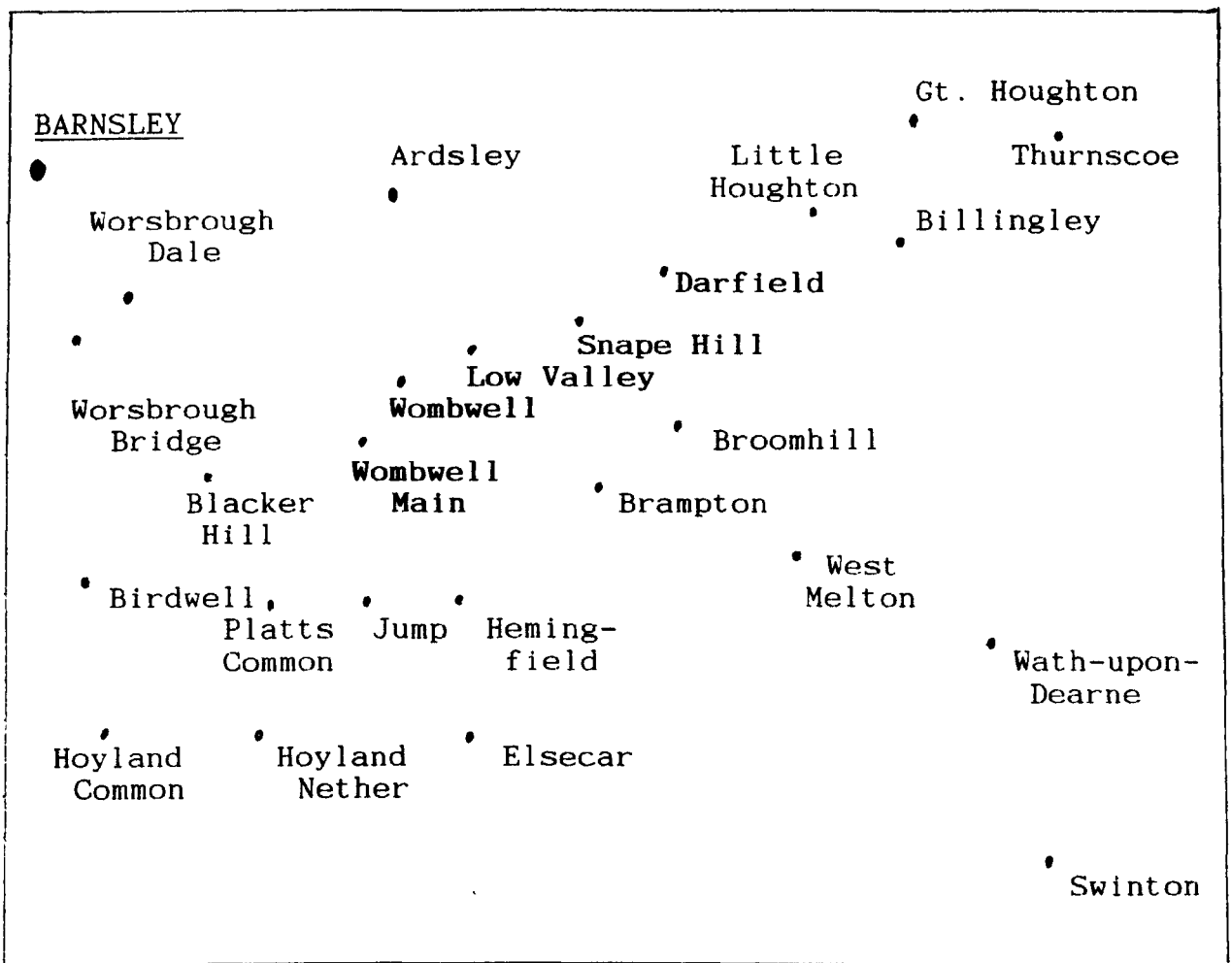
Scale: |————— 2 miles —————|

Preface

1. The Area of the Study.

At the outset it must be emphasised that, although the thesis considers the inhabitants of a circumscribed area, nevertheless one of its primary intentions is to suggest that communal affiliation is determined to a significant extent by individuals' involvement in multifarious relationships outside this bounded geographical area.

The thesis focusses principally upon the settlements of Darfield village, Snape Hill, Low Valley, Wombwell and Wombwell Main, all of which are situated in the South Yorkshire coalfield in the 'old' parish of Darfield whose centre is located some four miles to the south-east of Barnsley and nine miles west of Doncaster.[1]

The area of the study comprises: a number of new settlements which grew up in the second half of the nineteenth century to accommodate the employees of local collieries and their families, namely Wombwell Main, Low Valley and Snape Hill; a settlement that grew rapidly in size to serve the needs of this economically burgeoning area, Wombwell itself; and the long-established settlement of Darfield village, with its church partly of Norman origin. By concentrating upon these relatively unresearched settlements, the thesis aims, in part, to consider the

extent to which these population centres developed and retained their social and cultural distinctiveness.

The thesis focusses, too, upon a number of the collieries operating in the Wombwell and Darfield district, which prompted the growth of settlements in the district. Lundhill, Wombwell Main, Darfield Main, Mitchell Main and Cortonwood collieries began operating during two waves of pit sinkings in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and expansion of these collieries' workings occurred in the final quarter of the century. Coal was won at first from the Barnsley seam. Later sinkings led to coal being extracted from the deeper Parkgate and Silkstone seams. Lundhill and Wombwell Main collieries began extracting coal in 1855 and Darfield Main first raised coal six years later. The second wave of sinkings saw Cortonwood and Mitchell Main collieries begin to extract coal in 1875. Coal was extracted from the Silkstone seam at Wombwell Main from 1887 onwards, and from the Parkgate seam from 1891. The Parkgate seam also began to yield coal at Mitchell Main from 1899.[2] By considering the Wombwell and Darfield district in the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore, it is possible to explore the cultural and social development of these settlements at the time of their greatest rate of population increase. By the first two decades of the twentieth century, the settlements experiencing the swiftest rates of growth in the South Yorkshire coalfield were located to the east, where deeper

coal was being won nearer Doncaster at places such as Silverwood, in 1903, and at Maltby Main, in 1911.[3]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, colliery ownership within the Darfield and Wombwell district was diverse in nature, ranging from the paternalistic, conspicuously proprietorial Wombwell Main Colliery Company, to Darfield Main Colliery Company in which a much more *laissez faire* approach appeared to be adopted by its owners. Wombwell Main's principal partner and managing director, C. Bartholomew of Rotherham, played a leading part in the running of the mine and the life of the eponymous settlement almost until his death in 1895. In contrast, until its purchase by Mitchell Main Colliery Company in 1894, Darfield Main seems to have been owned by a largely absentee group of Pontefract businessmen.[4]

Thus, by considering the Wombwell and Darfield district of the South Yorkshire coalfield during the second half of the nineteenth century, it is possible to consider factors such as maturity of settlements and the nature of coalownership in determining the way in which distinct communities developed and either flourished or floundered socially and culturally as coalmining centres.

2. Primary Sources.

By mainly confining the period of the study to the second half of the nineteenth century has allowed access to one of

the most valuable sources available to the social historian, the census enumerators' books of 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891. Within these records, details of inhabitants of each household in the enumeration district are recorded. The census enumerator aimed to record the name of every person resident on the night of the census. In addition to household members' names, details were recorded of their relationship to the household head; their marital status; their ages; their occupations; their places of birth; and a brief note of any major disabilities was also made. The comprehensive nature of such material yields a great deal of fruitful information to any scholar interested in the study of nineteenth century society. This thesis has made extensive use of the available census enumerators' books for the years from 1851 to 1891, which is, at the time of writing, the latest year for which census details about individuals are exposed to public scrutiny. The census data help historians to: uncover much information relating to the economic and social lives of family groups and their households; reconstruct, as far as possible, migration patterns of individuals; and assess residential persistence, and the web of kinship ties constructed over a period of time, through the use of a series of census enumerators' books. This source material, therefore, is of invaluable importance to the scholar in attempting to reconstruct from the past the communal nature of individuals' lives.

There are, however, a number of problems associated with the census. Perhaps the most major drawback of the census enumerators' books is their somewhat spurious comprehensive nature. When considering a series of census enumerators' books over time, it is necessary to be aware of their discrete nature. The census enumerators' books need to be regarded as snapshots in time and not as a continuously running film. Unknown numbers of people moved into, or were born in, enumeration districts, where they lived, worked and either died, or moved on, without making a mark upon the census enumerators' books. By focussing entirely upon the census enumerators' books as an historical source, therefore, it is inevitable that much of the dynamism of past societies is underemphasised.

Another major problem of the census enumerators' books regards the relationships recorded within households. It must be recognised that the information entered into the census enumerators' books has been mediated through the enumerator himself: names and relationships he entered into the enumerators' books tended to be formalised and gave little indication of the qualitative nature of relations within households. The bourgeois-dominated, bureaucratic procedures connected with the collection of census data inevitably led to the collection of formalised, categorised information about individuals. The result, a tidy schedule of individuals' vital information, concealed the kaleidoscopic colour and flavour of life as it was led on a

quotidian, informal basis. No two households experienced the same internal power structure and relationships within the household and outside it, were characterised not by the anodyne kinship categories of reference noted by the census enumerator, but by a much richer variety of terms of address used by the historical actors themselves, dominated by the employment of nicknames, all of which were embedded with meaning.

A series of problems with the census enumerators' books emerges when an attempt is made to trace the experiences of women's lives within the area under study. The first such problem is caused not by the census *per se* but by the patriarchal ascription of surnames. Kinship links between males in different households within a settlement can be made through referring to an earlier census in which these individuals were enumerated under the same roof. However, inter-household kinship relations involving women cannot be identified to the same extent because of their change of surname upon marriage. A problem concerning the recording of data relating to women which can be attributed to the census enumeration procedure is the considerable under-recording of female economic involvement. This underestimation of women's occupations is revealed when other sources are consulted, such as diligently kept marriage records.

Despite the problems identified with census enumerators' books, it must be stressed that they represent the most

comprehensive collection of data relating to historical actors available.

In attempting to ascertain the nature of the social and cultural lives experienced by the inhabitants of the Wombwell and Darfield district, much attention has been paid to the local newspapers published during he second half of the nineteenth century, the Barnsley Chronicle, the Barnsley Independent, the Barnsley Times and the Mexborough and Swinton Times. The reports contained within these newspapers occasionally gave a flavour of the domestic and working life of inhabitants within the district. Inevitably, however, such reports tended to dwell upon events considered to be newsworthy, and, thus, by their nature, unusual. Nevertheless, from the detailed reports, such as those of crimes and misdemeanours, considerable background material was gleaned of quotidian life. However, as with the census enumerators' books, it needs to be emphasised that the observations made about the lives of the inhabitants of these mainly working class settlements were mediated through the largely bourgeois perceptions of the reporter, and, also, were written to attract the attention of a 'respectable' readership.

The local newspapers tended to cover comprehensively set-piece events in the social and cultural calendar of settlements such as Wombwell and Darfield. Customary events such as Whitsun celebrations and the settlements' feast weeks were often the subject of considerable local press

attention. However, customs of a less public nature, and which were as instructive to the observer of the nature of life in these settlements, such as the customs of the workplace and individuals' rites of passage, were absent from the reports of the local newspapers, unless they related to the lives of prominent families.

Records relating to the colliery workplace tended to shed little light upon the qualitative nature of relationships within it. The colliery company records surveyed, such as the colliery signing-on books, revealed much about the names of employees and their job titles, but little indication was made of the nature of employees' day-to-day relationships with their fellow workers. Similarly, the detailed records of Mines' Inspectors painted formal pictures of the operations of collieries, but gave only tantalising glimpses of the quotidian life of pits' workers.

That so much of the evidence considered within this thesis was generated by, and for the needs of, the bourgeoisie has meant that, in order to explore the informal, 'plebeian' culture experienced by the inhabitants of the settlements under study, much of this primary source material has had to be read 'against the grain'. It was only by piecing together fragmentary shards from a variety of these primary documents that an incomplete mosaic representing the later nineteenth century society and culture of the settlements of the Darfield and Wombwell district was constructed.

Where possible, evidence generated by the historical actors themselves was incorporated into the thesis. This, though, was restricted to the Nonconformist records of the district and to one coalminer's diary, that of Joseph Knowles, who, by his very nature, was unrepresentative of the district's inhabitants.

But, to a great extent, the essential problem with the available primary source material, considered in this thesis is no different from that other researchers interested in past societies have encountered: virtually none of the extant primary source material was originally produced to answer the questions that future scholars were to ask of it.

Notwithstanding the problems of interpreting the extant primary sources, the thesis would have benefitted from the opportunity to examine the rate books of the Wombwell and Darfield district, which would have uncovered important data relating to property ownership within the area, and the records of Houghton Main Colliery during the later part of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, these potentially valuable sources proved to be untraceable.

Footnotes to Preface

1. Wombwell became a parish in its own right in 1863.
2. See Chapter 4, especially Table 4.1.
3. G. Gray, 'The South Yorkshire Coalfield', in J. Benson and R. Neville, eds, <u>Studies in the Yorkshire Coal Industry</u>, 1976, p. 38.
4. Information about colliery ownership has been obtained from the following sources:
   Wombwell Main:
   West Riding Registry of Deeds, Jan. 1863, <u>XC756.826</u>
   <u>Mexborough and Swinton Times</u>, 18/1/95.
   Darfield Main:
   West Riding Registry of Deeds, Apr. 1864, <u>YM320.352</u>
   <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u>, 19/10/72.
   Mitchell Main Colliery Company Balance Sheet, 31/12/94, <u>NCB 608a/24</u>.

Chapter One

Introduction

The aims of the thesis are to describe, analyse and explain the nature of social and cultural life, and the way in which this changed, in several settlements situated in the South Yorkshire coalfield during the second half of the nineteenth century. Particular attention is to be paid to the townships of Wombwell and Darfield, located some five miles to the south east of Barnsley, and the smaller settlements lying between the two.

The vast body of historical work that has focussed upon the lives of miners suggests that room for another study may be rather limited. However, a large proportion of these studies has tended to dwell upon the history of the miners' industrial relations rather than upon their experiences of life in their places of settlement. It is this broader picture of the experiences of the miner and his family which is sought in the thesis.

Much of the literature relating to the nineteenth and twentieth century history of miners has been written from the perspective of union involvement. Indeed, many of the local studies of miners of particular coalfields have been commissioned by district union offices. The work of Frank Machin, The Yorkshire Miners, and that of Carolyn Baylies, The History of the Yorkshire Miners, 1881 - 1918, are the

most relevant of this *genre* to the present study. Machin's work was not only sponsored by the Yorkshire Area National Union of Mineworkers but also published by the union in 1958. The study by Baylies, which was first published in 1993, was also commissioned by the National Union of Mineworkers (Yorkshire Area). Comparable district coalfield studies of miners and their unions have been undertaken by, inter alia: R. Page Arnot, whose trilogy relating to the history of national mining unionism completed in 1961 was followed by a highly detailed portrayal of mining unionism in South Wales between 1898 and 1926; W.R. Garside, whose work on North East miners received the official approval of the Durham Miners' Association; and A.R. Griffin, whose work on the Nottinghamshire miners was sponsored by the N.U.M. area office.[1] Inevitably, the product of this union-sponsored scholarship emphasises the struggles and particularly the victories of the organised workers. In their foreword to Machin's work, the officials of the Yorkshire Miners' Union proclaim that:

"The characters of those who led the Union in its most bitter battles and campaigns are described in this book. It is difficult to understand how those battles were won, and it is even more difficult to imagine how some of the defeats were borne and yet the gallant Yorkshire Miners always re-organised most wondrously and rose to fight again."[2]

One of the effects of some of these heroic accounts of local mining union activity has been both to overemphasise

and oversimplify the influence and significance of unionisation in the mining industry. This is not to denigrate in any way the actual achievements of unionised activity in the mining industry. However, during the second half of the nineteenth century, for long periods, mining unionists were in a minority in the South Yorkshire coalfield area. Between 1881 and 1890, for example, an average of only 26.1 per cent of underground workers in Yorkshire were union members.[3] Union activists were even more scarce. At times of large scale union activity, still only a minority of the inhabitants of settlements on the South Yorkshire coalfield were members. In addition to the the dependents of mining employees excluded from the union, large numbers of mining surface workers were unable to gain membership of mining unions until the 1890s. In any consideration of life in the settlements in which miners resided, attention needs to be paid to the 'disenfranchised' non-unionists who play such a peripheral part in many of the union-sponsored local studies.

A further difficulty with the heroic union-orientated study of miners is the unproblematic approach which appears to play down disagreements within the union organisation between the leadership and the rank-and-file membership. John Normansell, leader of the South Yorkshire Miners' Association during the halcyon days of the early 1870s, reportedly boasted that: "nineteen times out of twenty he went his own way without respect to the wishes of his

constituents."[4] · The essentially corporatist, often teleological approach to the study of miners adopted by the scholars of mining unionism appears fundamentally flawed: sufficient attention is rarely paid by such historians to the divisions that existed within the mining workforce.

The almost Whiggish, union-orientated approach to the study of organised miners is challenged in works such as Independent Collier in which case-studies elucidate the divisions within unionism itself: the experiences of Edward Rymer, a miner active in unionism throughout his long working life in many of Britain's coalfields and a sometime resident of Wombwell, reveals the disagreements over strategy that marked unionist activity during the period.[5]

The essays contained in Independent Collier succeed in highlighting the problems associated with accepting the notion of miners as being archetypal proletarians. Within the collection of essays, significant variables such as colliery ownership[6]; customs and practices at the workplace[7]; and cultural factors such as migration[8] are addressed in an attempt to explain the stark differences between the experiences of miners in adjoining settlements. In his introduction, Royden Harrison emphasises the differences that can exist between neighbouring mining settlements by recounting a visit to a hill overlooking Conisborough: "Below lay Denaby and Cadeby lying cheek by jowl, yet possessed by different legends, traditions and *seemingly* industrial relations systems."[9] This collection

of essays offers a valuable corrective to the sweeping accounts of the inexorable rise of local union organisations by presenting a number of firmly empirical local studies which emphasise the multiplicity of factors working to determine the experiences of miners' working lives.

Robert Colls's recent work, Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield, is rather more ambitious both in its scope and its claims than any of the individual case studies contained within the Harrison collection. Whereas the aim of Independent Collier is to re-examine the experiences of the miner's life at work, Colls's study seeks to construct a picture of a wider local society from his findings relating to the study of the miner's workplace. Colls proclaims that his book: "centres on the pitmen but spreads its net outside the pit - into the economic, political, cultural and gender relations of the society beyond. It stands, then, as a history of labour which aspires to be a history of society."[10] Colls's intention to build up a wider picture of the society in which miners and their families lived outside the workplace as well as within it is one with which this present study has many objectives in common.

However, the approach that is to be adopted here is a rather less systematic one than that employed by Colls. Despite the detailed nature of his study, considering as it does significant aspects of the culture of mining

settlements originating outside the workplace, such as Methodism, Colls's work has a great deal in common with some aspects of the traditional hagiographical trade unionist account of the history of the mining industry. The tripartite division of Colls's book, into sections on 'Work', 'Culture' and 'Protest', bears similarities to the rather simplistic confrontational model of society that emerges in some of the trade union sponsored works on mining history. The determinist class-orientated approach that permeates Colls's study is revealed in his conclusion:

"The classic mining community of the late nineteenth century took its structure - indeed it took its 'community' - from the associations and conflicts of work, culture and protest ... The pit village was an overwhelmingly proletarian place based upon a glaring division of Labour and Capital. It had long been such. What was different, what was 'classic', was the way in which the pit village corresponded to descriptive and prescriptive images of an English working class."[11]

It seems somewhat strange that, despite his in-depth studies of the settlements of the North East coalfield, Colls should resort to such one-dimensional remarks about the communities in which miners and their families lived. The teleology of triumphalist unionism appears to be replaced in Colls's work by that of class-formation and conflict.

In the present study, what has recently been described as an 'intellectual strait-jacket'[12], the notion that capitalist social relations are inherently antagonistic,

will be eschewed. As Chapter Two makes clear in an overview of the economic history of the British coal industry, the idea that a general theory of confrontational labour-capitalist relations can be made to fit the multiplicity of different situations that prevailed throughout the British coal industry in the nineteenth century is, at the very least, problematic. Chapter Four explores the work experiences of mining employees in the study area and further questions the validity of a deterministic class-orientated approach to the study of mining settlements. Just as evidence emerges to suggest that, at times, consensual relations prevailed between employer and workers, so too does information which shows unambiguously that relations between different types of mining worker were by no means harmonious. The notion of an homogeneous group of mining employees, which is central to the conclusions of Colls's work, has been found to be a singularly unhelpful concept in the present study.

Whilst not disputing that at times a class-based analysis of relations between colliery owners and their workforces is of considerable value, the contention of the present study is that a looser, more flexible mode of analysis is needed in any local study of miners and their families. It was in the pursuit of such a fluid theoretical matrix in which to construct the thesis that the concept of community was found to be of significant worth. The term 'community' has been employed by social investigators of many different

types since at least the 1880s when the concept of community first gained currency through the work of the sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies. Since the term is to be employed regularly throughout the thesis, a detailed discussion of precisely what is meant by the word and the ambiguities and valued judgments often associated with it need to be unravelled.

In his work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, first published in 1887, Ferdinand Tonnies identified, with rapid industrialisation and urbanisation taking place in his native Germany, a shift from *gemeinschaft*, or ideas of community, characterised by intimate and enduring human relationships, to *gesellschaft*, a society marked by transience and a multiplicity of shallow, rational human relationships. In the work of writers such as Tonnies, Bell and Newby observe that there existed, "an anguished sense of the breakdown of the old."[13]

Tonnies recognised three central aspects of *gemeinschaft*: blood, place and mind which were manifested in the forms of kinship, neighbourhood and friendship. These aspects, Tonnies claimed, were "the home of all virtue and morality."[14] In contrast, under *gesellschaft*, "all its activities are restricted to a definite end and a definite means of obtaining it."[15] In more recent works, however, the exclusive nature of Tonnies's dualism is challenged. Observers identify the existence of *gemeinschaft* within

situations in which *gesellschaft* ought to have been expected.[16] Tonnies's implicit distinction between the benign *gemeinschaft* and malign *gesellschaft* therefore needs to be treated with caution. Before the term 'community' can be used as an historical vehicle of analysis, it has to be stripped of its inherited moral baggage: what Alan Macfarlane labels the 'myth of community' needs to be demythologised.[17]

However, no definitive meaning of the term 'community' offers itself for convenient analysis. Indeed, so nebulous and evasive is the word when a definition is sought that some writers have quite consciously decided not to attempt to define it. As Bell and Newby concede: "Rather as intelligence is what intelligence tests measure, perhaps we can, for the time being at any rate, merely treat community as what community studies analyse."[18] This somewhat unrigorous, albeit pragmatic, approach to the usage of the term has been the focus of John Fraser's attention. Fraser regards 'community' as "attractively empty or weak as regards theory: rights, values, institutions and structures - in any universal sense these do not exist for 'community'. This partly explains their attractiveness for sceptical, non-universalising social scientists."[19]

Community's apparent theoretical looseness is made abundantly clear in the work of George Hillery, who identifies 94 different definitions of the concept.[20] In their own interpretation of Hillery's findings, Bell and

Newby discover that: "A majority of the definitions include, in increasing importance for each element, the following components of community: area, common ties and social interaction."[21] These three elements are inextricably linked in the construction of the concept of community and, by examining each separately, it is hoped to be able to demonstrate the difficulty not only of defining each but also of identifying and quantifying them individually and *vis-a-vis* each other.

Considerable methodological difficulties confront the historian in tackling the spatial component of community. Charles Phythian-Adams shows how local historians usually choose as their focus of study communities either with a rich array of documentary sources produced by specific administrative units, such as the parish; or, communities situated in the context of a comparatively uniform and identifiable geographical region. Phythian-Adams highlights the danger to the historian of becoming trapped in a circular argument by using the concept of community carelessly: "Having defined a territory and then having discovered a community within it, the danger is that [the historian] will then relate the community once again to the territory."[22]

Furthermore, in delimiting the area in which the historian has decided the community to be studied exists, two major problems present themselves. If the area over which the community has been spatially defined is too restricted,

then the important links flowing over the boundaries which transmit political, economic and cultural influences and which shape the nature of both the communities under study and those surrounding it, will be ignored. Equally, however, if the bounds of an identified community are extended too liberally then the characteristics which had made the community worthy of study in the first place may become so diluted in the larger area as to be no longer a useful focus of attention.

In any local study, it is important that the concept of community should not be regarded merely as a geographical plane. This was a point Raymond Williams made very clearly in discussing the community represented in Jane Austen's novels which was, he asserted:

"a community wholly known ... an actual community very precisely selective. Neighbours in Jane Austen novels are not people actually living nearby; they are people living a little less nearby who, in social recognition, can be visited. What she sees across the land is a network of propertied houses and families, and through the holes of this tightly drawn mesh most actual people are simply not seen."[23]

Community, then, should not be seen as a spatially determined term. Of more importance in the identification of a community, as Williams intimated, are the ties that help bind people together, which offer them common terms of reference. Indeed arguably it is in this context that area, or more specifically, boundary plays its most important role in the composition of community, albeit in a somewhat

negative manner. A significant element contained within the concept of community is the dualism inclusion / exclusion. For a community to exist its members need to be aware of their inclusion within it and, equally importantly, need to know who are not classed as members. Of necessity, therefore, boundaries, spatial or otherwise, need to be established to facilitate differentiation between community members and non-members. For community to exist, therefore, common ties are a *sine qua non*.

Anthony Cohen lays great stress upon the importance of symbols in the construction of community members' common ties. Material landmarks, such as churches and war memorials; the continued enactment of rituals specific to the community, such as well dressings and feasts, marking significant events in the community's calendar; and an awareness of the community's history, often a 'folk history', very selective in the events and people celebrated within it, are all means by which individuals are able to express their membership of a community with reference to common ties. Cohen's emphasis on such communal symbols does not lead him to suggest the existence of a broad consensus within the community, however. Instead, the symbolic dimension, the common ties of the community:

"exist as something to 'think with'. The symbols of community are mental constructs: they provide people with the means to make meaning. In so doing, they also provide them with the means to express the particular meanings which the community has for them."[24]

The notion of community articulated by writers such as Cohen is clearly a much more subtle framework with which to explore the workings of a local society than the rather crude class analysis Colls deploys. However, for the concept of community to have any validity in an analysis of a local society, a component that has striking similarities with an aspect of class analysis needs to be present. For a class analysis to be in any way workable, individual members of the society under study have to be aware of their membership of particular classes: a class consciousness is essential. Similarly, in any analysis of a local society employing the concept of community, evidence that individuals feel members of that community needs to be available. This is achieved, albeit problematically as will be shown, by tracing lines of interaction between individuals.

Without this third essential component, which Bell and Newby recognise in their analysis of the concept of community, social interaction, the two other elements they identify as essential to community, common ties and area, would be rendered useless. The absence of social interaction would render the existence of common ties quite useless in the construction of a community, for without the interaction there would be no awareness amongst individuals of these common links between themselves and so the solidarity necessary for a community to exist would be missing. Similarly, without social interaction, the area

over which a community was said to extend could not be delimited.

However, more difficulties seem to arise in the assessment of levels of social interaction than in either the identification of the linked community components of area or common ties. As Andrejs Plakans observes, advances in the interpretation of community data:

"have been understandably slow to a great extent because substantive information about particular relationships in the past is nearly always embedded in third-party statements. The creation of this evidence and the historical actors it purports to refer to cannot be observed and questioned ... The uncertainties on which any subsequent descriptions must rest can easily be judged to lead to ... inferior history."[25]

The empirical difficulties associated with the term community have then deterred many social historians from using it as an historical framework around which to construct a study. John Benson argues that:

"in their pursuit of the male, institutional solidarities of the workplace and labour movement, historians have sometimes tended to overlook the less obvious, more personal and predominantly female solidarities of kinship, neighbourhood and community. But this neglect is not due simply to the failings of male labour historians. It springs too from the very elusiveness of the subject: from the theoretical complexities of defining and distinguishing the terms kinship, neighbourhood and community; and from the empirical difficulties of finding the evidence that is required to examine them historically."[26]

Ultimately, community is a mental construct. It exists in the minds of its members and so essentially each individual has a different conception of what constitutes the community to which he or she belongs, depending upon his or her place in the life cycle, the workplace, the kinship network and sphere of leisure interest. By attempting to study a community, whether historical or contemporary, all academics can hope to do is reconstruct, at some significant remove, a generalised picture of the community under study. In the construction of this community portrait, scholars use as their media, even in the most vivid examples, the testimony of only a limited number of individuals, all of whom attempt to articulate to a stranger, distanced either by society, time, or both, highly personal, internalised notions of community.

David Clark uses this notion of 'community as sentiment' as the keystone to his concept of community. In his evaluation of specific communities Clark identifies the existence of two fundamental elements: a sense of solidarity and a sense of significance. The sense of solidarity, according to Clark, is that which leads people to identify with others so that when they say 'we' there is no thought of distinction, and when they say 'ours' there is no thought of division. The sense of significance makes individuals feel that they have a role to play, their own functions to fulfil in the reciprocal exchanges of the social scene.[27]

Clark stresses that both these two essential elements need to be in operation for a community to exist. As he explains:

"There are numerous situations where the group that provides members with a strong sense of solidarity does not give them a sense of significance of the same intensity and *vice versa*. For example, some people discover a very strong degree of solidarity within the nuclear family whilst not finding that it gives them the chance to attain a fully adequate sense of significance. Some people derive a very strong sense of significance from their work whilst not experiencing a very strong sense of attachment to fellow workers ... the strength of community within any given group is determined by the degree to which its members experience both a sense of solidarity and a sense of significance within it."[28]

In order to assess the strength of community using Clark's two principal criteria much attention needs to be paid to the accounts of individual actors. Such a qualitative approach to the study of community has much to offer those undertaking contemporary or oral history studies of specific settlements and attempting to evaluate the importance or otherwise of community in the lives of individuals. However, an assessment of the strength of community based upon criteria such as 'sense of solidarity' and 'sense of significance' is more difficult when the investigator does not have the opportunity to question individual actors. In such situations a more quantitative approach to the study of community has to be adopted, using extant records to reconstruct as far as possible the social

interaction which marked the lives of those under consideration. Although in such circumstances the investigator may not be able to evaluate the strength of individual relationships discovered, nevertheless the identification of linkages between individuals is not without significance. As Calhoun remarks in his article examining the concept of community: "the experiential dimension is not independent of the structural: the sense of belonging to a community is directly founded on the social relationships through which one does belong to a community."[29] A quantitative approach to the study of community, therefore, through its attempts to reconstruct ties of social interaction, may be used in a qualitative manner to build up a tentative picture of a past individual's sense of significance and solidarity.

As has been suggested, if a community is to be considered as a forum constructed upon ties of social interaction then the idea of a community being contained within a rigidly definable spatial plane is unworkable. Instead, scholars interested in using the concept of community in their studies employ the notion of social networks.

Using such a system of analysis, individuals are represented simply as points or nodes, and links between them are expressed by connecting lines, or arcs. The application of a social network analysis in the study of community offers subtle degrees of flexibility to those intent on pursuing a quantitative approach to the subject.

Network analysis also facilitates the study of a community's structure *per se*, in addition to offering the opportunity to the scholar of examining personal networks which, when compared, enable the analyst to discern differences between community members' perceptions of their communities.

Principal among the problems connected with the use of the network concept in the study of community is that of delimitation. Superficially paralleling the problem associated with assessing the boundaries of a spatially-determined community, the network analyst has to decide at what point to cut off from the core sample. A complete analogy between these problems cannot be drawn, however, for whereas extended spatial boundaries of a community invariably blur the characteristics which are the focus of the study, an extended network locates individual points within the social space with an increasing clarity.

One problem associated with constructing a community network regards the weight which needs to be attached to each type of social interaction. For example, it may have to be decided whether more weight should be given to ties of common church membership than to workplace ties. Similarly, a network representing kinship links may not be able to make the distinction between ties which are active and strong and those which are irregularly used and weak.

Another drawback with the network concept of community study for the historian is the synchronic nature of its

representation. The community network is merely a snapshot in time however it is represented. By its very nature, the community network is dynamic: members of the network leave and are replaced causing alterations in the relations connecting actors; relations between continuing members of the network can also be transformed as jobs, friendship patterns and church membership, for example, are changed; and transformations in the quality of relations may also occur as, perhaps, a son's relationship with his co-residing father changes over time from that of dependant to household head. The somewhat contrived stability and solidarity of a network concept has been identified by Plakans, who observes that:

"The network concept may allow us to hold steady for analysis certain elements of a system of connections in order to measure them, but having measured them, we have to remember that we have the dynamics of only part of the community at a moment in past time and measurements we would obtain at the next moment might well be somewhat different."[30]

Whilst believing that the network analysis approach to the study of community is an important means of considering the concept, nevertheless Plakans warns that we "are applying to the complex social reality of the past a concept which is of our own making. The reality itself might not have been as systematic as the network concept allows us to think it was."[31]

In the present study, the methodology employed owes significant debts to the network approach to the study of communities. However, it is also, throughout, wary of the problems associated with an excessively quantitative approach to the examination of communities. As will be shown subsequently, an ecumenical approach to the study of community is preferred, applying aspects of both the network-orientated and spatially-determined approaches to the study of community. Initially, however, the way in which the extant evidence relating to the study of nineteenth century mining settlements in South Yorkshire can be used in a network-orientated approach to the study of community will be outlined.

Census enumerators' books, (C.E.B.s) form a most important source for the study. The information within them contains the names, occupations, ages, places of birth and relations to household heads of actors who can be incorporated into a reconstitution of social networks. In the reconstruction of historical communities the information contained within the C.E.B.s is particularly important in establishing kinship links, potentially the strongest ties binding a community together. Examination of single C.E.B.s alone, however, offers definite information only about kinship links *within* households. Kinship links *between* households can not be made with absolute authority using only one year's C.E.B. Assumptions about inter-household kinship ties can be based upon firmer ground when information from previous or

subsequent census records for the equivalent enumeration district involving the actors under scrutiny is available. For example, a father-son relationship involving inhabitants in separate households may be identified in the 1871 census by the fact that in 1861 the two men were enumerated in the same household and were recorded as being linked by such a relationship.

However, even such an apparently simple exercise in identification is beset by problems. It is an impossible task using only census data to identify the relationship of married women with their parents and siblings living outside the family household because of the inevitable change in surnames. Thus, most inter-household kinship links identified from the C.E.B.s are those connecting males. Even definite links between related males in different households are not easily made, however. Many different families within a small locality often shared the same surname. Matters are complicated further by the limited range of christian names employed to differentiate individuals.

Prosopographers, that is scholars involved in the reconstruction of mass life histories, have devised strategies to ascertain the degree of certainty with which differing documents can be assumed to be related to the same individual. In most cases, it is believed that a consonance of full name and birthplace is sufficient to assume records relate to the same person[32]; where records

also provide similar occupational and birthdate information transforms the assumption that the documents relate to the same person into the realms of virtual proof. In the present study, where linkages are made between documents, a similar approach to identification of individuals is adopted: consonance of name, birthplace, birthdate and occupation is sought. However, where these details are not available, but instead information regarding co-resident household members of the subject coincides in two documents, a 'hit' is registered.

The reliance upon information relating to household members other than the subject of the particular search when using more than one year's C.E.B. is necessary because of the inconsistencies and inaccuracies recorded by enumerators. Errors are common in the C.E.B.s and are invariably caused either through the collection of suspect data or through mistakes made in transcription. Data referring to age and place of birth is often prone to such problems. In many instances apparent differences in the place of birth are the result of different policies employed by different enumerators: one might have entered the name of the parish in which an individual was born whilst another might have given more specific information, such as the hamlet of the individual's birth. Record linkage is undertaken most effectively, therefore, with a keen knowledge of local geography.

In the construction of a community network. much emphasis is placed upon the data contained in C.E.B.s concerning relations between household members. Problems, however, exist with the information contained relating to the links between people domiciled together. Some of the terms used by nineteenth century enumerators to describe relationships were somewhat different from those in employment today: most common of these are the terms son-in-law and daughter-in-law, which often referred to adopted children, in addition to the marital partners of offspring.

More problematic, however, than the differences between the bureaucratic language of nineteenth century enumerators and that of modern scholars is the variance in the language of kinship relations used by the enumerator and the enumerated. Plakans observes the problem acutely:

"With historical records ... the analyst stands at one remove from the direct information and the skills he brings to the task have to involve scrutiny of record keepers' notations rather than of direct information coming from the historical actor. Consequently ... the analyst has to look at the status and history of the language involved in the sources ... to establish whether the language of the historical actors may have been a dialect which remains hidden by the more 'learned' language used by the record-keeper ... Moreover, the analyst has to bear in mind the distinction between terms of address and terms of reference ... it is necessary to establish whether in the realm of kinship terms somewhat different terms in language were used when historical actors were addressing each other than when they were referring to each other."[33]

The exact nature of the relationships between individual actors is, therefore, often concealed in the anodyne language employed by the official, making it difficult for the analyst to discern the exact quality of the relationship experienced between individuals. To do so would entail the collection of impressionistic evidence from the actors themselves, any of which necessarily would have undergone some form of mediation process, either in written form such as letters and diaries, or in oral testimonies. Nevertheless, despite the inadequacies of the C.E.B.s for the contemporary analyst in the attempt to assess the quality of past relationships between individuals, significant information is contained within them detailing who lived with whom, whether through choice or force of circumstance.

Apart from the census, the other principal means by which kinship ties can be analysed in the reconstruction of historical communities is through an examination of marriage and baptism records. Marriage records are perhaps the most effective tool of the historical network analyst for, unlike the census, links of kinship across households can be identified. Marriage records often detail, in addition to the place of residence of the bride and groom the occupations of the groom, his father and his father-in-law, thus allowing the analyst to discern whether any form of community may have been constructed from workplace ties. In this study marriage records will be used to establish

whether mining families' members married endogamously or whether partners were found from families engaged in agricultural or other industrial activities.

The occupational information contained within sources such as the C.E.B.s and marriage records is extensive, but not sufficiently complete from which to construct workplace networks. Such sources do not reveal either power relationships within the workplace, or indeed whether two individuals working in the same industry shared the same employer. Information such as this is important in any attempt to reconstruct an historical community and to analyse its internal dynamics. Census authorities, Edward Higgs observes, "were most anxious to ensure that occupational terms were accompanied by the materials being worked upon ... This reflected a preoccupation with the effects of working with such materials on the character and life-expectancy of individuals."[34] It has to be borne in mind that the original reasons for the collection of data for documentary sources invariably differ from the interpretative purposes for which historians wish to use the assembled evidence. Conclusions drawn from the occupational data contained in the C.E.B.s, therefore, should be treated with considerable caution.

More accurate information can be obtained from the company records of employers regarding individuals' occupations and their relationships with other members of the workforce. Through an examination of employers' records relating to

their workers in conjunction with, for instance, a study of census records, important information can be brought to light regarding the community ties, if any, engendered in the workplace. In the case of large employers such as the collieries in the Darfield area, of which, by 1893, four employed more than 800 workers, it is doubtful that all workers could have known all their co-employees: ties in such instances were invariably stronger between those employed on the same shift, and more binding still between those working in the same work-team.

From such substantive information as that contained within the C.E.B.s, parish registers, church and chapel records and company records, the extent and nature of the multiplex bonds linking individuals will offer significant evidence regarding the communities existing in the settlements upon which the study will be centred.

The recreational pursuits of inhabitants offers a less quantitative, but nonetheless valuable entry into the examination of community awareness. In their influential study of community life in Featherstone, thinly disguised as 'Ashton', a West Yorkshire colliery settlement undertaken during the nineteen-fifties, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter attach much significance to the place of leisure pursuits, particularly sport, in the establishment of close links between individuals. In Coal Is Our Life, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter observe that:

"The most important of the 'sporting activities' is that of supporting the Ashton Rugby League. The term 'supporting' has been used advisedly. It is meant to signify that the activity is not a mere passive process of watching and taking pleasure in the display of a particular skill. Each game is an occasion in which a high proportion of Ashton's males come together and participate in the efforts of Ashton to assert its superiority (through its representatives) over some other town (through their representatives)."[35]

Evidence of the existence of such a territorially-orientated sense of community apparently contradicts the notion of community transcending spatial planes which many analysts have come to accept. However, rather than prompting the dismissal of the useful network approach to the study of community it may be more valuable to consider the existence of an additional, separate spatially-determined notion of community, operating in a somewhat different manner from the concept of community linking individual nodes by lines of social interaction.

Community as perceived by network analysts is, essentially, a constructive notion. The kinship and other ties of association identified by such analysts linking individuals together, even if only latent, are often activated in crises, giving support in times of under- or unemployment; when individuals are in poor health; or suffering from problems effected by their position in the life cycle. Such mutual support networks operate regardless of the existence of notional geographical community

boundaries, sometimes working exclusively within them, but often cutting across them. In contrast to the concept of a constructive, network-orientated community, the notion of a territorially defined community appears essentially to be a defensive one. In a sense it gives individuals the opportunity to express what Clark terms their 'we-ness' by the principally negative means of drawing attention to the 'otherness' of those living outside the often tacitly agreed geographical boundaries dividing communities.

As a matrix in which to undertake a study of several nineteenth century settlements in a mining area, the concept of community outlined here, with its emphasis on multiplex ties linking individuals together offers much to the social historian. As a framework of analysis it allows important questions to be asked about the incorporation of newcomers into the settlements; the extent to which they formed new communities of their own or were assimilated into established ones; and the nature of the relationship between existing and emerging communities. Clearly, the flexible characteristic of the notion of community is of particular value in the analysis of settlements undergoing great change over time, although, as has been explained, representations of these transformations using a network approach remain difficult.

By extending the study of a community beyond artificially defined spatial boundaries, often in the past demarcated by the inquirer, influences operating on a community from

outside can be assessed. This approach facilitates the incorporation into the study of an awareness of national political, economic and cultural developments, whilst inevitably also focussing upon the locality in which ties are most dense. Such an approach, therefore, aims to mediate between the polarities of 'national history localized' and 'local history *per se*'.[36]

In order to consider fully the notion of community as it operated in the coalmining settlements of Darfield and Wombwell the economic factors applying to the coal industry during the second half of the nineteenth century are first examined. By surveying the heterogeneous character of the structure and economic performance of the industry at a national level the difficulties of generalising about the experiences of families living in mining settlements are emphasised. The inextricable link between local and national history is made manifest in the consideration of the broad economic history of the mining industry since the large scale migration into the district of miners, to be considered in Chapter Three, is to a large extent explained in a national survey of the waxing and waning of the industry.

Having placed the economic development of the coalmining industry in South Yorkshire in its national context attention is shifted to the principal concern of the study: the social and cultural construction and, where

appropriate, reconstruction of community. However, in settlements so dependent upon the mining industry for employment, the society and culture of the townships of Darfield and particularly Wombwell were in large part determined by economic factors. It is for this reason that the consideration of the economic development of coalmining precedes the examination of constructions and reconstructions of communities within the locality.

From Chapter Three onwards the issue of 'community' features prominently in the investigation of social and cultural life in the Darfield and Wombwell district. In Chapter Three attention is paid to migration into the area and, from the census data available, there is clear evidence of residential clustering occurring. This suggests that migrants consciously strove to settle in new districts in pockets already populated with settlers from their own place of origin. The impact such residential patterns had upon the development of community consciousness in these districts and whether or not such migratory currents marked out neighbouring settlements very clearly from each other is analysed.

Chapter Four acknowledges the centrality of the workplace in miners' community lives. The aim of the chapter is to assess the way in which the mining workplace operates as a community at different levels. Regard is paid to union involvement but particular attention is focussed upon the often quite rigid divisions between grades of mining

employees which have been somewhat underemphasised in previous examinations of mining settlements. With the aid of census data, marriage records and colliery company records, social and familial links are made between individuals and career paths are traced. From a somewhat limited range of sources of an official nature, such as newspaper accounts and Mines Inspectors' Accident Reports, an attempt is also made to identify the evanescent communal culture of the pit.

Chapter Five seeks to shift the emphasis of the thesis from the exclusively male world of the coalmine to the domestic sphere in which the lives of the mining settlements' womenfolk necessarily are foregrounded. Attempts are made throughout the study to emphasise where possible the experiences of women but it is in this chapter that most attention focusses upon them. Women's communal experiences are traced against a background in which their roles as workers are first portrayed. This chapter seeks to challenge the notion that suggests that women in mining settlements played an economically passive role. It is argued in this chapter that the women inhabitants of the Darfield and Wombwell district during the second half of the nineteenth century enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy and should not be regarded merely as 'miners' wives'.

Chapters Six and Seven explore more explicitly cultural aspects of life in the coalmining district of Darfield and

Wombwell. Chapter Six focusses upon religious life in the district. In local societies in which religious observation is high, clearly denominational affiliation can be of significance in establishing one's communal identity. Consequently this chapter seeks to establish the incidence of religious observation, the social composition of each sect and the nature of inter-denominational relations in the district. Attention is paid not just to formal religion but also to popular belief, which is often a strong communal bond in localities where large numbers of individuals are employed in potentially dangerous occupations.

Chapter Seven examines the importance of leisure in the Darfield and Wombwell district during the second half of the nineteenth century. The nature of the leisure pursued by individuals is, to an important extent, determined by their work. Leisure-time is, essentially, a negative term principally determined by what it is not. The relationship between work-time and that of leisure must always be considered an unequal one: the hours of leisure are determined by the hours of work. Indeed, to a significant degree, individuals' leisure pursuits are dictated by the rewards of their labours. To an important extent, therefore, there is a consonance between the communal links of the workplace and those of leisure time. By focussing upon a number of key events in the district's customary calendar and examining several popular sporting activities

pursued in the locality, revealing information is obtained concerning social and economic relations *within* settlements and relations *between* neighbouring communities.

In the concluding section of the thesis the idea of community is reconsidered in the light of the preceding findings. Particular attention is paid to analysing whether the idea of an archetypal mining community is of any validity in the examination of the social and cultural lives of individuals associated with the coalmining industry.

<u>Footnotes to Chapter One</u>

1. Institutional histories of the mining unions include:
    R. Page Arnot, <u>The Miners: A History of the Miners'</u>
    <u>Federation of Great Britain, 1889 - 1910</u>, 1949; R.
    Page Arnot, <u>The Miners: Years of Struggle. A History</u>
    <u>of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain from 1910</u>
    <u>Onwards</u>, 1953; R. Page Arnot, <u>The Miners in Crisis</u>
    <u>and War. A History of the Miners' Federation of Great</u>
    <u>Britain from 1930 Onwards</u>, 1961; R. Page Arnot, <u>The</u>
    <u>South Wales Miners: A History of the South Wales</u>
    <u>Miners' Federation, 1898 - 1914</u>, 1967; R. Page Arnot,
    <u>The South Wales Miners, 1914 - 26</u>, 1975; H. Francis
    and D. Smith, <u>'The Fed': A History of South Wales</u>
    <u>Miners in the Twentieth Century</u>, 1980; W. Garside.
    <u>The Durham Miners, 1919 - 1960</u>, 1971; A.R. Griffin,
    <u>The Miners of Nottinghamshire, 1881 - 1914:</u>
    <u>A History of the Nottinghamshire Miners' Association</u>,
    1955; A.R. Griffin, <u>The Miners of Nottinghamshire,</u>
    <u>1914 - 44</u>, 1962; C. Griffin, <u>Leicestershire and</u>
    <u>South Derbyshire Miners, Volume I, 1840 - 1914</u>, 1981;
    C. Griffin, <u>Leicestershire Miners, Volume II, 1945 -</u>
    <u>88</u>, 1988.

      Two institutional histories of the Yorkshire miners
    have been written: F. Machin, <u>The Yorkshire Miners, a</u>
    <u>History, Volume I</u>, 1958; and C. Baylies, <u>The History</u>
    <u>of the Yorkshire Miners, 1881 - 1918</u>, 1993. Machin's
    work focussed upon the activities of the separate
    South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Miners'
    Associations; Baylies's recent work examines the
    history of the Yorkshire Miners' Association from
    its unification in 1881.

2. F. Machin, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.v.

3. This average has been calculated from figures repro-
    duced in C. Baylies, <u>The History of Yorkshire Miners</u>.
    p.446, from P. Spaven, <u>Accommodating the Miners</u>,

Warwick University Ph.D., 1978, p.129. The percentage of Yorkshire miners who were members of the Yorkshire Miners' Association were as follows: 1881 - 10.3; 1882 - 22.4; 1883 - 20.0; 1884 - 15.4; 1885 - 15.5; 1886 - 15.0; 1887 - 14.6; 1888 - 18.1; 1889 - 60.8; 1890 - 78.5.

4. R. Harrison, 'Introduction', in R. Harrison, ed., Independent Collier, 1978, p.11.

5. C. Fisher and P. Spaven, 'Edward Rymer and "The Moral Workman" - the Dilemma of the Radical Miner Under "MacDonaldism"', in R. Harrison, op. cit., pp.232 - 264.

6. P. Spaven, 'Main Gates of Protest: Contrasts in Rank and File Activity Among South Yorkshire Miners, 1858 - 1894', in R. Harrison, op. cit., pp.201 - 231.

7. C. Fisher, 'The Free Miners of the Forest of Dean, 1800 - 1841', in R. Harrison, op. cit., pp.17 - 63.

8. A. Campbell, 'Honourable Men and Degraded Slaves; a Comparative Study of Trade Unionism in Two Lanarkshire Mining Communities, c.1830 - 74', in R. Harrison, op. cit., pp.75 - 113.

9. R. Harrison, 'Introduction', in R. Harrison, op. cit., p.12.

10. R. Colls, The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield: Work, Culture and Protest, 1790 - 1850, 1987, p.xi.

11. Ibid., pp.305 - 306.

12. P. Joyce, 'The Historical Meanings of Work: An Introduction', in P. Joyce, ed., The Historical Meanings of Work, 1987, p.7.

13. C. Bell and H. Newby, Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community, 1971, p.22.

14. Ibid., p.22.

15. Ibid., p.25.

16. See for example M. Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire, 1971; and T. Harevan,

Family Time and Industrial Time: the Relationship
Between Family and Work in a New England Industrial
Community, 1982.

17. A. Macfarlane, Reconstructing Historical Communities,
     1977, p.1.

18. C. Bell and H. Newby, op. cit., p.32.

19. J. Fraser, 'Community, the Private and the Individ-
     ual', Sociological Review, 35, 1987, p.797.

20. G. Hillery, jr., 'Definitions of Community. Areas of
     Agreement', Rural Sociology, 20, 1955, quoted in
     C. Bell and H. Newby, op. cit., p.27.

21. C. Bell and H. Newby, op. cit., p.29.

22. C. Phythian-Adams, Rethinking English Local History,
     1987, p.25.

23. R. Williams, The Country and the City, 1973, p.19.

24. A. Cohen, The Symbolic Construction of Community,
     1985, p.19.

25. A. Plakans, Kinship in the Past, 1984, p.vii.

26. J. Benson, The Working Class in Britain, 1850 - 1939,
     1989, p.117.

27. D. Clark, 'The Concept of Community: a Re-examin-
     ation', Sociological Review, 21, 1973, p.404.

28. Ibid., p.409.

29. C. Calhoun, '"Community": Toward a Variable Con-
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     History, 5, 1980, p.109.

30. A. Plakans, op. cit., p.227.

31. Ibid, p.227.

32. C. Harvey, 'Record Linkage and the Relational Model'.
     A lecture given to the Association for History and
     Computing Conference, Wolverhampton Polytechnic,
     7/4/90.

33. A. Plakans, op. cit., p.100.

34. E. Higgs, Making Sense of the Census, 1989, p.79.

35. N. Dennis, F. Henriques and C. Slaughter, Coal is Our
     Life, 1956, p.156.

36. The terminology is that of H.P.R. Finberg, quoted in C. Phythian-Adams, op. cit., p.1.

Chapter Two

The Economic Development of the British Coal Industry,

c.1840 - 1900

The coal industry played a vital role in the industrialisation of Britain. It was, as Francois Crouzet observes, "the condition of existence of practically all the other main British industries at a time when coal was almost the only source of energy."[1] Coal's importance in the industrialising economy however was not merely confined to its role as a fuel, for the product was also used in the manufacture of economic goods and the transportation of raw materials and finished products. E.A.Wrigley claims that coal was particularly indispensable with regard to two of the most important innovations of the industrialising economy, "the steam engine and the coke-fired blast furnace." These, Wrigley asserts, "were the two developments which, more than any other, made possible the unprecedented expansion of industrial production which took place during the second half of the nineteenth century, and both were enormous consumers of coal."[2]

This chapter seeks to consider the growth of the British coal industry during the second half of the nineteenth century. The varied nature of coalownership and the differing responses of coalowners to the changes in the mining industry caused by the altering supply and demand

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schedules for the product will then be investigated.
Attention will finally be paid to the differing systems of
pit-working and to the linked matter of colliery
management. Throughout the chapter the heterogeneous nature
of the British coal industry will be stressed.

Although no reliable statistics exist for Britain's coal
output before the 1850s when Robert Hunt began to compile
them in connection with the Geological Survey, it has been
estimated, by extrapolation from available statistics
relating to total coal imports to London and total coal
exports to foreign countries, that in 1800 the United
Kingdom's total annual coal output amounted to eleven
million tons, with a pit-head value of £2.8 million.[3] The
industry's contribution to national income was likely to
have been less than one per cent at the beginning of the
nineteenth century and was barely two per cent by 1850.
However, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards the
coal industry comprised some six per cent of Britain's
annual national income.[4] By 1913 the industry's output
attained its zenith, exceeding 287 million tons, with a
pit-head value of £146 million.[5] The numbers employed in
the industry also grew swiftly during the nineteenth and
early twentieth centuries. In 1851, 216,000 people worked
in the coal industry, constituting approximately 2.5 per
cent of the country's workforce. By 1913, the number

employed in the industry had risen to 1,128,000, some 5.8 per cent of the total national working population.[6]

Between 1851 and 1913 the most rapid growth in British coal output was achieved from the 1850s into the early 1870s, when production almost doubled in twenty years from an annual average of 68.4 million tons in 1850 - 1855 to 123.3 million tons in 1870 - 1874, an average rate of growth of 2.95 per cent per annum.[7] From 1875 onwards the growth rate slowed, reaching its nadir in the decade 1885 - 1895, before improving again though only to an annual growth rate of 2.5 per cent in the period 1905 - 1913.[8]

The growth of production in the British coal industry between 1840 and 1914 needs to be seen as the consequence of two inter-related forces, supply and demand, each of which, to a certain extent, had its own system of dynamics. However, the more influential factor of the two upon the growth of the coal industry, and that which determined its character, was the demand component. The industry's growth was essentially demand-led: technological developments in the coal industry were prompted almost invariably by an increase in the demand, and hence the price, of coal, which necessitated the exploitation of increasingly deep coal seams. In studying the growth in coal output, attention will first be paid to the developments on the demand side of the equation before examining the largely consequent changes on the supply side.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century most of the
output of the British coal industry was consumed by the
household market or by small domestic manufacturers. Cole
and Deane estimate that, at the turn of the nineteenth
century, "the household market absorbed between one-half
and two-thirds of all coal consumed in Great Britain and
Ireland."[9]

Forty years later British coal output had increased more
than three-fold, in part owing to the demands made by the
metal industries which absorbed over one quarter of total
coal output. Manufacturing industries outside the metal
trades were thought to have consumed just below one-third
of Britain's annual coal output, which was much the same
proportion as that used by domestic consumers.[10]

In 1871 the Coal Commission published a compilation of
statistics which revealed that by 1869 coal was principally
a producers' good. Domestic consumption constituted barely
one-sixth of the total demand for British coal output. By
1870, as Roy Church observes, considerable progress had
been made in the application of steam power to
manufacturing industry. By this date significant
developments in the use of coking coal for furnaces had
been effected and large new consumers of coal had created a
significantly increased demand for the product, most
particularly with the emergence of gas manufacture, the
railways and steam navigation. Continued growth and
development of the iron and steel industries meant that by

1869 this market was the single largest consumer of coal, using some 30 per cent of British coal output annually.[11]

The most marked feature of the demand for British coal in the closing years of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of war in 1914 was the increasing importance of coal exports. In 1907 nearly two-thirds of all world trade in coal was mined in Britain.[12] In 1913 almost 98 million tons of coal was shipped abroad, nearly one-third of the industry's entire output, which constituted more than one-tenth of the value of Britain's exports.[13] In 1869 exports of coal had made up barely more than one-tenth of British coal output. The principal cause of this rapid rise in exports, it has been argued, was the industrialisation of Europe and the associated transport revolution, the progress of which was hampered in many countries, among them some 'advanced' nations such as France, by the lack of immediately available suitable indigenous coal.

Britain's increasing dependence upon its export market for demand for its coal prompted little contemporary concern, but there were some scholars, as Crouzet observes, "like Alfred Marshall, who thought that these massive exports depleted a natural capital asset that could not be replaced or who were surprised that a growing proportion of exports from a highly industrialised country was made up of a raw material."[14] Writing in 1938, J.H.Clapham anticipated many later economic historians when he commented that:

"although Britain's unusual geological and geographical advantages as a coal producer made at least the partial continuance of exports reasonably certain, much of the trade lay open to damaging competition. It was unlikely for instance that England would always supply one-fifth of the coal burnt in Berlin as in the early years of twentieth century she sometimes did."[15]

The British coal industry's dependence upon its export trade and its product's principal function as a 'producer's good' made the industry particularly vulnerable to cyclical fluctuations. Foreign demand was 'highly irregular'[16] and a fall in output of any power-using industry resulted invariably in a corresponding fall in demand for coal. The situation was often further exacerbated by technical innovations in other industries, which involved economies in the use of fuel. Nevertheless, despite the violent cyclical swings in demand for coal, the secular trend throughout the years from 1850 to 1914 remained determinedly upward. As Church makes clear:

"Over the long term and excluding the years of strikes in 1893 and 1912, output actually fell on only nine occasions: in 1858, 1874, 1878, 1884 to 1886, 1892, 1901 and 1908, each simultaneous either with a fall from a price peak or with a prolonged collapse of prices."[17]

The almost unilinear advance of British coal output, however, masked a more complicated picture, which is revealed only when the national figures are broken down into the component mining regions, and their changing relative patterns of output are examined. Although all ten

of the United Kingdom's mining regions, which Church identifies, saw significant increases in production from 1840 to 1913, many regions' output, as a proportion of the U.K.'s total, changed quite dramatically.[18] Six of the regions' relative positions declined, the most dramatic being the demise of the West Midlands coalfield, which fell from 17.5 per cent of the national output in 1840 to 7.5 per cent in 1913, followed by the Lancashire and Cheshire coalfield, the figures for which were respectively 13.4 per cent and 8.8 per cent. Of the four mining regions which enjoyed increases in their share of Britain's total coal output during the period 1840 - 1913, the two which experienced the greatest increases were the East Midlands, rising from 5.4 per cent in 1840 to 11.5 per cent in 1913, and Yorkshire, increasing from 9.8 per cent to 12.5 per cent. The North East's position as unchallenged premier coal producing region in 1840, with ten million tons of coal sold annually and 22.4 per cent of British output was being threatened in 1913 by South Wales, third largest producer in 1840, where 51.5 million tons of coal were being produced, giving the area 19 per cent of U.K. output compared to figures for the North East of 54.2 million tons and 20 per cent of the U.K. market.[19] Reasons for the changes in the supply structure of the British coal industry will now be considered.

An essential development which facilitated the growth of the British coal industry was the growth of an extensive

railway network which allowed the requirements of demand and supply for the product to be reconciled much more efficiently than had hitherto been possible. Because of its bulky nature, coal had always incurred high transport costs which had prohibited the sale of coal hewn from the inland fields much beyond its point of extraction. Consequently, coalfields located near to the coast enjoyed many advantages over their inland rivals since the transportation of coal by sea , being much cheaper than overland, allowed producers to offer their coal for sale in large markets further afield. Nowhere were the advantages of cheap sea transport felt more than in the coalfield of the North East. The power enjoyed by the North East coal producers in the London market particularly was reflected in the establishment of a cartel amongst the region's major coal suppliers, the Vend, which regulated its members' coal sales to shipowners in order to support prices in the capital. The Vend was eventually broken in the mid-nineteenth century only as a result of the increasing importance of railways in transporting coal to the capital, which broke the North East domination of the market. In 1850, only 55,000 tons of coal were brought into London by rail. In 1860, the figure had risen to 1.5 million tons; in 1870, 3.5 million tons; 6.2 million tons in 1880; and 7.25 million tons in 1886. The capital's sea-borne supply in contrast had remained fairly stable: 3.5 million tons had been carried by ship in 1850, some 64 times more than the

quantity of coal conveyed by rail. However, by 1886, the
sea-borne supply had risen only to 4.7 million tons,
constituting less than two-thirds of the amount transported
by rail for consumption in London that year.[20]

Prior to the development of an extensive rail network, the
larger inland collieries which did exist, as Pollard
observes, "had to be either very close to large towns or
groups of large iron works."[21] Few of them matched the
scale of the collieries of the North East, however, where,
as early as 1724 it has been estimated that perhaps 240
people were employed daily at the Gibside coliery in the
parish of Whickham, and by 1829 between £2 million and £2.5
million of capital had been invested in the coal trade, and
41 Tyneside collieries employed 12,000 men at an average of
300 each.[22] Nevertheless, some comparatively large
collieries did exist before 1840 in the land sale
districts. In South Yorkshire, for example, on the
Fitzwilliam estates collieries were developed alongside
ironworks. By 1820, Earl Fitzwilliam calculated that he had
spent £122,000 in the past thirteen years in acquiring nine
collieries. It was reported that several collieries in the
area at this time employed workforces averaging between 200
and 300 people.[23] One of the largest land-sale collieries
in the opening years of the nineteenth century was
Middleton Colliery in West Yorkshire, which had a virtual
monopoly of the large Leeds market and employed 380 people
in 1820. Proximity to the major local markets of Glasgow

and Manchester also enabled the successful development to take place of collieries at Govan and Worsley respectively.[24]

The sinking of large, deep pits became more commonplace as the demand for coal grew rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century in part both prompted and facilitated by the growth of railways. Many of the small pits on exposed coalfields were mined to exhaustion. Consequently attempts were made to exploit deeper seams, an exercise made worthwhile by the continuing increase in demand for the commodity. Thus, as the shallow seams of the Forest of Dean coalfield were gradually exhausted, attention was shifted to South Wales where collieries began to be sunk in the 1850s.[25] Similarly, in the Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire coalfield, as the collieries on the exposed, westerly section of the coalfield were gradually exhausted, further exploration of the resources shifted eastwards despite the deeper sinking necessitated by the significant eastward dip in the coal seams. Describing the development of the South Yorkshire coalfield, Patrick Spaven notes that:

"1853 - 4 proved to be crucial years for the opening up of larger pits of the district. The Wakefield Express [on January 15, 1853], claimed that Barnsley was 'fast becoming a second Newcastle' on account of recent advances in the railway network. The new markets precipitated the opening of large numbers of pits ... Most of them were designed to serve varied and distant markets for the first time and were not a response to specific local demand. Wombwell

Main, (1856), Strafford Main, (1857), Lundhill, (1855) and Wharncliffe Silkstone, (1854), were examples of these large pits of the early railway boom."[26]

Parallelling the development of the South Yorkshire coalfield was that of the East Midlands. Expansion eastwards from the exposed coalfield into the deeper, richer seams of the East Midlands was partly made possible by the increasing demand for the product and the development of a railway network which made its transportation economically viable. As A.R.Griffin notes, mining in the East Midlands from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, could be divided into three distinct phases as the exploitation of the coalfield advanced eastwards. In 1850, the main mining district of the region was centred upon the Erewash Valley where coal was mined in small pits on the exposed coalfield. However, by 1860 many of these old pits, exhausted, were no longer in operation, and many more modern mines were sunk further east in the Leen Valley, where the concealed top hard seam was beginning to be worked. As Griffin explains, "These developments were facilitated by the growth of an integrated railway system."[27] Most of the Leen Valley pits were sunk in the 1860s and 1870s. Some twenty years later a further eastwards advance of the coalworking took place with the sinking of still deeper and larger collieries in the Mansfield area.

Although the changing market conditions for coal were the prime inducement for the sinking of deeper, larger collieries from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, this could be effected only by the implementation of technological improvements. It could be argued that the great advances necessary to enable the sinking of deeper mines were encouraged by the prospects of enhanced profitability, and so were very much stimulated by the buoyant coal market. The years spanning the middle part of the nineteenth century therefore saw many improvements in mining technology facilitating the sinking of deep and large mines. Perhaps the most obvious development was the use of increasingly efficient steam engines for the vital work of pumping. Improvements relating to pit shafts were also of obvious importance in the development of deeper mining. As Roy Church observes:

"Raising and lowering men in shafts and winding coal to the surface from mines of increasing depth, at speed and with greater safety was achieved not only by increasingly powerful winding engines, but also, even from the 1830s, by the installation of guided cages, first using rails, then ropes and later by the use of automatic tippers which were designed to avoid the transshipment of coal."[28]

The vast costs involved in the sinking of increasingly deep shafts meant that as much coal as possible had to be extracted in order to bring a return on the investment. Invariably, therefore, the workings of the deeper collieries were more extensive than those located on the

exposed coalfield. In such collieries the safety of workers was a matter of increasing legislative consideration from 1842 onwards. Significant advances, for example, were necessary in matters such as ventilation. By the 1860s the use of furnaces as a means of creating draughts to ease the dangers caused by the presence of such gases as firedamp, (methane), and chokedamp, (carbon dioxide), was declining with the increasing adoption of mechanical fans.

In his work, Roy Church pays particular attention to the developments made in the field of 'access technology' in the coalmining industry during the nineteenth century. With the more extensive workings associated with the deeper collieries the matter of transporting workers and coal quickly and efficiently from the face to the shaft bottom assumed an increasing importance. As Church elucidates:

"The movement of coal from the face was a necessary condition for continuous working and, in achieving this, the substitution of ponies for human labour beyond the main roads for face-to-main-road duties was significant from the mid-nineteenth century; steam power was also soon applied to main-road haulage. The key development in this direction however began in the 1860s with the substitution of the endless wire rope for the chain system of haulage; this increased the regularity of tubs dispatched, facilitated handling, enhanced safety and required minimal labour for efficient operation."[29]

The uneven adoption, however, of such technological advances is made clear by an examination of contemporary technical mining periodicals. In one such publication, for

example, after a report of a meeting at which an official of Mitchell Main Colliery, Yorkshire explained the advantages his mine enjoyed in having adopted the endless rope haulage system, an article concluded that:

"The Chairman said this was an important subject owing to the increasing depth of shafts. To him it was interesting to find that at one colliery they are taking out the [more established] main-and-tail rope system running at high speed and putting in the endless rope, and at another they are taking out the endless rope and putting in the main-and-tail rope."[30]

Clearly, the investment of capital in new equipment and technology did not always prove to be successful. To be able to write off significant amounts of capital in the event of such failures whilst sinking the larger collieries of the second half of the nineteenth century necessitated the development of a different type of colliery ownership system from that which had previously characterised the industry.

In the early years of the nineteenth century there existed a strong tendency for landowners to manage directly collieries on their own estates. Day-to-day control of the coal working persisted with the owners of some small, shallow pits throughout the century. One such enterprise, referred to in a Report of Inspectors for Mines as late as 1885, was that of a certain John Lewis, who was described as "the owner of a small colliery at Thurgoland, and on 5th March he lost his life in it. He and two others were

the only persons in the pit."[31] Elsewhere, as F.M.L.Thompson acknowledges, direct control of their coalmines remained with some leading members of the aristocracy into the 1870s. Thompson notes the continued involvement of the Duke of Devonshire in the management of his coalmines in Derbyshire; the Bridgewaters in Lancashire; and the Marquis of Londonderry and the Earls of Dudley, Durham and Lonsdale in the North East. Many of these coalowners regarded their collieries very much as an extension of their agricultural interests. Indeed, landowners in the North East until the later years of the nineteenth century offered similar terms of employment to their mining employees as to their agricultural workers, offering a tied cottage and hiring them on a yearly bond.[32]

Such figures were, however, the exception. As Thompson states, "By 1869 it appears that not many more than 5 per cent of collieries in England were owned and managed by landowners and a high percentage of these were owned by half a dozen coal empires."[33] The decline in the numbers of landowners involved directly in their own estates was a constant feature of nineteenth century society. Earl Fitzwilliam, for example, who had run four collieries in the late eighteenth century and five or six in the 1840s had, it seems, only two left in his own hands by 1869.[34]

The tendency throughout the period was for mineral landowners to withdraw from their enterprises into the more secure position of rentiers. The sinking of deeper, more

capital-intensive mines was made necessary as the demand
for coal increased. This, at least in the short run,
deterred rising numbers of landowners, many of whom had
been rendered impecunious by the Regency extravagances of
their forebears, from investing in the coal reserves
beneath their estates. Instead, many such landowners left
the development of collieries upon their estates to others
in return for royalty payments and wayleave rents.

However, in their capacity of rentiers, mineral landowners
were by no means passive in matters relating to the
development of the coal drawn from their properties. As
R.W.Sturgess stresses in his examination of nineteenth
century Staffordshire landowners: "The responsibility of
ensuring that lessees worked their mines both judiciously
and profitably was generally given to a professional mine
agent and in 1851 William White could list 27 mining
agencies in the Potteries and the Black Country." As
lessors rather than coalmasters, nevertheless, Sturgess
observe, landowners "still retained a vigorous interest in
ensuring that their coal tenants exploited their royalty-
earning mines to the full."[36] Indeed, in order to exploit
their lessees financially to the utmost some landowners
invested in railways. These offered a more secure
investment to the landowner and, by linking the lessees'
coal direct with its market, enabled rentiers to benefit
from the increased profitability of their lessees'
operations. According to J.T.Ward, "South Yorkshire squires

were among the leading promoters, planners, directors and users of the railway network in the colliery districts."[37] The Duke of Norfolk, for example, had interests in the Manchester and Sheffield Railway Company whilst Earl Fitzwilliam was involved with the South Yorkshire Railway Company.[38]

Without doubt one of the principal deterrents for investment in collieries, from an individual landlord's point of view, was the need for a vast amount of initial capital to finance the sinking of shafts and the construction of underground workings before any coal was mined. According to a survey detailed in the Colliery Guardian in 1871 the average sinking time might vary from ten to 38 months in dry areas, dependent upon depth, and longer in districts where water was a problem.[39]

Another major discouragement for landlords when considering whether to undertake the financing of a colliery alone was the question of coal's violent short-term fluctuations in price. The volatile nature of coal prices was caused principally by the relative inelasticity of the commodity's supply. In the short term the supply of coal could not be altered significantly in response to changes in the product's demand because of the length of time needed for pit sinking. Thus, when demand for coal rose, the supply of the commodity could not be increased markedly until further capacity was made available. The resulting rise in coal prices prompted investment in

further colliery ventures which, some two years after the initial surge in demand, caused an increase in the commodity's supply. However, by this time, the demand for coal usually had already peaked, causing therefore an excess in supply and a concomitant depression in coal prices. The effects of the violent cyclical nature of coal prices can be seen clearly in the case of the Earl of Durham whose colliery interests enjoyed a profit of £380,000 at the height of the coal boom in 1873. Two years later, however, when prices had slumped, the Earl of Durham suffered a dead loss of £65,000.[40]

That highly capitalised, deep, large collieries were sunk and opened was due in large part to the emergence of the limited liability company from the mid-1850s onwards, after the passing of the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1856, and a great consolidating Limited Liability Act in 1862.[41] In limited liability companies investors could employ their capital in the knowledge that if the company failed their liability was limited to the amount they had themselves invested. The coming of limited liability at a time when many small capitalists were eager to employ their savings constructively significantly increased the amount of capital with which the coalmining industry was able to work.

An examination of the figures for the effective yearly formations of public limited companies registered in coal and iron mines illustrates clearly the cyclical nature of

the industry's fortunes. In the peak years 1872, 1873 and 1874, for example, respectively 78, 109 and 84 public limited companies were formed compared with only 44, 25 and twelve in the depressed years 1875, 1876 and 1877. The perils of investing in the coal and iron mining industries have been highlighted by Shannon in a survey of the 271 companies formed in the three year period 1872 - 1874. His findings reveal that within three years 76 of the 271 companies were dead; within four years, 128; and within ten years, the figure had risen to 176.[42]

The onset of limited liability enabled industrialists and merchants from outside the coal industry to invest capital into collieries. Financial control of Pope and Pearson and Company, owners of Denaby Main Colliery in South Yorkshire, as James MacFarlane has shown, lay not with the Pope and Pearson families but also with the Crossley family of Halifax, carpet manufacturers, and the Baines family from Leeds who included newspaper proprietors and politicians.[43] Some investors entered the coal industry in an attempt to secure supplies of coal for their own enterprises. Such movements towards vertical integration were prevalent in South Yorkshire, as Spaven has observed,:

"Cammells at the Oaks colliery, John Davy of Manvers Main, John Brown at Aldwarke, the Old Silkstone and Dodworth Coal and Iron Company at Church Lane, Mark Firth at Silkstone Main and Newton Chambers and Company at Thorncliffe were all connected with large scale iron and steel manufacture."[44]

The shift in the nature of ownership of collieries with the associated increased importance of profitability to finance shareholders' dividends and the increased capital-intensiveness of the coal industry prompted changes in the way in which many collieries were run. Mining management experienced considerable transformations with the development of larger collieries, though these changes were prompted also by legislative requirements relating to safety. As Spaven observes:

"The top of the colliery hierarchy contained a confusing range of job titles, some of which were interchangeable and some were not. 'Manager', 'viewer', or 'agent' in some firms signified the men with overall responsibility while in other firms all three titles appeared ... As legislation became more plentiful and complex, especially after the 1872 Mines Regulations Act specified that underground managers had to be certified mining engineers, the importance of the viewer increased."[45]

Such a professionalised management structure was broadly in evidence in the collieries of the North East coalfield considerably before it became widely applied elsewhere, principally because the region was characterised early by the existence of large collieries. Indeed, the reputation of the northern coalfield was such that mining companies elsewhere looked to appoint viewers who had been trained in the North East's informal schools of management.

Professional management structures with managers directly responsible for all employees were associated almost from the outset with the development of large collieries in

areas such as South Yorkshire and South Wales. Elsewhere however a system of sub-contract working, or 'butty work', lingered, in some places well into the second half of the nineteenth century. Two distinct types of sub-contract systems prevailed: the big- and the little-butty system. The big-butty system involved the letting of a pit to one or a pair of butties. A company would sink a shaft and then invite tenders from perspective butties. The butty who quoted the lowest price for getting and raising coal was invariably given the contract and was then responsible for engaging his own men. As a witness employed in the Portland Colliery, Selston, in Nottinghamshire told a Children's Employment Sub-Commissioner in 1841, "The company does not consider they have anything to do with any of these parties but the butties."[46]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, by far the more commonplace means of sub-contracting in the mining industry was the little-butty system whereby a colliery company, having sunk a shaft and constructed workings, let sections of a coalface to pairs of butties who were paid the tonnage price for getting the coal. The butties then paid two or three day wage assistants who usually worked under them and provided their own light, powder and hand tools.

As the nineteenth century progressed, even in areas where the butty systems had previously been prevalent, a more professional approach to colliery management was adopted.

Detailing the development of the East Midlands coal industry, A.R.Griffin comments that:

"Large new collieries like Thomas North's Cinderhill and Babbington collieries were much too extensive to be left to one butty to run. Further, the owner had far too much capital at risk to trust it to the uneducated butty ... Progressive companies like Butterley abolished the big butty system even at their old pits; and by 1851 the Butterley 'contractor' (i.e. little butty), rarely had charge of more than ten people."[47]

Indeed, where the butty system continued much beyond the middle of the nineteenth century in the East Midlands many contractors were subject to the control of a pit deputy who was directly employed by the colliery company.

The decline in the sub-contract system was caused principally by the emergence of the larger collieries in which it became increasingly clear that the interests of the company and the butties were, at root, in conflict. The butty's interest was always the immediate short-term, attempting to extract only the colliery's choicest pickings, not, as the coalowners required, its fullest yield. Long term projects such as development work in the colliery were also given low priorities under the sub-contract system which became increasingly unacceptable as the initial amounts of capital invested into the project rose. The continued use of the butty system became still further untenable following the decision in the case of Regina *versus* Cope in 1867 in which it was established that

liability for injury sustained in a colliery operating under the butty system lay not with the contractor but with the coalowner. Thus, as A.J.Taylor concludes:

"In the 'new model' coal industry of the late nineteenth century, the butty could at best hold only a limited and questioned place, and subcontracting survived from force of habit rather than from any virtue it had once possessed."[48]

One feature of early nineteenth century coalmining which was not allowed to linger through force of habit was expunged with the passing of the 1842 Mines Act. This was the employment of women and young children below ground. Although Mining Commissioners found that by 1840 the employment of women in collieries was by no means general, underground female coalworkers were still reported in parts of some districts. These were chiefly in pockets of Lancashire, Cheshire, the West Riding, South Wales and the East of Scotland. Indeed, in East Lothian the Mining Commissioners found that one-third of all adults employed below ground were women.[49]

Where women and children were employed underground they were generally engaged in the little-butty system of colliery working, invariably being employed at such tasks as tramming by their husbands or their fathers. In such a working system the pace of work was generally controlled by the male head of the family working group. The decline of the employment of women and young children can be seen therefore not as a consequence of Victorian moral outrage

but within the context of the demise of the sub-contracting system. As Campbell and Reid observe:

"The new highly capitalised, vertically integrated coal and iron companies geared their production to rhythms which differed completely from those of small masters supplying domestic consumption ... their need was not for an independent come-and-go-as-you-please contractor but for a wage-hand."[50]

Another consequence of the more professional approach to colliery management, it has been argued, was a change in the method of mine working from the pillar-and-stall, or 'bord-and-pillar', method to a longwall means of coal extraction. Though, as Church stresses, there were in effect as many different ways of working as there were coal seams each was, in essence, rather a variant on the pillar-and-stall or longwall method of coal winning.

The pillar-and-stall method involved the construction of a series of alcoves leading off an arterial road from the shaft bottom. A small group of workers was responsible for hewing and transporting coal from each individual stall. As the coal was hewn in the stall, pillars of coal were left at intervals as roof supports. When the stalls were abandoned in some places the pillars were worked off whilst elsewhere they were allowed to remain. Matthias Dunn, a colliery viewer from Newcastle-upon-Tyne claimed that the pillar-and-stall system worked in the district enabled 80 to 90 per cent of coal to be extracted.[51]

Each working group under the pillar-and-stall system, it has been claimed, enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy and had responsibility for the whole coal-getting task. Such workers, Trist and Bamforth claim, "had craft-pride and artisan independence."[52] With the more intensive working required in the larger collieries of the latter part of the nineteenth century, so the argument has been advanced, more control over the pace of work of its employees was required by the colliery management. In a summary of this line of argument, Church writes that:

"The adoption of longwall mining allowed increasing specialisation of function among larger teams of miners working longer faces, facilitated a higher degree of supervision by managers and, by requiring a more disciplined performance from the individual miner, thereby led to a decline in his independence as an artisan."[53]

Longwall mining accounted for approximately 75 per cent of U.K. output by 1900 and dominated, apart from South Staffordshire, North Wales and the North East.[54] However, as Church stresses, the method of longwall working in existence before the widespread adoption of machine coalcutting equipment from 1913,

"generally involved the coalface advancing in a stepped line, or fanning out from the bottom to form a series of well-defined working places which were the province of one or two hewers and the putters who removed the coal from the face."[55]

In short, therefore, the opportunities for a more professional colliery management scheme to become

established were only moderately improved by the adoption of longwall mining. Indeed, significantly, the area in which professional colliery management was born, the North East, persisted with the pillar-and-stall system until late into the nineteenth century, whilst one of the districts in which the longwall method was pioneered, North Staffordshire[56], remained an area where, according to A.J.Taylor, "as late as the 1870s the butty system was said to have prevailed."[57]

Until the coming of large scale modernisation in collieries from the second decade of the twentieth century onwards when strips of 100 metres or more were worked, arguably one of the most significant factors in determining the method of working, longwall or pillar-and-stall, was the geological nature of the area being mined. Church observes, for example, that, "The thickness of seams in Durham, parts of Scotland and in the Swansea district of South Wales where roofs were typically poor and wet conditions were widespread, proved especially favourable to the persistence of pillar-and-stall."[58]

A significant factor, however, prompted the large majority of British coal to be worked by the longwall method by 1900, namely that of safety. As early as 1854 a Royal Select Committee examinning accidents in coalmines highlighted the lesser degrees of roof falls under the longwall system and concluded also that, "for the facility of conveying the air through a mine and for obtaining the

greatest quantity of coal the longwall system, where it can be adopted, is preferable to any other."[59] John Longden, a mining engineer, succinctly explained the safety advantages of the longwall system to a Royal Commission set up to investigate mining accidents in 1891. He declared:

"In the first place the ventilation can be split in any direction with few outcasts ... The faces advance so slowly and regularly that the gas imperceptibly exudes and does not come off in flushes as it does with the pillar and stall method. Any gas that is made is at once removed by the immense volume of wind constantly passing the coal faces."[60]

Such safety benefits associated with the longwall mining method were significant factors, particularly with the increasing number of larger mines in existence. In 1895 just below five per cent of Britain's collieries employed over 800 workers. In 1913 the figure had risen to sixteen per cent.[61] This undoubtedly was an important factor in explaining the longwall system of mining's predominance by the beginning of the twentieth century, even in areas such as South Wales where resistance to it had previously been strong.

The increasing preponderance of longwall coal extraction in Britain's mines should not be seen, however, as a symbol of rising homogeneity of working practices in the coal industry by the beginning of the twentieth century. One factor that militated against uniformity of working experience below ground was the diverse incidence of

machine use in coal extraction. By the beginning of the twentieth century the application of coal extracting machinery remained low in Britain in comparison with its application in the United States: by 1913 it has been calculated that whilst 8.5 per cent of British coal was cut by machine, in the United States some 40 per cent was extracted by this means.[62] As David Greasley acknowledeges, the relatively low incidence of coal cutting machinery in Britain during the later nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries "has been used to cast doubt upon the quality of British entrepreneurship."[63] However, severe obstacles lay in the way of those eager to implement such machinery in the British mining industry.

For many years the benefits of mechanised coalcutting were outweighed often by the techical difficulties associated with the equipment. As was stated in a Royal Commission Report in 1886: "The coalcutting or kinving machines of which so many have been brought forward within the last twenty five years are in numerous cases ingenious and effective but cannot yet be accepted as a practical success."[64] One of the principal drawbacks of mechanised coalcutting was the unreliable nature of the electrical power supply initially used which was a direct current system that suffered high transmission losses and was deemed unsafe in many mines owing to the sparks it caused. Only with the application of the safer, more flexible

alternating current system early in the twentieth century was this problem overcome.

These problems, however, were felt universally and did not explain the uneven diffusion of machine coalcutting within Britain. By 1902, for example, only 0.67 per cent of Durham's coal output was machine-cut compared to 2.22 per cent in Scotland and 4.11 per cent in the Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire coalfield. By 1913, marked regional differences remained, though Scotland, with 21.99 per cent of its coal now mechanically cut had overtaken the Yokshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire region, with 10.37 per cent, as the most highly mechanised British coalfield.[65]

A major cause of the regional differences in the application of mechanised coalcutters was geological variation. Machine technology was most effective in thin seams where its application enhanced the quality, and hence the value, of coal output. Using mechanised coalcutters, more round coal was produced, with a greater degree of thermal efficiency than the slack which was often the product of handcutting in thin seams. As Greasley comments:

"In the early years of the twentieth century when machine cutting was concentrated in seams of two to three feet in thickness the gain in round coal was typically ten to 25 per cent. At this time round house and steam coal was approximately twice the price of slack."[66]

Consequently areas such as Scotland, West Yorkshire and Northumberland, where thin seams predominated, were those

in which the majority of machine coalcutters were to be located.

Other factors, however, also influenced the application of machine cutting. Whilst by the twentieth century the Durham coalfield was characterised by thin seams, it was second only to South Wales and Monmouthshire in the limited use of machine coalcutters. This was a consequence of the fact that the principal advantage of machine cutting was the enhanced quality of output. However, in areas such as Durham, and to a lesser extent South Yorkshire, where a high proportion of the coal was carbonised either in gas or coking plants, the increased production of round coal by machine coalcutters was of no economic advantage.

Geological factors other than thin seams also dictated the prevalence of machine coalcutting. As Greasley remarks:
"The hardness, friability, inclination and faulting of coal seams along with roof and floor conditions are all geological circumstances which may have helped determine the economically rational technique [of coal extraction]."[67]

Thus, where economic benefit was seen to be derived from the application of machine cutting, as the case of Scotland illustrated, the opportunity was taken to introduce mechanisation at the coalface. However, even by 1914 most British coalowners still felt little economic benefit could be forthcoming from the application of the new technology to their collieries. The profusion of articles relating to

mechanical coalcutters in journals such as the Transactions of the Federated Institution of Mining Engineers,[68] and the application of less conspicuous, but no less important developments such as improvements in access technology, makes it evident that the British coal entrepreneur was not reluctant to invest when and where economic returns were expected to be forthcoming.

By considering some of the principal economic factors which determined the development of Britain's mining industry and the multifarious ways in which coal was won during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the dangers of generalising about the British coal industry have been emphasised. The differing experiences of mining and the dissonant cycles of prosperity and hardship in the various mining districts have been stressed in order to explain, in part, why movement between mining regions occurred and also to point to the potential difficulties associated with such moves caused by differing working practices both between and within mining districts.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

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2.   E.A. Wrigley, <u>Industrial Growth and Population Change</u>, 1961, p.3.

3.   P. Deane and W. Cole, <u>British Economic Growth, 1688 - 1959</u>, 1962, p.216.

4.   F. Crouzet, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.263.

5.   P. Deane and W. Cole, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.216.

6.   P. Deane and W. Cole, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.143; F. Crouzet, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.268.

7.   R. Church, <u>History of the British Coal Industry, Volume 3: 1830 - 1913</u>, 1986, p.3.

8.   F. Crouzet, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.265.

9.   P. Deane and W. Cole, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.218.

10. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.219.

11. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.219

12. R. Church, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.758.

13. F. Crouzet, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.266.

14. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.266.

15. J. Clapham, <u>Economic History of Modern Britain: Machines and National Rivalries, 1887 - 1914</u>, 1938, p.64.

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17. R. Church, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.61.

18. The ten U.K. mining regions identified by Church include the North East, Cumberland, Lancashire and Cheshire, North Wales and the West Midlands, all of which suffered proportional declines in the U.K.'s total coal output in the period 1840 - 1913. The other four regions, South Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire and the East Midlands all increased their share of the total output in the same period.

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Chapter Three

Migration into the Darfield and Wombwell District, 1861-91

The economic fluctuations associated with the mining industry, and particularly the regional nature of these variations, prompted much population movement during the nineteenth century of both experienced and aspiring miners who, in some cases, travelled with their families in order to seek work. The aim of this chapter is to focus upon migration into the South Yorkshire parish of Darfield and to assess the impact this had upon the nature of both its established and developing communities

Victorian society, it seems, was made up of a particularly fluid population. As the Registrar General, in his report upon the 1871 census returns noted:

"The improved roads, the facilities offered under the railway system, the wonderful development of the mercantile marine, the habit of travelling about and the increasing knowledge of workmen have all tended to facilitate the flow of people from spots where they are not wanted to fields where their labour is in demand."[1]

In his influential work on Britain's nineteenth century population movements, Ravenstein identified five types of migrants: local migrants, who confined themselves to movement within the same town or parish; short-journey migrants; those who migrated by stages, often wandering

from parish to parish in search of work; long-journey migrants; and temporary migrants.[2]   Ravenstein observed that most migration undertaken was either local, or of a short-journey. "Of every one hundred migrants enumerated in England and Wales, as many as 53.7 had gone no further than a border county,"[3] asserted Ravenstein from an examination of the 1881 census data.

Ravenstein's general observations appear to have been validated in a number of later studies of nineteenth century coal mining districts.   In his important article 'The Migration of Labour into the Glamorganshire Coalfield, 1861-1911', Brinley Thomas noted the degree to which the migrants working in this fast-developing coalfield were of local origin.[4]   Similarly, Michael Sill, in a more recent article on movement into the nineteenth century north-eastern colliery settlement of Hetton-le-Hole has discovered a large proportion of resident short-distance migrants.[5]

However, despite the apparent propensity of both the nineteenth century colliery settlements in the North-East and South Wales to attract short-distance migrants, one significant difference in the nature of the incomers was clear from the works of Thomas and Sill, which seems to have considerable implications for the development of the settlements in each locality. Brinley Thomas identified "the large number of single young men among the migrants" in the Glamorganshire coalfield. Thomas also remarked that,

where migrants were married, men would "go to work in the mines leaving their families to look after smallholdings in the country...returning to them for a few weeks every summer."[6] This pattern of single migration contrasted strongly with that which Sill identifies in the North-East coalfield, where those who moved were: "very largely ... coalmining families."[7]

Whether migrants moved in family groups or as individuals inevitably had potential implications for the character of the host settlements. Townships into which family groups moved were more likely to receive from these migrants an active emotional, cultural and economic input than the settlements into which flowed predominantly single men, whose orientation remained towards the community in which they had left their closest family members. In the following discussion, particular attention is drawn to the impact of in-migration upon a number of settlements on the South Yorkshire coalfield, and comparisons are made, where appropriate, between the nature of in-migration into the South Yorkshire, South Wales and North-East coalfields.

This chapter examines the in-migration patterns of Darfield parish and an attempt is made to assess the changes wrought in the parish by the arrival of a significant number of migrants. The distances migrants had travelled; the areas from which they had principally moved; the familial condition and the age of migrants as they

embarked on their move; and the extent to which links were retained by incomers with kin both within the new location and from where they had moved are all factors that need to be considered in any attempted reconstruction of an historical community in which significant amounts of in-migration occurred. Initially, however, a brief critical assessment of the principal source material used in the study, census enumerators' books, is undertaken.

Whilst the census enumerators' books contain the most extensive and detailed data relating to the individual households available to the student of Victorian society, the authoritativeness of the information contained within them is by no means complete.[8] Although the enumerators appointed for each census district were invariably local figures of repute, some proved themselves to be poorly qualified for the task in hand. Evidence of enumerators' bad spelling, indecipherable handwriting and their inability to transcribe accurately from individual household schedules can often be found in the census books. Although, generally, the entries considered in the present study have been found to be legible, by comparing information in successive censuses for one specific locality, inconsistencies relating to subjects' names, ages and birthplaces become apparent.

Before embarking upon any study of migration which uses as its main source nineteenth century census enumerators'

books , it must be emphasised that the census was not originally designed with this purpose in mind. In using the nineteenth century census enumerators' returns in an attempt to reconstruct a family's migration patterns an obvious handicap is confronted: the only places of residence of a family recorded were those in which a still co-residing family member had been born. Inevitably, therefore, the census tended to under-record the number of places in which both individuals and family groups had dwelt. However, a counter-effect also applied. The fact that an infant was born in a particular place did not necessarily imply that its family actually lived there: in the final stages of pregnancy, for instance, a young woman, rather than giving birth to her first child in an unfamiliar area, might have preferred to stay with her mother and thus have access to an already proven network of ante-natal and post-natal carers. Despite these drawbacks, however, the sequence of decennial censuses produced particularly between 1851 and 1891 forms, for students interested in population movements, the most comprehensive source material available for this period.

Darfield is situated some four miles south-east of Barnsley and nine miles west of Doncaster. The parish of Darfield in 1861 was extensive, comprising six townships, Ardsley, Billingley, Darfield, Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Wombwell and a chapelry, Worsbrough, with a total

population of 12,231. By 1891, the total population of these settlements had virtually doubled, standing at 29,860.[10] Population growth within the parish was by no means uniform, however. While the populations of Billingley and Great Houghton, both predominantly agricultural settlements, rose steadily during the period, the township of Wombwell grew spectacularly from an already relatively large base of 3738 inhabitants in 1861 to 10,942 in 1891. The population of Darfield itself more than quadrupled over the period, from 746 to 3416. It is to the population of Darfield itself that attention is to be drawn particularly.

Unlike many of the other settlements situated towards the eastern side of the concealed South Yorkshire coalfield, Darfield was a long-established settlement to which its church, partly of Norman origin and occupying an even earlier site, stands as testimony. However, the township's nineteenth century population figures suggest that its character altered markedly following the opening of the Barnsley coalseam. Between 1841 and 1851, the township's population experienced a decline in number of some eight per cent, a rate of depopulation mirrored in the neighbouring, and similarly predominantly agricultural, townships of Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Billingley, and Bolton-upon-Dearne. In contrast, however, the township's population figures from 1851 display a pattern of continuous decennial increase throughout the study period, concomitant with the opening in the neighbourhood

first of Wombwell Main, Lundhill, and Darfield Main
collieries in the decade before 1861, and then with a
second wave of colliery openings in the locality from 1871
to 1881 at Mitchell Main, Houghton Main and Cortonwood.

However, the aggregate population figures for the township
paint a misleading picture of its development within the
study period, for much of its growth was centred upon two
settlements, Snape Hill and Low Valley, situated to the
south-west of Darfield village itself. The successive
census enumerators' books of 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891 are
used to examine the expansion, fuelled by in-migration, of
these two settlements particularly, and an attempt is made
to assess their populations' relationships with each other
and with that of Darfield village itself. In order to
discover whether the in-migration into these settlements
was characteristic of other mining settlements in the
parish, census records for Wombwell Main, a group of houses
built up around the eponymous colliery two miles to the
south-west of Darfield village were also considered.

From the census enumerators' books of 1861, 1871, 1881 and
1891, percentage figures for each of the localities within
the parish here examined have been calculated, categorizing
residents by their birthplaces, (Table 3.1). Of the
settlements here considered, that with the highest density
of long-distance migrants resident in 1861 was undoubtedly
Low Valley. The majority of its population was born
outside the county of Yorkshire. Only 3.6 per cent of its

population was born in Darfield parish and a further 46 per cent was born elsewhere within the county, comprising together less than 50 per cent of Low Valley's inhabitants, (Table 3.1).

The high incidence of long-distance migration found in Low Valley at this date was, however, exceptional. The 1861 figures for Snape Hill reveal that, overwhelmingly, its population was made up of those born in Yorkshire, the majority of whom originated in the West Riding. The residents of Wombwell Main too were composed mainly of West Riding natives in 1861, although almost one-third of the settlement's population had been born outside the county at that date. However, a significant proportion of them came from the neighbouring counties of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. In contrast to the figures for Wombwell Main, those for Darfield village itself in 1861 reveal that only 9.6 per cent of its population was born outside the county of Yorkshire.

By 1871, with the continued growth of coalmining in the district, the total population under consideration had grown substantially. However, that of Darfield village itself rose only slightly and that of Wombwell Main actually declined. In contrast, the population of Snape Hill more than doubled. Most dramatic though had been the growth of Low Valley's population between 1861 and 1871 caused by the settlement of a large number of incomers, a high proportion of whom could be categorised as 'long-distance migrants'. Over one in five of Low Valley's population in 1871 had been born in the West Midland counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire: more males were born in these counties than in Darfield parish itself. In total, 53.6 per cent of Low Valley's population had been born outside Yorkshire.

Table 3.1
Birthplaces of inhabitants of various settlements expressed as a percentage of total population[10]

Settlement	Darfield parish	Rest of Yorks.	West* Midlands	Notts., Derb.	Ire-land	Other
1861						
Darfield vil.	42.0	48.4	0.6	2.7	0.0	6.3
Low Valley	3.6	46.0	9.4	8.6	6.5	25.9
Snape Hill	28.4	65.5	0.9	1.7	0.0	3.4
Wombwell Main	23.9	45.6	1.4	18.4	0.3	10.4
1871						
Darfield vil.	39.3	38.1	4.1	5.1	0.3	13.1
Low Valley	20.1	26.3	21.2	8.6	4.7	18.5
Snape Hill	32.3	33.0	17.0	6.5	1.0	10.2
Wombwell Main	47.4	36.7	1.9	9.6	0.2	4.1
1881						
Darfield vil.	35.1	35.3	9.0	7.1	0.3	13.1
Low Valley	29.2	35.9	9.9	6.2	5.6	13.2
Snape Hill	32.6	36.6	9.2	8.2	0.7	12.8
Wombwell Main	52.3	29.6	2.1	8.6	0.0	7.3
1891						
Darfield vil.	39.6	31.3	10.6	6.3	0.7	11.5
Low Valley	35.9	29.5	10.2	10.0	1.7	12.6
Snape Hill	38.5	29.7	10.6	8.5	0.3	12.4
Wombwell Main	53.8	32.5	2.1	4.7	0.0	6.8

*West Midlands = Shrops., Staffs., Warwicks. and Worcs.
Population figures:
Darfield vil.: 1861- 620; 1871- 708; 1881- 1192; 1891- 1104
   Low Valley: - 139;   - 661;   - 808;   - 1152
   Snape Hill: - 116;   - 294;   - 596;   - 1158
Wombwell Main: - 588;   - 561;   - 614;   - 572

Snape Hill's population growth in the decade up to 1871 also appears to have occurred, in part, because of the influx of long-distance migrants. Whilst the proportion of Snape Hill's population born in Darfield parish itself had grown a little between 1861 and 1871, the percentage of those born elsewhere in Yorkshire had fallen considerably,

(Table 3.1). As in the case of Low Valley, a large proportion of Snape Hill's incomers in 1871 had been born in the West Midlands.

In contrast, by 1871, in the established settlement of Wombwell Main, nearly half of its population had been born in the parish of Darfield, almost twice the proportion that had been so in 1861, suggesting the existence of a more stable settlement than that of ten years before. The stability which seemed to mark the population of Wombwell Main in 1871 appeared also to characterise that of the village of Darfield: over three-quarters of its inhabitants were recorded as natives of the county.

With the opening of the local collieries of Mitchell Main, Houghton Main and Cortonwood in the decade preceding the 1881 census, the number of residents at Low Valley and Snape Hill continued to rise. Low Valley's population grew by one-fifth between 1871 and 1881 whilst that of Snape Hill more than doubled in the period. In contrast to the population growth in the other settlements studied, the rise of Snape Hill's population from the raw birthplace figures at present being examined suggest no large influx of long-distance migrants. Indeed, the percentage of Snape Hill's population with birthplaces in the West Midlands had fallen from seventeen per cent in 1871 to below ten per cent in 1881. Instead, Snape Hill's population growth was the consequence of short-distance migration and a natural increase in the indigenous population.

Though Low Valley's rate of population growth between 1871 and 1881 was considerably lower than that experienced by Snape Hill, similar patterns seem to have prevailed, with a significant increase in the number of parochially-born inhabitants and a reduction in the proportion of resident long-distance migrants. West Midlanders for example had made up 21 per cent of Low Valley's population in 1871; ten years later, they constituted under ten per cent of Low Valley's total population.

The figures extracted from the 1891 census enumerators' books reveal, in the main, a continuation of the patterns already outlined. The majority of the inhabitants of the settlements by this date were natives of Yorkshire. Wombwell Main continued to accommodate the largest proportion of Darfield parish-born residents. The low incidence of migrants living at Wombwell Main is revealed by focussing upon the figures for residents living there who had been born in Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire: in 1861, of the four settlements being considered, Wombwell Main had, with 18.4 per cent, proportionately more than twice as many Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire natives than its nearest rival, Low Valley; by 1891 the situation had reversed and Wombwell Main had less than a quarter of the proportion of such migrants it had done so in 1861.

The raw, generalised county-of-birth data which have been examined so far are useful in giving an overview of population movements into the areas under consideration and

offer an indication of the degree to which groups of people, united by a common place of birth, tended to move into the settlements under study over time. Migration patterns from this generalised data have been recognised. It seems that, in the settlements under consideration, initial rapid growth in population was effected much more significantly by long-distance migration than in the decades when slower population growth rates applied. As these largely mining settlements matured, increases in population were primarily achieved through short-distance migration and by means of a considerable natural increase in the indigenous population.

By far the most significant areas from which long-distance migrants came were the West Midland counties of Shropshire, Warwickshire ,Worcestershire and, particularly, Staffordshire. Almost without exception, male migrants from these counties were involved, upon their arrival in Darfield parish, in the coal industry. Of the census years under consideration the West Midlands presence was proportionately largest in 1871, when thirteen per cent of the overall populations of Darfield village, Low Valley and Snape Hill originated from the area. At no time was there a significant presence of West Midlanders at Wombwell Main. Of the census years examined, the West Midlands-born residents totalled most in Darfield village, Low Valley and Snape Hill in 1891 when 338 were enumerated. It seems

though that most of the migration from the West Midlands occurred in the decade 1861 - 71: more children were present in 1871 with birth places in the West Midlands than in 1881 or 1891.[11]

Migration from the Black Country took place on a large scale in the mid-Victorian period, prompted by the exhaustion of coal reserves and drainage problems in many of the small, shallow coal mines which peppered the area at the time. West Midland mineworkers were unhappy with their levels of income and the continuance of a harsh sub-contracting labour system, the "butty system" and were aware that many of the smaller mines were nearing the end of their working lives.[12]

These West Midlands workers could have been prompted to move by information about the expanding opportunities for mineworkers on the South Yorkshire coalfield. Information regarding the opportunities awaiting miners in South Yorkshire it seems might have been transmitted to those living in the Black Country by relatives born, brought up and still resident on the South Yorkshire coalfield, for, as R.Lawton has stated, by 1861 in the Black Country, "There was a high intensity of migration not only from all adjacent counties but also from Lancashire and Yorkshire in particular."[13] Such an explanation for the preponderance of West Midlanders in the locality under consideration, it must be stressed, can at present only be advanced tentatively. Detailed exercises in record linkage between

census records in the Black Country and South Yorkshire coalfield areas need to be undertaken to test the argument further. It does seem likely, though, that migrants moving into the South Yorkshire area from the West Midlands had locally born, Yorkshire relatives.

Other causes for the high number of West Midland migrants in the district undoubtedly included the work of recruitment agents in the Black Country, men such as Paul Roper of Bilston, whose activities encouraging men to move to the newly opening South Yorkshire pits were noted in the Barnsley Chronicle in 1868 and 1869.[14] The employment of recruitment agents, however, does not explain the existence of such distinct pockets of West Midlanders within the locality, since most agents did not work specifically for one colliery but were hired to recruit workers by a number of mining firms.

More local factors, then, need to be sought as an explanation for this high West Midland density in areas such as Low Valley and Snape Hill. One cause of the large influx from the Black Country in this particular part of the district might have been the involvement of the Hammerton family in the development of Low Valley and Snape Hill. Daniel Hammerton was a prominent local builder and a resident of Low Valley. During the 1870s, as the extant building control plans reveal, Daniel Hammerton and a relative, Joseph Hammerton, were involved in major development work at Low Valley and Snape Hill.[15] Between

1877 and 1894, plans were submitted by them for the construction of 89 houses. Perhaps of significance is the fact that Joseph Hammerton, according to an indenture of 1885, gave his address as Wolverhampton.[16] It seems possible, therefore, that some of the movement into Low Valley and Snape Hill from the West Midlands was prompted by the work of Joseph Hammerton, who was evidently aware of the availability of jobs in the Darfield area and had a personal interest in stimulating the local property market.

Whilst the raw migration data examined so far have offered details about individuals' places of birth, much information is also masked by the generalized nature of the statistics. A more sensitive approach to the census records can reveal significant further information about the mechanics of in-migration. Important information in this regard can be derived from a breakdown of migrants by age group.

Repeatedly, the birthplace data broken down by age revealed that the large numbers of youngsters born in the parish of Darfield concealed the extent of migration which had taken place amongst adults, (Table 3.2). For instance, in the case of the figures for males resident in Low Valley in 1871, the overall figures reveal that 74 males out of the total male population of 369, twenty per cent, were born in Darfield parish, (Table 3.2). However, when these figures are broken down by age groups, more illuminating

information becomes evident. Of 108 boys resident in Low

Valley aged under ten years, 51, 47 per cent, had been born

in the parish of Darfield.

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Table 3.2
Birthplaces of male residents, broken down by age,
as discerned from census enumerators' books, 1861-91

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Place of birth	LOW VALLEY Age Categories			WOMBWELL MAIN Age Categories		
	0-9	20-39	All	0-9	20-39	All
1861						
Darfield parish	1	1	2	46	7	69
Rest of Yorks.	17	10	34	39	43	140
West Midlands	0	3	7	1	2	3
Notts., Derbs.	5	2	8	13	26	65
Ireland	0	7	8	0	1	2
Totals	28	28	78	106	93	313
1871						
Darfield parish	51	11	74	87	19	151
Rest of Yorks.	24	27	84	12	35	99
West Midlands	18	34	79	0	0	5
Notts., Derbs.	9	12	32	1	11	31
Ireland	1	18	26	0	1	1
Totals	108	146	369	100	74	299
1881						
Darfield parish	83	16	124	82	17	178
Rest of Yorks.	37	52	166	11	29	97
West Midlands	6	23	49	0	4	10
Notts., Derbs.	1	13	28	0	8	31
Ireland	1	20	35	0	0	0
Totals	135	157	462	94	71	345
1891						
Darfield parish	120	23	202	71	50	182
Rest of Yorks.	17	70	191	7	40	101
West Midlands	6	40	74	0	3	4
Notts., Derbs.	3	28	64	0	6	14
Ireland	0	10	18	0	0	0
Totals	151	210	632	80	104	327

The picture, though, is totally different when the figures

for men of these children's fathers' generation are

examined: of 146 men resident in Low Valley aged between

twenty and 39 years, only eleven, eight per cent , had been born in Darfield parish. In contrast, of this same twenty to 39 year old cohort, 34, 23 per cent, had been born in the West Midlands.

Much of the in-migration from the West Midlands appears to have been composed of young families. In 1871, 71 West Midlands-born men and women aged between twenty and 29 years lived in Snape Hill, Darfield village and Low Valley, along with 54 children under ten years of age who had also been born in the region, comprising together over 57 per cent of those from the West Midlands surveyed in the sample. From crude net in-migration figures calculated from the Snape Hill, Low Valley and Darfield village data in 1881, it seems that 76 per cent of the net total of migrants from Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire to the area in the decade were either young adults aged between twenty and 29 or children under ten years old. A similar calculation made from 1891 census figures revaled that 95 per cent of the net total of migrants from the West Midland counties who had moved to the district within the past ten years fell into these two age categories.[17] Crude net in-migration figures calculated for the ten year period 1871 - 81 suggest that the movement of young families into the area under consideration from other parts of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire were also common, though not quite to the extent that marked migration from the West

Midlands.[18] Migration into the district, therefore, appeared to mirror the family-orientated movement Sill has identified in the North East coalfield rather than the pattern discerned by Thomas in the Glamorganshire district composed principally of single migrants.

One group of migrants that constituted a significant exception to this pattern of familial movement, however, was the Irish.[19] Throughout the period the Irish presence within the settlements under consideration was almost wholly confined to a small number of adult males. Only seven Irishmen were recorded as resident in 1861, one of whom lived at Snape Hill, whilst the remaining six lived under one roof in Low Valley. By 1871, 36 Irish people were enumerated in the area, 31 of whom lived in Low Valley: only five were female. Analysis of the 1881 census records reveals a similar pattern of Irish residence. Numbers of Irish-born had then grown to 53, of whom only eleven were women. Again, the vast majority, 45, lived in Low Valley, and 37 were adult males aged between twenty and 49 years, most of whom were unmarried. The transient nature of this Irish presence can be discerned through an examination of lodgers' birthplaces: in 1881 only six per cent of Low Valley's population comprised those born in Ireland, yet 33 per cent of its lodgers had been born there.

Overall, however, as has been shown, many migrants moved into Darfield village, Snape Hill, Low Valley and Wombwell Main as young family units. An examination of the

birthplaces of members of individual families contained in census records can reveal further valuable information about migration patterns into the locality, although the pitfalls of equating individuals' birthplaces with places of residence ought to be borne in mind. The tendency to migrate as nuclear family units can be demonstrated through a study of the recorded birthplaces of members of individual families. In 1861, at Wombwell Main, of 89 households containing children whose heads were engaged in the coalmining industry, some 66, 74 per cent, had children resident who had been born outside Darfield parish. By 1891 the comparable figure at Wombwell Main was only 31 per cent.[20] With their somewhat later development as settlements for coalminers, the proportions of mining families living in Low Valley, Snape Hill, and Darfield with offspring co-resident who had been born outside the parish, were higher than that of Wombwell Main in 1871. Just over one-half of Wombwell Main's resident mining families had children born outside the parish in 1871 whilst the figures for Low Valley, Snape Hill and Darfield denote that two-thirds of such families had co-resident offspring born elsewhere.[21]

The majority of coalmining families with children born outside the parish of Darfield, however, had co-migrant offspring born only in one settlement outside the parish, suggesting that stage migration in family units was rare. In 1881, of mining family households containing children

born outside Darfield parish, 60 per cent of these families had only one place of birth recorded for their offspring outside the parish. The most significant number of families with experience of stage migration was present in 1871 in the new settlement of Low Valley.[22] As with most of the other household familial groups recorded throughout the period which had experienced stage migration, the majority of these Low Valley household groups had previously moved extensively within the Black Country or on the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire coalfield, suggesting that large numbers of newcomers into the area already had experience of coalmining. An example of a stage migrant from the West Midlands, enumerated in 1871 in Low Valley , was John Bllingley, a 46 year old miner. His birthplace was recorded at Bilston, Staffordshire, in the very heart of the Black Country. Billingley's wife had been born at Tipton and their three co-resident children were born in Sedgley, Dudley Port and Pelsall, all in Staffordshire. A fellow inhabitant of Low Valley during 1871 was fifty-year-old coalminer Samuel Abbott, who it appears had moved widely in the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire coalfield, having co-resident children born at Clay Cross, Staveley and Shireoaks.

Attention so far has been principally paid to familial migration. The movement of single migrants, however, did take place within the district. Such migrants, mainly young

men, are most conspicuous in the census records as lodgers. In Darfield enumeration district one, in 1871, 25 per cent of all households accommodated lodgers. Consistently, however, lodgers were more common amongst mining households than amongst the population of Darfield parish at large.[23]

Ever since the groundbreaking work of the nineteenth century scholar, Ferdinand Tonnies, the prevalence of lodgers has been regarded by some as evidence of the existence of what he termed "gesellschaft", a fragile society marked by transience and a multiplicity of shallow human relationships.[24] The presence of significant numbers of lone migrants, it was felt, threatened the existing social order as a consequence of an inevitable breakdown of familial social control over such individuals. Social dislocation caused by the alienation of lodgers in the Darfield district, however, appeared unlikely. Discounting those born in the parish of Darfield or in Ireland, 33 per cent of all remaining lodgers surveyed, who lived in homes headed by a man occupied in the coal industry, were born in the same community as a co-residing member of the family of the household head. These findings accord with Michael Anderson's study of mid-nineteenth century Preston, where, he notes, "no fewer than 20 per cent of all lodgers aged 15 years and over and not born in Preston or in Ireland had been born in the same community as a co-residing member of the nuclear or extended family of the household head."[25]

It seems, therefore, that a large number of lodgers would already have known members of the families with whom they now co-resided, thus mitigating to an extent the isolationary impact felt by single migrants. Indeed, it seems likely that among the ties such individual lodgers shared with the family group within the household could well have been a concealed kinship link. Far from minimising the incidence of familial migration, therefore, the presence of so many lodgers with common birthplaces to other members of the co-resident family group suggests that some of those supposedly 'unattached' individuals comprised part of this familial migration process.

Attention so far has been concentrated upon migrants moving into Darfield parish from outside. However,those who moved within the parish itself, Ravenstein's 'local migrants', also experienced to an extent the upheaval and dislocation effected by migration. Intra-parochial migration, particularly in extensive parishes such as Darfield, ought not to be overlooked, since the process of moving, for example, from the settlement of Worsbrough within Darfield parish into Low Valley differed little from that of moving to the area from the neighbouring extra-parochial township of Ardwick-upon-Dearne.

However, problems emerge when considering intra-parish mobility from census records, caused by ambiguities relating to the term "birthplace". A significant number of

people in the survey could have been enumerated as Darfield village-born when their birthplaces might instead have been Low Valley, Billingley, or Snape Hill. Within Darfield, however, throughout the study period, there existed other than the principal village, two comparatively sizable settlements, Wombwell and Worsbrough, natives of whom were invariably enumerated as such rather than as having been born in Darfield village. Attention is concentrated upon natives from these two centres of population resident in the settlements here under consideration.

Between 1861 and 1881 Wombwell Main, the nearest of the settlements considered to Worsbrough, contained by far the largest number of households headed by men occupied in the coal industry within which natives of the chapelry lived. Nevertheless, in the census years examined, numbers of households containing Worsbrough natives were never large, ranging at Wombwell Main between thirteen and fourteen throughout the period. Elsewhere, only one household of the 95 headed by a man occupied in the mining industry in Low Valley in 1881 contained a person born in Worsbrough. The situation differed little when those with birthplaces recorded at Wombwell were counted: as was to be expected, large numbers of the mining households at Wombwell Main contained natives of Wombwell throughout the period; but the largest number of households headed by men employed in the coal industry containing Wombwell-born residents elsewhere in the settlements under consideration over the

period was at Low Valley in 1881. Even here, however, only seven households accommodated residents born in the township of Wombwell, barely a mile away.

It seems, therefore, that intra-parochial mobility amongst individuals living in households headed by men employed in the coal industry within the settlements studied remained low throughout the period 1861 - 81. This suggests that, once mining families had moved into an area, migrants were inclined to remain based in one settlement rather than to move regularly between settlements in the immediate locality. One reason for this might have been the presence of binding ties with other inhabitants in their settlement of residence. Evidence for the existence of such ties within the settlements under consideration will now be examined, using census data.

Undoubtedly the most significant tie binding individuals together was that of kinship. Having established already that large numbers of migrants flowed into the settlements of Snape Hill, Low Valley and, initially at least, Wombwell Main, an examination of the kinship links discerned from each settlements' census records should reveal interesting information relating to the inhabitants' sense of 'community' or 'belongingness' to their places of residence. Employing figures for 1881, when the census data of that and previous years could be used to ascertain the ties of kinship, the incidence of kinship linkage was

lowest in Low Valley. Here, of 150 households surveyed, only fifteen, ten per cent, had discernible kinship links with one or more households in the settlement. The rate of kinship linkage between households in Snape Hill was slightly higher at fourteen per cent.[26] By far the highest rate of inter-household kinship linkage was found at Wombwell Main in 1881 when almost one in four of its households had kinship links with one or more other households in the settlement.[27] Reasons for this high incidence at Wombwell Main include the fact that the settlement had been occupied almost a decade sooner than those at Low Valley and Snape Hill and had not been subject to those two settlements' high rates of expansion over the period. It seems likely also that the owners of Wombwell Main colliery consciously adhered to a policy of family recruitment. Of 49 household heads at Wombwell Main in 1881 with co-resident working sons, only three heads had no sons working in the coal industry. The high level of residential persistence experienced at Wombwell Main between 1871 and 1881 also suggests efforts were made to retain trusted workers and their families by the colliery's management.[28] In 1891, of Wombwell Main's 100 household heads, 69 had been present in the settlement ten years earlier: indeed, 44 of these household heads had also been residents of the settlement in 1871.

With such levels of residential persistence and a high level of kinship linkage, Wombwell Main it seems was very

much a self-contained community. The census records for 1881 suggest that Wombwell Main, with over half of its inhabitants having been born in the parish, most of them within Wombwell and Wombwell Main, many more kinship links were to be discerned within the households of Wombwell Main than at Snape Hill or Low Valley, where less than one-third of these settlements' residents had been born within the parish. However, using the census enumerators' books, links binding inhabitants together can be sought elsewhere in an attempt to ascertain why incomers tended to remain in one settlement within the parish.

The most conspicuous link in the census enumerators' returns connecting individuals in different households is common birthplace. The West Midlands migrants' density within the settlements of Low Valley and Snape Hill compared to their relative absence elsewhere within the locality studied makes it clear that ties existed which powerfully linked together these migrants into some type of 'community' in these two settlements. In 1871 at Low Valley, 26 of 88 households headed by a coal industry employee contained at least one person whose birthplace was in the West Midlands. Further, eleven of these 26 households contained at least one person whose birthplace was Oldbury, Worcestershire. Evidently, in such a situation a multiplicity of common ties bound Low Valley's inhabitants together: kinship links, forged through marriage, or of a secondary nature and therefore not

discernible using Darfield census records, inevitably must have been present; shared experiences of their previous places of residence would have prevailed amongst many of these West Midland migrants, knitting them together in this new settlement; amongst the women particularly, common problems of child-rearing could be shared, since, as has been shown, many of the West Midland migrants moved to the area in young family units; and clearly many of the settlement's men, moving into new jobs at collieries such as neighbouring Darfield Main, did so in the company of relatives and friends, with whom they had previously worked. Such an influx of people sharing common ties inevitably had a great influence upon the character of the community which developed with the growth of Low Valley and marked it out from other settlements within the parish such as Wombwell Main and, at least initially, Darfield village itself.

Whilst the rapid growth of neighbouring Low Valley and Snape Hill began in the 1860s, the village of Darfield during the period had been detached from the development linked to the opening of the local mines. In 1861, household heads occupied in the mining industry totalled six in the village; ten years later numbers so employed had only risen to 22. It seems from an examination of the census records that, even by 1871, Darfield village had largely resisted the incursion of migrant mining families.

During the 1870s, however, the character of the village appears to have changed markedly. The 1881 census records reveal that its population rose during the decade from 708 to 1192. Almost one-third of the village's male population had been born outside Yorkshire, with a total of 107 people resident who had been born in the West Midland counties. By 1881, only eighteen per cent of households in the settlement could be linked by kin to others in the village, compared to the figure of 36 per cent a decade earlier. Residential persistence in the decade to 1881 for Darfield village was at a rate of only 26 per cent compared to that of 42 per cent in Wombwell Main in the same period.[29] It seems then that, by 1881, the differences which had previously marked the village of Darfield, with its settled population, its low intensity of miners and relatively small number of long-distance migrants, from the burgeoning neighbouring settlements of Snape Hill and Low Valley had all but disappeared.

However, a closer examination of the 1881 census enumerators' books for Darfield village reveals a somewhat different picture: 45 of the 87 household heads resident in Darfield village and occupied in the mining industry lived in one street, New Street. Of 25 households headed by West Midland-born coal industry employees, resident in Darfield village in 1881, twenty of them lived in New Street: indeed the clustering of these migrants was such that seventeen of them were enumerated consecutively. Clearly, ties of

community amongst long-distance migrant miners and their
families bound the New Street residents together in much
the same way as those links uniting migrant residents
within the communities of Snape Hill and Low Valley. New
Street, undoubtedly then, was in large part independent of
the village of Darfield itself, a situation that was
underlined by the street's geographical position, on the
southern periphery of the village, adjoining Snape Hill.
Thus, although by 1881 considerable numbers of migrant
miners and their families were now living in Darfield
village, they inhabited principally its southern edge,
where links were more likely to be with residents in Snape
Hill and Low Valley than with inhabitants living in the
heart of the village itself.

Despite the vast amounts of in-migration taking place
within its immediate vicinity, Darfield village itself,
therefore, retained a degree of detachment. Between 1851
and 1881, 37 different surnames recurred in the village in
each census, suggesting an element of stability in the
community's settlement not present in Low Valley and Snape
Hill. Indeed, of these 37 surnames recorded as resident in
Darfield in 1851 through to 1881, 29 of them were listed
as Darfield telephone subscribers in the 1982 directory.
Names such as Beevers, Carr, Goldthorpe, Hirst, Lazenby,
Middleton, Needham, Roystone and Stables clearly
constituted the core families within the community, all of

which were represented in the 1851 census and continue to have a presence within the settlement today.

It seems then that distinct communities existed within the parish of Darfield. For the creation of a community, individuals require the presence of substantial common ties binding them together, such as those of kinship and workplace. Alongside the integrative nature of community, however, exists an exclusive element: for a community to exist, its members need to be aware of its boundaries of inclusion. The sharp variance in the migration patterns identified within the settlements here considered suggests that individual mining communities existed within the parish, each experiencing different relationships with those neighbouring them over time. A cursory examination of the surnames enumerated in the censuses for the years 1861-81 illustrates powerfully the separateness of the neighbouring settlements of Darfield village and Low Valley: 73 per cent of the different surnames enumerated at Low Valley between 1861 and 1881 were not recorded in Darfield village itself.[30]

Thus, the census data examined shed interesting light upon the residents of Darfield parish and their in-migration patterns between 1861 and 1881, and offer insights into the contrasting characters of the neighbouring communities which grew up in the vicinity of the developing coalmines. The findings have suggested migration into the area was,

like that in the North-East coalfield, of a familial
nature. Even where single migrants were enumerated as
lodgers, many of them resided in households in which
members of the host family shared their birthplaces. A
detailed examination of residents' birthplaces, broken down
by age, has suggested that the importance of long-distance
in-migration, particularly in times of rapid development,
may have been under-emphasised in studies of other
nineteenth century colliery settlements. Long-distance
migrants in the district here examined were not only
significant in number, but, through their residential
patterns, constituted conspicuous sections of local
communities and helped forge their distinctive identities.

Footnotes to Chapter Three

1. E.G. Ravenstein, 'The Laws of Migration', _Journal of the_
   Royal Statistical Society, XLVIII, 1885, p.167.

2. _Ibid._, pp.167-227.

3. _Ibid._, pp. 181-2.

4. B. Thomas, 'The Migration of Labour into the Glamorganshire
   Coalfield, 1861-1911', _Economica_, X, 30, 1930, pp.275-94.
   Many miners, Thomas observed, had previously worked in
   neighbouring Welsh rural counties, and were themselves replaced
   by agricultural workers from English counties such as Somerset
   and Gloucestershire.

5. M. Sill, 'Mid-Nineteenth-Century Labour Mobility: the case
   of the coal miners of Hetton le Hole, Co. Durham', _Local_
   Population Studies, 22, 1979, pp.44-50. Sill has found
   that 95 per cent of migrants living in Hetton le Hole had
   been born in the counties of Durham, Northumberland,
   Cumberland, Westmorland, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

6. B. Thomas, _op. cit._, p.290.

7. M. Sill, _op. cit._, p.50.

8. For a detailed critical assessment of the Census Enumerators'
   Books as an historical source, see E. Higgs, _Making Sense of the_
   Census: the Manuscript Returns for England and Wales, 1801-1901,
   1989.

9. The settlements' population totals have been taken from
   The Victoria History of the County of York, ed. W. Page, III,
   1913.

10. Census figures. 1861, Darfield e(numeration) d(istricts) 1
    and 5; 1871, Darfield e.d.s 1 and 5; 1881, Darfield e.d,s 1,
    2, and 6 (Wombwell Main only).

11. In 1891, of 338 West Midlands migrants living in Darfield
    village, Low Valley, Snape Hill and Wombwell Main, 24 were
    aged under ten years.

12. See G. Barnsby, 'The Standard of Living in the Black Country
    During the Nineteenth Century', _Economic History Review_, 24,
    1971, and M. Rowlands, _The West Midlands from A.D.1000_,

1987.

13. R. Lawton, 'Population Movements in the West Midlands, 1841-61', Geography, 43, 1958, p.172.

14. Barnsley Chronicle, 9/5/1868 and 20/3/1869. See P. Spaven, Accommodating the Miners, 1978, p.370.

15. Barnsley Archives, Darfield Building Control Plans, First Series, 1876-96.

16. West Riding Registry of Deeds, 1885/11, p.543, 326.

17. Census Records: 1871, Darfield e.d. 1; 1881, Darfield e.d.s 1 and 2. Crude net in-migration figures from the West Midlands into Darfield village, Low Valley and Snape Hill during the decade 1871-81 were calculated as follows: all children under ten years from the West Midlands enumerated in the 1881 census were included in totals net in-migrants; also included were additions by 1861 to the 1871 various age categories' figures for the West Midlands. For example, seventeen females aged between ten and nineteen years born in the West Midlands were enumerated in 1871: ten years later, 26 women were listed as West Midlands natives aged between twenty and 29 years, representing a net in-migration from the West Midlands over the decade of nine. The net totals of in-migrants, from the West Midlands, to the settlements of Darfield village, Low Valley and Snape Hill were 44 males and 34 females. Between 1881 and 1891 the net totals of in-migrants from the West Midlands to the settlements of Darfield village, Low Valley, Snape Hill and Wombwell Main were 52 males and 31 females, of whom 79 were aged either under ten years or between twenty and 39 years.

18. Census figures: 1871, Darfield e.d. 1; 1881 Darfield e.d.s 1 and 2. (Darfield village, Low Valley and Snape Hill.) By making crude net in-migration calcuations from the census data, the following figures were obtained for Yorkshire and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in the period 1871-81: from Yorkshire, there was a crude net in-migration of 425 people, of whom 53 were aged between twenty

and 29 years, and a further 245 were children under ten years, together constituting 70 per cent of the Yorkshire net in-migrants over the period. From Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, a crudenet in-migration of 85 occurred over the years 1871-81,of whom 25 were aged between twenty and 29 years, and 27 were under ten years, comprising together 61 per cent of the net in-migrants from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

19. Further information regarding Irish migration in England can be found in R. Swift and S.Gilley, eds, The Irish in Britain, 1989.

20., Census figures. Darfield e.d. 9, (Wombwell Main). Of 81 households headed by men employed in the coalmining industry with children, 25 contained children born outside the parishes of Darfield and Wombwell.

21. Census figures. 1871, Darfield e.d. 5, (Wombwell Main). Of 76 households headed by men employed in the coal mining industry with children, 40 contained children born outside the parishes of Darfield and Wombwell.

22. Census figures. 1871, Darfield e.d.1, (Low Valley). Twelve familial household groups had children co-resident with birthplaces in more than two settlements outside the parishes of Darfield and Wombwell.

23. Census figures. 1871, Darfield e.d.1, (Low Valley and Snape Hill). 35 per cent of mining households in Snape Hill accommodated lodgers. The comparable figure at Low Valley was 38 per cent. 1881, Darfield, e.d. 1, (Darfield village and Snape Hill). In Darfield village, sixteen per cent of households contained lodgers, while at Snape Hill 30 per cent of mining households accommodated lodgers. 1881 Darfield e.d. 2, (Low Valley). Of mining families resident in the settlement, 32 per cent housed lodgers.

24. For a brief description of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft, see R. Sennett, 'Destructive Gemeinschaft', in R. Bocock et al., An Introduction to Sociology, eds R. Bocock et al. 1980, p.92.

Nineteenth century American concerns about the evils of
lodging are discussed by T. Hareven and J. Modell,
'Urbanization and the Malleable Household: an Examination
of Boarding and Lodging in American Families', in
M. Green, ed., The American Family in Social-
Historical Perspective, 1978, pp.51 - 65.

25. M. Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth Century
Lancashire, 1971, p.102.

26. Census figures. 1881, Darfield, e.d. 1, (Snape Hill). Of 109
households enumerated, only fifteen had discernible
links with another household in the settlement.

27. Census figures. 1881, Darfield, e.d. 6, (Wombwell Main). Of
99 households surveyed, 23 had kinship links with one
or more other households in the settlement.

28. Census figures. 1871, Darfield e.d. 5, (Wombwell Main); 1881,
Darfield e.d. 6, (Wombwell Main). Of 407 persons resident in
1881 aged over ten years, 172 had also been resident
in the settlement in 1871.

29. Census figures. 1871, Darfield e.d. 1, (Darfield village);
1881, Darfield e.d.s 1 and 2, (Darfield village). Of
544 persons resident in 1881 aged over ten years,
141 had also been present in 1871.

30. Census figures. 1861, Darfield e.d.s 1 and 5, (Darfield
village and Low Valley). 1871, Darfield e.d. 1 (Darfield
village and Low Valley). 1881, Darfield e.d.s 1 and 2,
(Darfield village and Low Valley). Of 388 different
surnames enumerated in Low Valley between 1861 and 1881,
only 106 were also recorded in the same period in Darfield
village.

Chapter Four

Mining Employees and their Workplace: Social Relations and Culture at the Pit.

The workplace is not just the site of the manufacture of materials: it is also a *milieu* in which social and cultural relations are produced both between workers themselves and also between workers and their management. It is this aspect of the mining experience which is to form the focus of this chapter. The relations forged at the workplace were to have a bearing upon those operating outside in the settlement which was the home of most of the mine employees. Thus, any attempt to reconstruct historical communities in mining districts, of necessity, has to lay great stress upon the social relations and culture of the workplace which permeated so much of the inhabitants' life experiences.

The chapter begins by examining briefly the historical debate relating to supposedly determining factors in the workplace which constructed the social relations operating therein. The applicability of arguments deployed by proponents from each side of this debate in the case of the mining industry in the Darfield and Wombwell district is then considered. Attention subsequently is focussed upon this district's mines as nineteenth century workplaces, with particular regard to the physical and economic factors

over which individual mineworkers had no control. The distinct culture of the mining workplace which resulted from this uncertain environment is then explored.

Using extant colliery records, the reports of mine inspectors and newspaper accounts, emphasis is placed upon the specific jobs undertaken in the mines and at the pit banks. The relationships between the various grades of workers is sought through assessing factors such as: familial reconstitution in the workplace; occupational mobility within the mine; the perceived levels of skill required for individual grades of workers, expressed, for example, through levels and means of payment; job demarcation; and attitudes towards the employment of newcomers. Following on from this examination of the relations between employees, attention is paid to a number of significant moments in the history of the district's industrial relations in the mining industry, which cast light not only still further upon relations between the various grades of workers in the industry but also reveal the nature of relations between the mining employees and the colliery owners.

The final part of the chapter is devoted to an exploration of communal identity among the mineworkers. Here, whether miners in the district identified themselves with fellow employees from other collieries in the locality or merely with co-employees from their own workplace is considered. The chapter as a whole aims to give some idea of the

complexity of relations which operated in the collieries of the district during the period under study.

1. The Work Process Debate

According to strict Marxist theory, class relations were determined wholly by the relations operating in the workplace. The character of these workplace relations themselves was influenced heavily by the 'work process', or the way in which the workers were organised in the manufacture of the materials they produced. That changes in the work process determined the transformation in class relations in society as a whole was a central tenet of Marxist orthodoxy.

The most influential exponent of the theories of Marx in this regard has been the American sociologist of the workplace, H. Braverman.[1] According to Braverman, the industrialising process has strengthened progressively the position of the capitalist, the corollary of which has been the emasculation of the worker. This, he argues, has been achieved as a consequence of the increased capitalisation of the workplace. As more capital was invested by employers in workplaces, so they required more disciplined workforces to operate therein, so as to extract maximum returns from their investments. The harnessing of the workforce was achieved, according to the Braverman thesis, by destroying the autonomy of the worker through a process of deskilling. This was effected by introducing an increasingly fragmented

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production process, necessitating a vast division of labour.

Prior to the implementation of the deskilling process, owners exercised merely 'formal control' over their workforces. Despite the fact that, in theory, ownership and authority lay in the hands of the employers, because of the high degree of autonomy which was held by a number of skilled workers much of the power wielded in the workplace was controlled by key groups of employees. Once the deskilling process had taken effect, argues Braverman, the employers' 'formal control' was replaced by a much more complete 'real control'. Deskilling led to degradation of work and the homogenisation of the labour force. This, in turn, prompted the distinctions and antagonisms between capital and labour, employers and workers, to be exacerbated. In the work of Braverman, therefore, the links between relations in the workplace and those operating outside it are made explicit.

Since the publication of Braverman's seminal work, Labour and Monopoly Capital, in 1974, a substantial amount of historical literature has questioned, both directly and indirectly, the validity of his thesis in regard particularly to the nineteenth century. It is now accepted by a large number of social and economic historians that the amount of large-scale mechanisation and the transformation of the work process through the introduction of new, often steam-powered, technology was by no means as

extensive as it has previously been claimed. Recently, champions of the notion of an 'industrial revolution', such as Pat Hudson, have been careful to emphasise only its partial impact upon the national economy, in particular industries, such as the textile industry.[2] As A.E. Musson has stated, "the 'triumph of the factory system' took place much more slowly than has generally been realized; water wheels long continued to be built and used while most manufacturing operations remained largely unmechanized until after 1870."[3]

Where mechanisation did occur on a substantial basis, Braverman's thesis that deskilling inevitably took place has recently been challenged convincingly by the work of Paul Robertson and Lee Alston.[4] The Marxist labour process argument is outlined by Robertson and Alston thus:

"To the degree that groups of workers can obtain monopoly power, firms have an obvious incentive to use mechanization as a means of weakening employee bargaining power. This forms one of the pillars of the marxist contention that capitalist firms necessarily favour increased division of labour and deskilling as a means of controlling labour and reducing wage costs."[5]

However, as Robertson and Alston make clear, mechanisation and its effect upon the labour process in a workplace could be complex. Lee and Alston identify basically two distinct types of mechanisation which are the result of the development of process technology in the workplace. The first type of mechanisation, termed 'differentiating',

undertakes one specific task in the labour process. As Robertson and Alston explain: "Where the range of an innovation coincides precisely with the tasks of a single group of workers ... [o]verall, the pattern of workforce organization would be the same as before the innovation."[6] In such a situation, therefore, the division of labour need not be increased.

The second type of innovation is identified by Robertson and Alston as being 'integrative' in nature:

"Integration occurs when a new machine cuts across tasks previously in the province of more than one group of workers. This runs exactly counter to the differentiation of labour because less specialized and more educated machines ... make it possible for ... operatives to cross craft boundaries ... Thus integrative innovations oblige firms to adjust workforce organization ..."[7]

As a consequence of integrative innovation straddling two distinct tasks in the manufacturing process, skilled workers are often still required for the pre- and post-mechanised stages of the production process.

Thus, as Robertson and Alston make clear, "the effects of technological change on the functional organization of the workforce within the firm are by no means simple because different types of innovation are likely to evoke different patterns of adjustment in the deployment of labour."[8] Tasks not covered by innovations could be so essential to the company and need such high skill levels that no substantial deskilling would occur. As Robertson and Alston explain,

for deskilling to take place inevitably as the result of mechanisation,

"it is necessary for management to implement more than one new piece of equipment simultaneously ... where one innovation takes over a portion of the tasks ... while the remaining tasks are assigned to a second innovation, in the process completely undermining the bargaining power of the incumbent workers."[9]

Where mechanisation did take place, it rarely occurred both dually and in such a complementary manner. It seems, then, that the real control of the employers was not wrested easily from the hands of their workforces.

The examination by Robertson and Alston of the differing ways in which innovations could affect the organisation of labour succeeds also in highlighting the way in which divisions *between* workers could occur as attempts were made to accommodate new technology. This factor was overlooked to a great extent by Braverman's thesis in which, it has been argued, too much emphasis is placed upon the antagonistic relations between the employers and workers. Indeed, the whole concept of a conflict-orientated model of the nineteenth century workplace has been brought into question. An historian recently much interested in nineteenth century work relations, Patrick Joyce, declares that: "The Braverman paradigm of control, as with classical Marxism, rests on the notion that capitalist social relations are inherently antagonistic. This antagonism

becomes in much analysis a meta-historical category, a kind of intellectual strait-jacket."[10]

In order to discard the strait-jacket, Joyce contends, it is necessary to consider the extent to which consensual relations occurred between employers and workers. This 'terrain of compromise', Joyce affirms:

"is a ground very little worked upon by social historians ... [T]he extent to which capital and labour have a basic interest in co-operation has been generally overlooked ... [T]he perspective of interdependence and compromise is a valuable one ... [which] has much to tell us about the nature of Victorian industry."[11]

Indeed, the acknowledgement that negotiation took place between the employers and workers redresses a serious flaw in the Braverman/Marxian thesis which bestows omniscience and omnipotence upon the owners of factors of production but assumes complete emasculation of employees. The recognition that co-operation took place between management and workers suggests that the role of the workforce was not just a passive or reactive one but involved its members in decision-making processes relating to the organisation of the workplace.

Consideration of the 'work process' debate, centred as it is upon the work of Braverman, will now be undertaken in a more practical manner, with an examination of the nineteenth century evidence of the mining workplaces of the Darfield and Wombwell district.

2. The Mining Work Process in Darfield and Wombwell.

The lynchpin around which Braverman's thesis is constructed is itself a fundamental building-block of Marxist theory. Determinist Marxists contend that, with the onset of industrialisation, capitalisation of individual companies increases rapidly, thus strengthening further the powerful position of employers. In the second half of the nineteenth century in the Darfield and Wombwell area, as elsewhere in the rapidly expanding South Yorkshire coalfield, this pattern of increasing capitalisation was manifested in the cases of many colliery companies. This was inevitable as the exploitation of the coalfield advanced eastwards, where deeper shafts were necessitated by the dip of the coal seams. The increased cost of sinking deeper shafts, and the concomitant rise in the costs of winding coal and men, could only be recovered practicably by extending the area in which coal was extracted underground. The depths at which the collieries in the Darfield and Wombwell district worked coal are given in Table 4.1, with the dates at which extraction began in each seam.

As Table 4.1 illustrates, shaft sinkings did not cease with the opening up of a colliery. In the cases of Wombwell Main and Mitchell Main, shafts were sunk later to deeper seams which enabled further exploitation of the coal reserves to take place. However, the attempt by Wombwell Main's owners to open up the Silkstone seam proved

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unsuccessful. As the <u>Colliery Guardian</u> reported at the time, the Silkstone coal at Wombwell Main was "found too thin to work and even varied in thickness on different sides of the shaft ... [By] this unfortunate result ... the South Yorkshire coalfield has been seriously crippled and deprived of a seam the district can ill afford to spare."[12]

<u>Table 4.1.</u>

<u>Depths of Working and Dates of First Extraction:</u>

<u>The Collieries of the Darfield and Wombwell District</u>[13].

Colliery	Barnsley Seam	Parkgate Seam	Silkstone Seam
Lundhill	214 yds (1855)		
Wombwell Main	227 yds (1855)	495 yds (1891)	587 yds (1887)
Darfield Main	337 yds (1861)		
Cortonwood	232 yds (1875)		
Mitchell Main	307 yds (1875)	574 yds (1899)	
Houghton Main	515 yds (1878)		

The risks involved, from an owner's viewpoint, of colliery proprietorship are in evidence in a study of the Darfield and Wombwell district during the second half of the nineteenth century. It was estimated that the 1857 Lundhill colliery disaster, in which 189 men and boys lost their

lives, cost the colliery owners £20,000 in loss of property.[14] In 1872, a fire at Darfield Main colliery was estimated to have lost the colliery owners, principally Messrs Moxon of Pontefract, over £100,000.[15]

Economic slump, it seems, could be as devastating to the finances of colliery owners as any large-scale conflagration. In 1882, the <u>Colliery Guardian</u> reported that Mitchell Main colliery, which cost over £121,000 to open up, was offered for sale at auction; "The bidding commenced at £10,000 and closed at £21,500. At the latter sum, the property was withdrawn."[16] In 1894, following a year of protracted industrial and economic difficulties across the coalfield, Darfield Main colliery was bought from the receiver by the proprietors of neighbouring Mitchell Main for £44,500.[17] In 1886, during legal action against Mitchell Main Colliery Company, the owners of Darfield Main had claimed, perhaps with some degree of exaggeration, that the mine shafts alone had cost them at least £100,000.[18]

The risk of financial loss, though it was felt by many individuals with capital, was worth taking since the potential for profit-making in the coal industry was particularly high during periods of economic prosperity. This was made clear in the case of Cortonwood Colliery. In 1872, the capital of the partnership which owned the colliery amounted to £50,000.[19] In 1883, at its transfer from partnership to limited company status, Cortonwood Colliery was valued at £159,247.[20]

With the ever-increasing amounts of capital sunk into the colliery companies, those with a financial stake in coalmines inevitably were eager to ensure that the maximum possible amount of coal was drawn. The demands of lessors meant also that it was advantageous for the coal to be extracted as quickly as possible. Many leases contained clauses which committed colliery companies to pay landowners a minimum amount annually, even if no coal were extracted under lessors' lands. The arrangements the

Mitchell Main Colliery Company held, for instance, during the 1870s with two of its largest lessors, J.W.R.Wilson and Harry Garland, meant that £300 was paid to each for every acre of coal extracted under their lands. However, the company guaranteed to pay annually Wilson not less than £1500 and Garland £1200.[21] Evidently, therefore, extracting annually *more* than five acres of coal under the land of Wilson and four acres under Garland's estate helped to minimise the unit costs of the Mitchell Main Colliery Company.

Several strategies were employed by coalowners to maximise the returns from their capital which related directly to the organisation of work at collieries. Alterations to the methods of working employed in the mines themselves: changes in the shift-working systems; alterations in the methods of disciplining employees; and attempts to adjust the holiday-taking patterns of the workforce were all measures adopted on behalf of colliery owners in mines in the Darfield and Wombwell district. The enforcement of each of these measures by the coalowners could be interpreted as a move towards their achievement of real control in the workplace. If such strategies were successfully applied to the collieries of the district, then the validity of Braverman's thesis that, with increased capitalisation, the employers' power in the workplace was inevitably enhanced, would be strengthened. Each of the strategies the owners intended to implement upon their workforces will be considered in turn and their effectiveness assessed.

a. Changes in the system of coal-working

As the chapter on the general economic history of the nineteenth century British coal industry has revealed, a multitude of working methods abounded in winning Britain's coal. However, as the nineteenth century progressed, these working methods tended to coalesce into one, the longwall method of mining, if geological conditions permitted. At a crude level, until the middle years of the nineteenth

century, the most common method of coalmining was a variant on the pillar-and-stall method. Under this system, a number of hewers, often no more than two, had assigned to them a small area, the 'stall', in which, with the help of a number of other workers, employed by the hewers themselves, they were responsible for extracting coal. At various sites within their stall, the coalworkers left columns of coal to support the roof, known generally as 'pillars'. Under the pillar-and-stall system of mining, a great degree of autonomy was bestowed upon the hewers, who invariably could determine themselves their own pace of work.

As the units of coal production expanded in size, a more systematic method of winning coal was demanded by colliery owners. The longwall method of mining replaced the small stall as the site of coal extraction with a long coal face at which a large number of hewers worked alongside each other. By this means, inspection was facilitated by an overseer, or deputy and the introduction of an increased level of division of labour was effected. Specific groups of men could be designated to particular activities such as: boring; drilling holes for shot-firing; coal cutting at the face; ripping, or maintaining the roads and roofs at the coalface; and filling, loading the cut coal into trams, or, more recently, onto a conveyor belt for removal to the shaft-bottom.[22] Through the introduction of such job divisions underground, the 'measurement' of individuals' work could be accomplished and control of the workplace was diluted. The autonomy of the hewer had been replaced by a more easily disciplined and thereby emasculated underground workforce. This, at least, was the theory underlying the introduction of longwall working methods in many areas.[23]

Another significant factor, however, that needs to be taken into consideration when studying the introduction of the longwall system is the safety element. In fiery collieries, such as those working the Barnsley seam in the South Yorkshire coalfield, the longwall method was adopted

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since it facilitated safe ventilation. Following the catastrophic fire at Lundhill colliery in 1857, the mine inspector, Charles Morton, reported that its owners had since introduced the longwall method of mining: "Important improvements have recently been effected in the working and ventilating as well as the lighting arrangements at Lundhill colliery. The 'long-wall' system of getting coal has superseded the hazardous method previously pursued..."[24]

Despite both the safety and managerial benefits which appear to have accrued from the introduction of longwall working, in many of the collieries in the Darfield and Wombwell district, a more 'traditional' form of working continued into the final decades of the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the comments made by Joseph Coe, underviewer of the Lundhill colliery, that: "As regards the system of working coal generally in this neighbourhood I will venture to say, (from my own experience in the North of England, Staffordshire and in Yorkshire), that the Barnsley mode of getting coal is the most wretched and dangerous that I know."[25]

The system of coal working characteristic of the Barnsley area is described variously as the 'leading and following up bank' principle[26], or simply the 'benk' (sic) principle.[27] According to W.W. Smyth, in his 1867 work, A Treatise on Coal and Coal Mining, this benk system in Yorkshire had, "for a long time been practised which unite[d] some of the characteristics of the pillar system with a certain amount of long-wall." [28] Smyth described the benk system as follows:

"From the main levels [roadways leading from the shaft bottom], which are protected by sufficiently massive ribs of coal, bord-gates [side-roads], (generally in pairs), are driven up the rise of the seam in advance of the main workings, and between them *banks* [stalls] are opened in the form of bords of 20, 30, or 40 yards wide."

Smyth made clear his own reservations about this method of working when he explained that:

"the establishment of a number of separate goafs [accumulations of loose debris left behind after coal had been extracted and in which gas tended to linger] in proximity to, and generally below, the places where colliers are working renders outbursts of gas extremely dangerous and has led to fearful explosions of the Ardsley Oaks, Darley Main, Warren Vale and Lund Hill collieries."[29]

This benk system of working, in which colliers and their assistants could not be overseen effectively, clearly left much autonomy with the hewer: in such a working system, little division of labour could be possible and so the hewer had control over a considerable part of the work process. The benk and pillar-and-stall systems of coal working continued to be practised in many of the district's mines into the late- nineteenth and indeed early-twentieth centuries. Charles Rose, a consulting engineer to over half of South Yorkshire's collieries informed a Royal Commission, as late as 1909, that: "at a great number of our own [South Yorkshire] pits we work pillar and stall."[30] A newspaper report of a dispute at Darfield Main in 1901 makes it clear that the benk system of working was still in operation at that colliery. In the report of the Barnsley Chronicle, it is stated that: "As to the objection to three men working in a hole, our representative was informed that it was and had been for years one of the rules of the colliery that three men should work in one place, there

being twenty-two yards of coal between the packs all through the pit."[31]

However, some collieries in the district, did employ the longwall method of working. At Mitchell Main, a highly-capitalised colliery at which many of the most up-to-date innovations were in use and were reported in the Transactions of the Institute of Mining Engineers, it was noted, in 1895, that: "The system of working is longwall..." The length of the working-face, the report stated, was 1,200 feet.[32]   Wombwell Main colliery was an example of a coalmine which combined two methods of working: the Barnsley seam, first worked in 1855, used the pillar-and-stall method of extraction, whilst the deeper Parkgate seam, where working began in 1891, employed the longwall method of working.[33] The case of Wombwell Main suggests that, as developments in coalmining occurred, relating to technological and managerial innovations, the longwall method of mining was beginning to find favour.

The triumph of the longwall system, and the concomitant increase in the division of labour at the coalface, however, was not accepted without the management of some collieries encountering much opposition from their workforces. At Cortonwood colliery, in 1887, the management sought to replace the pillar-and-stall method of working which had been in operation at the mine since coal production began there in 1876. Resistance from the workforce was intense. Reservations regarding the

introduction of longwall working were expressed initially
in the form of concerns over 'fair prices for the new class
of work'.[34] By 1890, when the bargaining position of
mineworkers was enhanced by the rising market for coal,
more militant action was demanded. A meeting at Cortonwood,
held under the auspices of the Yorkshire Miners'
Association, was told that "they would be on strike at that
colliery before long", if a number of grievances, including
the matter of longwall working were not settled quickly.[35]
An amicable settlement was reached some ten months later
when the colliery's management agreed to accept the terms
demanded by the men. As the Mexborough and Swinton Times
reported, Cortonwood's manager, Mr Gregory, was:

"prepared to come back to the old system of working. This
would put an end to the difficulties which had been in
existence so long at the colliery, and that was to come
back to the old mode of working so that the difficulties
complained of working long wall work would be done away
with by the adoption of pillar and stall."[36]

It seems, therefore, that the experiences of colliery
owners in the Wombwell and Darfield district do not support
Braverman's thesis that increased capitalisation of the
workplace would lead inevitably to a higher level of
division of labour and a consequent reduced level of
autonomy for individual workers. Whilst, undoubtedly, the
amount of capital sunk into the mining industry increased
throughout the nineteenth century, there seems little
emphatic evidence in the district to suggest that this

increased investment led to a concomitant reduction in the levels of employees' control in the workplace.The pillar-and-stall and benk systems of 'getting' coal not only continued alongside the 'modern' longwall system but in at least one colliery actually superseded it.

b. Changes in work-time patterns.

It was in the best interests of coalowners to extract the mineral as quickly as possible from the land of lessors to whom often a minimum sum had to be paid annually regardless of the extent of the workings beneath their estates. The enormous capital cost of mines also acted as an incentive to owners to ensure that the maximum return was made on their investment. As a means of achieving this return, continuous working of mines was a goal towards which many owners wished to aim. The working patterns of coal employees thus became an area of crucial significance, and can be broken down into two aspects, each of which will be considered in turn: the hours of daily working; and the allowance of holidays.

From their opening, the mines in the Darfield and Wombwell district appeared to operate a shift system. Perhaps the most common system in use was the double shift means of working. The accounts collected by Charles Morton, the district's mine inspector when the Lundhill colliery disaster occurred, make it clear that, in 1857, the double shift system operated at the time of the explosion. William Corbridge, a deputy at Lundhill, stated that: "four

deputies were employed, two in the day and two at night.".[37] A Lundhill miner, George Burrows, recounted that: "On the morning of the explosion I came out of the pit about 4.30..."[38]

Newspaper reports reveal that individual miners occasionally worked throughout a double shift period. Working underground for such lengths of time drew substantial levels of criticism, not least from miners' leaders, such as the President of the South Yorkshire Miners' Association, John Normansell. In 1868, Normansell addressed a meeting at Darfield, where he made reference to the problems of the double shift system. He declared that:

"All of them knew very well that when they had been eight hours in a pit there ought to be a cessation of labour. All knew how essential it was by their own houses. They had room above room so as to avoid always breathing the same air. All knew that if six of them slept in the same chamber for a night the place would be scarcely fit to live in until the air was purified." Normansell urged "stewards and managers to think of this."[39]

The implication from Normansell's speech was that pressure was applied upon men to work over two consecutive shifts. A fatal accident at Darfield Main colliery a year later in which two men were killed appears to question this assumption. In the initial newspaper report of the accident, the lack of official timekeeping at the colliery is revealed:

"Charles Needham and Edward Dyson ... went to work on Monday afternoon on what is termed the night shift. Both

men worked in one hole and were seen all safe about nine or ten o'clock on Monday night. Whether or not they agreed to work a double shift is not known, but nothing was known of them until four o'clock on Tuesday morning when a man ... saw a large fall of coal..."[40]

At the subsequent inquest into the two men's deaths, Charles Ramsay, a deputy steward, or fireman, at Darfield Main colliery told the coroner that: "They had been at work since two o'clock in the afternoon and they told me they thought they would work until two o'clock in the morning." Ramsay affirmed that: "They were not obliged to stop. They did so of their own free will..."[41]

The apparently haphazard time-discipline arrangements which prevailed at Darfield Main and the dangers of working excessively long hours underground were highlighted by the coroner in his verdict:

"[He] thought the case was purely an accident but thought it a bad precedent to allow men to work a second shift without acquainting the authorities of the pit of their intention to do so ... [He] said in his opinion that the second shift system was objectionable. There was not a business in the country that required so much control as coalmining."[42]

From the evidence of this inquest, it seems that the lack of control, to which the coroner referred, was a problem only for the colliery management: the mine employees, it seems, fatal accidents notwithstanding, enjoyed significant levels of control over their working hours. Indeed, control of working hours was to prove a means by which colliery employees could attempt to exert economic authority over

coal owners. In 1881, for example, a mass meeting of miners at Wombwell, organised by officials of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, agreed to the resolution:

"That miners of Wombwell district hereby agree that one of the great evils we have now to contend against is excessive production ... and we therefore resolve to carry out the eight hours principle to the utmost of our power and endeavour to persuade all other miners to do the same..."[43]

By the beginning of the 1880s, it seems, the eight hour day had become the norm in the district amongst hewers. In 1873, John Normansell, addressing a Parliamentary Select Committee on the Scarcity and Dearness of Coal, noted that most hewers in South Yorkshire worked "about eight hours a day".[44]

At times of rising coal prices, hours of working underground declined further. According to the Barnsley correspondent of the Colliery Guardian, at the end of 1882, when coal prices were beginning to recover from a long period of slump, "large numbers only worked seven hours per day, and nine hours bank to bank would be over rather than under the average."[45] The miners' control over their hours of work was made particularly manifest in a report carried by the Colliery Guardian during the boom of 1889. In a report of the Barnsley coal trade, it was noted that: "Shifts are to be abolished and men are to be allowed to do as they please..."[46]

In addition to having significant control over their hours of work, many coal face workers also were able to determine

their pace of work. Normansell's comments to the Parliamentary Committee on the Scarcity and Dearness of Coal made it clear that, where hours of work were long, the pace at which coal was extracted declined. The miner, observed Normansell, "gets as much in eight hours as he does in ten."[47] It seems that, like the employees of several other industries in the region, of whom perhaps the best documented were the workers of Sheffield's light trades, the miners of South Yorkshire varied their pace of work throughout the working week. In a letter written by 'the manager of a large South Yorkshire colliery' in 1878 to the House of Lords Select Committee on Temperance, it was stated that:

"colliers worked very indifferently in the first part but pulled up at the end of the pay ... Generally speaking, with regard to collieries they found a very much larger amount of work was done on the the day on which wages were made up and that on that day there was a very much larger attendance of men."[48]

In the mining work place, therefore, it appears that, to a significant extent, the real control which the large capitalists sought, according to the work of Marxists, such as Braverman, remained elusive. During the later years of the nineteenth century, in the Wombwell and Darfield area, as in a large part of the South Yorkshire mining district as a whole, working hours and the pace of work were still determined largely by coalmining employees themselves.

Although colliery owners found it difficult to control the working hours of employees in their mines, strong attempts were made to ensure that men attended their workplace regularly. Fines and court action were resorted to by some of the colliery companies in the district to ensure regular attendance at the workplace. This was necessary particularly when wages were high: at such times men often preferred to reduce the length of their working week rather than obtain higher wages. In 1884, for instance, several offences which occurred at Darfield Main colliery were tried at Barnsley Police Court, amongst which was the case of Charles Leather, a collier. According to the Colliery Guardian, Leather was "fined 20s. compensation and costs for neglecting to attend regularly to his work, having absented himself on eight days."[49] At Houghton Main colliery several workers were dismissed in 1884 for "neglect of work".[50] Perhaps the most zealous colliery company in the Darfield and Wombwell district with regard to the issue of regular working was the Mitchell Main Colliery Company. According to the Colliery Guardian, in 1888, the company summoned:

"twenty-three of their workmen before Barnsley magistrates ... to recover damages against them for neglecting their work ... The men, it seemed, were in the habit of staying away from their work without giving any notice of their intention so to do and thus great loss and inconvenience was caused. The company sued for compensation at the rate of 2s.6d. per day per man, which was said to be considerably less than the actual damage sustained."[51]

Two of the 23 culprits, John Howells and Adrian Pemfield, were "summoned for amounts of £1.2s.6d. and 17s.6d. respectively." The prosecuting solicitor declared that: "Great damage was caused to the company in consequence of men thus absenting themselves and they were bound to bring these cases forward to set an example to others."[52]

The effectiveness of the strategies employed by the district's colliery owners and their representatives to ensure a regular supply of labour has to be doubted. The attempts by the proprietors of Mitchell Main colliery to secure a labour supply during the traditional feast holidays were ultimately unsuccessful, as will be shown in a later chapter on leisure and popular culture. During July 1889, the Barnsley correspondent of the Colliery Guardian noted that: "At several places not much work was done until Wednesday, for on Tuesday so few hands were ready to go down some of the pits that it was not considered worthwhile to continue operations."[53]

The difficulties encountered by mining employers securing a regular workforce during periods of high demand were, to an extent, of their own making. During economic downturns mining employers shed labour freely, as mines were shut down for extended periods, either partially or, occasionally, completely. For mineowners to demand a regularity of working from their men only at times of boom was unrealistic when much emphasis was placed upon casual work.

Casual workers were employed in the mines during seasonal peaks in coal demand. In a period of economic slump, the lack of seasonally recruited labour in mines in the Barnsley district prompted comment in the <u>Colliery Guardian</u> during November 1888: "Work is not [so] plentiful in the different districts as to call for additional hands besides those usually employed, although this should be about the busiest period of the year."[54]

During seasonal slumps in coal demand, mineworkers themselves found casual work outside the mines. In his diary, Joseph Knowles, a Hemingfield miner, noted in several entries during July 1886 that he had worked haymaking. According to Knowles's diary, Wednesday 7 July was: "A playday. Haymaking has been the buisness (sic) today and I may say I like it very well." Ten days later, he reported again "a play day, but I am pleased to say not for me: for I made a day and a quarter haymaking."[55] In an account of a 'Fatal Quarrel in a Harvest Field at Wombwell', the <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u> reported in 1893 that a number of the labourers involved in the incident whilst harvesting were mineworkers employed by Wombwell Main Colliery Company.[56]

The evidence gathered here suggests therefore that the concept of the increasing commodification of time as capital's influence in the workplace rose is rather simplistic. According to E.P. Thompson's seminal essay, 'Time, work-discipline and capitalism', as the process of

industrialisation advanced, 'task-based time' was replaced by a regularised 'clock time' determined principally by employers.[57] As with all industries operating under a capitalist system, the principal determinant of the hours worked in the mines of the Wombwell and Darfield district was the market demand for the product itself, in this case coal. However, the rhythms of work, the hours worked on any shift and the pace at which work was undertaken, were determined largely by the mining workforce itself. The employers' often ineffectual attempts to control not the hours but days of work of their employees were hampered by both seasonal and secular fluctuations in the product's demand patterns.

Having identified the fact that much real control of their workplace was retained by coal employees throughout the later nineteenth century despite the increased significance of capital in the industry and the expected concomitant growth in the real control of the employer, reasons for this situation will now be explored. To do so requires an examination of the cultural environment of the underground workplace itself and an exploration of the powerful customs that had effect there.

3. The culture and custom of the mine.

As with other industries in which workers are exposed to high levels of risk or subject to the intangible factor, 'luck', the coalmining industry has been perceived to

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possess a rich culture of its own. An increasingly 'rational' approach to life, which has supposedly characterised later modern society has by no means destroyed many of the cultural traits associated with superstition, or, expressed another way, the attempts to reduce risks and enhance productivity in the workplace. A recent study of the British fishing industry has demonstrated that the application of new technology, which symbolised the more scientific, rational approach prevailing in society, need not undermine the superstitious nature of the workplace culture. Indeed, Trevor Lummis observes that the most superstitious group of East Anglian fishermen were those engaged in drifting, the most modern method of commercial fishing. Lummis finds that the lowest levels of superstition were in the most traditional sector of the fishing industry. This apparently paradoxical situation, he explains, is a consequence of the high skill factors which determined the success or otherwise of the traditional fishing methods. In contrast, driftermen:

"worked in a situation in which, whatever their skills, earning in the end depended on a collective gamble. The general whereabouts of herring shoals was well known and hundreds of drifters would shoot their nets alongside each other, drifting with the movements of the tide until they hauled their nets in ... There was nothing a particular crew could do to improve their catch: they simply had to wait for the herring to swim into their nets and boats fishing close to each other could suffer the extremes of fortune. 'Luck', therefore, was all-important."[58]

In the case of the South Yorkshire coalmining industry, as the nineteenth century progressed, the safety record of the district's mines improved significantly. However, the *potential* for disaster was perceived to be ever-present, particularly in the fiery Barnsley seam. It was the constant threat of disaster, as much as the reality of the casualties suffered, that determined the cultural and customary nature of underground working. By far the most calamitous mining disaster in the district during the second half of the nineteenth century was the Lundhill explosion in 1857 which claimed 189 lives. During this period only one other accident claimed the lives of a significant number: at Houghton Main colliery in December 1886, when a cage carrying ten men plunged to the bottom of the pit shaft, killing all of the occupants.

As Table 4.2a illustrates, a large proportion of the district's fatal mining accidents were caused by various types of roof falls. These in the main claimed only one or two lives at a time: the 159 fatalities caused by roof falls during the period occurred in 155 separate incidents. The prospect of meeting death alone underground was, therefore, a real one for mining employees and inevitably affected the working atmosphere below ground.

Table 4.2a

Causes of Deaths Amongst Colliery Workers, 1854 - 1914

Name of Mine   **Type of Accident**

Name of Mine	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	Total
Cortonwood	0	30	1	5	0	3	2	0	41
Darfield Main	0	40	4	10	0	8	1	3	66
Houghton Main	0	24	11	13	1	4	1	0	54
Lundhill	196	21	3	4	0	2	0	0	226
Mitchell Main	0	18	0	11	1	8	1	0	39
Wombwell Main	1	26	1	11	0	8	2	2	51
Totals	197	159	20	54	2	33	7	5	477

Key to types of accident:
1. = fire damp;   2. = fall of coal / rock / timber / roof
3. = shaft accidents;   4. underground haulage accidents
5. = underground machine accidents;   6. = pit-bank accidents
7. = miscellaneous accidents;   8. = unknown cause of death

Source: Mine Inspectors' Reports.

Table 4.2b: Annual Death Rates Until 1914

Name of Colliery	Date working		Annual Death Rate
	Opened	Closed	
Cortonwood	1876		1.08
Darfield Main	1861		1.25
Houghton Main	1878		1.50
Lundhill	1855	1895	5.65
Mitchell Main	1876		1.03
Wombwell Main	1855		0.86

Few accounts exist detailing the culture and custom of underground working in the mines of the Darfield and Wombwell district during the second half of the nineteenth century. The information that has been gleaned has been derived principally from 'official' sources such as newspaper accounts and the reports of mine inspectors. Such reports inevitably sanitise the conditions and practices of the mine for the benefit of readers' perceived sensibilities. Therefore, the following account can do little more than speculate about the colour, or perhaps more specifically the smells and noise, of underground working life, from the extant source materials.

The reports of the 1857 Lundhill disaster portray a picture of indiscipline and mismanagement underground. The explosion occurred as a consequence of the defective means of ventilation in practice at the mine. At the time of the explosion, the ventilating furnace was being supplied not with pure air but with 'return' air which had passed through the mine and had been exposed to the inflammable gases present. As Charles Morton, the mine inspector of the South Yorkshire district, reported: "Doorkeepers ... were improperly allowed to go off duty for nearly an hour at dinner time and it is worthy of remark that during this interval the great explosion occurred."[39] Several witnesses at the coroner's inquest into the disaster commented upon the practice of the doorkeepers leaving their positions at

dinner time. According to John Thompson, a Lundhill miner, "The doorkeepers always left their doors nearly an hour at supper time in the night shift and at dinner time in the day. The deputies have allowed them to do so; the doorboys and deputies dined and supped together at the furnace."[60]

This flagrant disregard for safety was compounded by the practices of the hewers and their assistants. George Burrows, a miner at Lundhill, stated that:

"occasionally safety-lamps were used, but more commonly we had candles; we used safety-lamps until gas got worked out of the place and then we lighted candles: the colliers exercised their own judgement concerning this. We were acting contrary to Special Rule 18 in this matter: we ought to have been guided by the steward or his deputy, but the latter seldom came near us."[61]

The complaisance of underground officials extended, at Lundhill at least, to the team of workers building the packwalls immediately behind the working face, where gas invariably lingered. According to the evidence of Abraham Levitt, a packer:

"Mr Coe, [the underviewer], said the packers were always to use safety lamps but the oil was so bad we could not make the lamps burn; the gauzes were never locked and sometimes we screwed them off ... Mr Coe and the deputies had seen us doing so and they did not reprove us because they knew that lamp oil burnt so badly."[62]

A report written by Charles Morton, the mine inspector, following a fatal explosion at Wombwell Main colliery in 1858, one year after the Lundhill disaster, clearly reveals his frustration at the cavalier attitude to safety which

appeared to be shown particularly by employers and management in the fiery Barnsley coal seam:

"Soon after the Lundhill catastrophe, I advised the principal agent of Wombwell Main colliery ... to abandon naked lights and adopt safety lamps, with a view to lessen the risk and frequency of explosions and I regret that my suggestion was not acted upon ... I have since strenuously endeavoured but with only partial success to induce the owners of Wombwell Main and other fiery pits around Barnsley to substitute locked safety lamps for naked lights in the underground works; and my belief is that the existing legal powers of inspectors are not strong enough to subdue the reprehensible prejudice entertained by some employers, (chiefly for economic reasons), against the use of the most efficient instrument yet invented for protecting their mining servants in the presence of inflammable gases."[63]

The mining employees themselves, according to Charles Morton, were responsible in part for the unsafe nature of pitwork. In his 1863 report, Morton emphasised the avoidable nature of many accidents caused by roof falls. "I am convinced," he declared, "that it is much in the power of operatives themselves to diminish accidents of this kind by paying more attention to 'propping', 'packing', and 'spragging'."[64]

The indifference of the district's underground workforce to the threat of roof falls appears to have altered little by the end of the nineteenth century. Charles Morton's successor as mine inspector, Frank Wardell reiterated Morton's concerns in his 1900 district report:

"There is often too great neglect and carelessness exhibited in the way in which timber is drawn. Where there is an adequate supply of timber and when it is at hand ready for use, then there is no excuse for neglecting to set it, or deferring too long when the doing so means the difference between safety and danger."[65]

The tendency amongst underground workers, most of whom were paid piece rates, to set the minimum amount of timber possible is explained by Wardell on the grounds of cost: "Naturally, a workman considers that time he spends in supporting the roof is time lost and therefore he runs the risk of unnecessary delay: but if he would only reflect what such a delay may, and often does, mean, he would never incur the risk."[66]

It seems likely, however, that the principal reason for this apparent neglect on the part of underground workers was a deeply founded fatalism which pervaded much of the culture and custom of the mining workplace. Despite the exhortations of the mining inspectorate for more care to be taken with regard to timbering, the inspectors themselves in their reports commented upon the unpredictability of local geological conditions. In his 1874 report, Wardell noted that: "The percentage of loss of life occasioned through falls of roof and coal is kept up each year with unfailing, yet most dispiriting, regularity. Many, very many, of these deaths occur from causes which no amount of skill or attention would obviate..."[67] The report of a

fatal accident in Darfield Main colliery during 1895 makes
clear the unpredictable nature of underground working:

"A fall of roof, caused by what is known as a 'weight
bump', occasioned the death of J. Pearce ... Very many
fatalities occur in consequence of these bumps and they can
neither be foreseen nor guarded against ... [A deputy]
examined the place only five minutes previous to the
accident and was not able to detect any sign of danger."[68]

In such unpredictable working conditions, where costly
precautions against disaster had no guarantee of success,
the apparent low levels of interest in personal safety
measures and the prevalence of fatalistic attitudes amongst
underground workers perhaps were to be expected. Although
the inspectors' reports show that these attitudes were
present throughout the period under study, by the beginning
of the twentieth century, rather more interest was being
shown by mining employees in matters relating to safety
than previously. This, to an extent, was a consequence of
the actions of employers, who, in some cases at least, were
not only motivated by a concern for their workers' safety
but also were aware of the cost of accidents to their
mining interests. As a consequence of the 1887 Mines
Regulations Act, special rules were drafted which were to
be applicable throughout the district. According to
Wardell:

"the formation of the special rules under the 1887 Act was
a work of much labour and time ... [A]fter a great number
of meetings, some of which were held by [owners and
managers] alone, others in conjunction with myself and

others again where representatives of workmen together with myself were present, [a] code of rules was drawn up ... I have every confidence in believing that as the rules become known and are carried out, substantial beneficial results will accrue tending to diminish the proportional rate of mortality."[69]

The active role of mining employees in the securing of mine safety was increased significantly with the implementation of General Rule 38, whereby men were enabled to inspect their underground places of work on a regular basis. In his evidence to the 1909 Royal Commission on Mines, Charles Rhodes, a consulting engineer to almost half of South Yorkshire's collieries reported that: "There are examinations regularly at all the collieries I am connected with and reports from the workmen who have examined the pits." Rhodes noted that these workmen's inspections were usually conducted "once in three months". The inspections were undertaken, "nearly always" by "colliers, men who were selected by a general meeting of the miners." According to Rhodes, "a reasonable spirit was shown on both sides in arranging for these inspections."[70]

It seems that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the matter of miners' safety had become very much part of the 'terrain of compromise' between workers and their employers, which historians such as Patrick Joyce maintain was more characteristic of workplace relations than the conflict-dominated model advanced by many scholars.[71]

Nevertheless, active measures taken by workers in their concern for safety did, on occasion, bring them into conflict with their employers or managers. At Lundhill colliery, for instance, ten years after the major explosion, a new engineer attempted to introduce blasting into the mine. As the Barnsley Chronicle reported:

"The intention of Mr Beacher, the engineer at the pit, to introduce the use of blasting powder was made known to the men on Thursday morning week and, as a result, all refused to go down. During the day, a meeting was held presided over by Mr W. Archer, when a resolution was unanimously come to not to use powder on any account. Mr Beacher, on learning the feelings of the men, withdrew the order and work was resumed the following day."[72]

The antipathy of the men to blasting in a mine where 189 men lost their lives in one explosion was clearly understandable. Indeed, the memory of the 1857 disaster cast a long shadow over Lundhill colliery throughout the remainder of its working life. A special service was held annually at Darfield church to commemorate the disaster until 1867.[73] Thereafter, it was customary for Lundhill's employees to 'play' on the anniversary of the disaster. As the Mexborough and Swinton Times noted in 1890, on the 33rd anniversary of the Lundhill explosion, "the day was observed by the workmen as a general holiday. A few of the workmen who were in the colliery at the time ... [are] still working at the colliery."[74]

The evidence examined suggests that mineworkers held a somewhat paradoxical approach to the issue of mine safety.

Collectively, colliery employees strove to improve, or at least maintain, levels of safety underground, as the example of the Lundhill men has illustrated. The action of individuals, however, as the mine inspectors' reports particularly have made clear, suggest that coalworkers accepted, at least to an extent, the inevitability of accidents and many were reluctant to forgo time spent extracting coal for that spent ensuring a safer working environment. It seems, therefore, that a fatalism at an individual level was not incompatible with a simultaneous desire to improve workplace safety conditions at a more general level.

The existence of this paradoxical situation appears to have been somewhat overlooked in G. Deacon's recent work on mining disaster ballads.[75] Deacon's thesis forcefully challenges the view that the attitudes expressed in such songs represented the opinions of the mining people themselves. Instead, Deacon argues, the style and content of the songs were determined largely by the rules of the genre. Mining disasters, Deacon asserts, "were portrayed in terms which originated in medieval poetry on the subject of death. This response came to be the accepted model for verse response on disasters and tragic death ... it became the norm."[76] It seems, though, that Deacon rather overstates the case when he asserts that:

"In alternative sources on miners' attitudes to mining disasters the fatalism of the disaster ballads is

consistently rejected ... Whenever and wherever they wished to take issue with the official view of mining disasters as unavoidable accidents, they did so arguing cogently that disasters could and should be avoided."[77]

Although this may have been the case in the North East, in the collieries of South Yorkshire, as has been shown, the geological conditions, particularly the presence of 'weight bumps', meant that many roof falls resulted which were unavoidable.

The mining disaster ballads, Deacon states, are "industrially and regionally non-specific."[78] Despite this assertion, Deacon's interpretation of the disaster ballads is based principally upon the North East miners' experiences. If the conditions of underground workers employed in different coalfields with varying working problems had been considered then perhaps the fatalism, so readily discounted by Deacon in the case of North Eastern miners' attitudes, might have been identified as a legitimate aspect of some miners' working experiences. In short, the fatalism which pervaded the disaster ballads and which, Deacon claims, was absent amongst miners in the North East, *was* present in the responses of some miners. To an extent, therefore, the mining disaster ballad did represent in a valid way the responses of some miners to a workplace calamity.

The broader cultural consequences of the fatalism identified in individuals at the workplace are explored in more detail with respect to the people of the Wombwell and

Darfield district in the forthcoming chapter on religious belief, where a high level of vestigial belief has been discovered in the locality. It is the way in which the culture of the underground workplace was influenced by the strategies used by mining employees to cope with the imponderable nature of their working environment that is now to be considered in this chapter.

Following the death of a colleague as a result of a roof fall, Joseph Knowles, a Hemingfield miner, wrote in his diary on 7 May 1886 that: "we run so many risks and have so many narrow escapes that we grow indifferent to them until some calamity makes us more cautious. Nobody need envy the poor miner ... to those who say he is reckless, let me advise them to come and try and they will soon find out their mistake."[79] One of the most important strategies employed by underground workers to accommodate themselves to their dangerous environment was the use of humour. The work of A.E. Green in exploring this aspect of mine culture is particularly instructive. Green's work is based upon fieldwork conducted in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the 1960s. However, it seems likely that the humour characteristic of the workplace then had also been prevalent one hundred years before. Humour, according to the thesis Green advances, is a means of coping with the anxiety of the workplace. The anxieties of the workplace, and thus the need for similar coping strategies were

certainly no less present in the nineteenth than the twentieth century.

The use of 'kidding' was the most significant means by which humour was applied to the mining workplace. According to Green, kidding is "any humorous attack by one acquaintance on another, whether verbal or not, provided that it is not both cruelly satirical and formally elaborate."[80] Kidding was a significant means by which an individual could disclaim responsibility for a charitable act. In the mine, as the diary entry of Joseph Knowles suggests above, death is escaped relatively frequently, often through the heroic actions of other individuals. Green uses the case of the rescue of a worker from a roof fall to illustrate the way in which kidding worked. Once the safety of the victim was assured, "the rescuer 'just looked at the injured man and said, 'Have I done that for thee?'"[81] "The implication that had the rescuer realised who was in trouble," Green explains,

"he would not have endangered himself, permits an unpleasant event and its fortunate outcome to be treated equally unsentimentally ... the truth is that the rescuer would have done the same for anyone; but by apparently making an exception of the man whom in fact he has just helped, he releases the latter from obligation. Debts of money and beer can be repaid, the saving of a life probably cannot."[82]

Kidding, together with the technical pit jargon and the "insistent and routine obscenity ... which miners' wives and mothers, who are generally spared it, tend to call 'pit

talk'"[83] also served as a useful indicator to the underground worker, according to Green, of the degree of trust which could be placed in working colleagues. As Green explains, "in case sense of humour seems a trivial reason for choosing or rejecting a team-mate ... a man who is too selfish or too self-important to allow his mates a laugh at his expense might be equally egocentric in other more critical contexts."[84]

Examples of kidding in the mines of the Wombwell and Darfield district during the nineteenth century have not been easily come by. Clearly, the informal nature of such a culture does not appear in the official records of the period, such as the mine inspector's reports. Cases of kidding are rarely reported in the local newspapers being a quotidian aspect of the miners' working lives and so of little newsworthy significance.

The report of a well-known Wombwell character's death, in the Barnsley Chronicle during 1891 reveals fleetingly the culture of the mine as a workplace and is suggestive of the preponderance of kidding that occurred there. Samuel Gill, who died at the age of 87 was,

"for many years in the employment of Wombwell Colliery ... It was whilst employed for the colliery company ... that he was best known, his good temper and fondness for a joke causing him to be generally liked. He lived for many years at Smithley, and when, as the years came on, he became less able to walk the distance, the colliers bought him a donkey, on which he used to ride to work, to the delight of

the youths employed at the pit who played innumerable pranks on Sam and his donkey."[85]

A thin line separated acceptable levels of humour from what was considered either offensive or abusive by recipients. Experience of pit life undoubtedly made individuals aware of their colleagues' tolerance levels. Inevitably, novices in the pit occasionally overstepped the bounds of acceptable behaviour. This appears to have occurred, for example, at Houghton Main colliery in 1887 when a corporal, who was responsible for the pit lads, was charged with assaulting a horse driver. According to an account in the Barnsley Chronicle, "For the defence it was shown that the defendant had great trouble with the lads, the complainant being one of the worst to manage."[86]

Having examined the culture of the mine as a workplace in general terms attention is now to be turned onto the rather more formal relations between the various grades of mining employee, both below and above ground.

4. Workplace Relations.

Any analysis of relations at the colliery workplace is made difficult by the multiplicity of differences which mark out one colliery worker from another. Perhaps the most basic form of differentiation can be made between underground and surface workers. Differences in status also arise as a consequence of the means of payment: some tasks are paid by piece rate; others by the hours worked.

Underground, work can be divided between the productive face workers and the on-cost workers responsible for haulage and maintenance work. Divisions exist even between employees working in the same colliery doing essentially the same task but crucially toiling in a different seam. The relations between underground workers in the mine will be examined initially before a similar examination of the relations between surface workers will be undertaken. A consideration of the ties linking together both underground and surface workers will also be made.

a. Work relations underground. As the nineteenth century progressed an increasingly distinct group of underground supervisors emerged as the active managers of the subterranean colliery workings. This was, to an extent, enforced upon colliery owners by legislation as safety measures were introduced into the colliery workplace.[87] However, many coal owners, as their businesses became more capital intensive, were alert to the need for the deployment of more systematic teams of underground managers. The inadequacies of early nineteenth century colliery management in the Yorkshire district was made manifest by Charles Morton's report on the 1857 Lundhill colliery disaster, where the incompetent underground management of the men and disregard of safety measures were significant contributing factors to the loss of 189 lives.

In 1871, one year before the introduction of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, which made the appointment of

certificated colliery managers compulsory, the South Yorkshire district mine inspector, Frank Wardell, bemoaned the lack of education:

"Such a state of things ... is not confined to the colliers themselves but is too often apparent in the deputies, firemen and overmen to whom the knowledge of the rudiments of education ought to be of vital importance ... amongst a body of men subject to responsibility varying in extent, one single case of a man entrusted with only the slightest degree, and being unable to read or write ought not to be endured."[88]

In his 1872 report, Frank Wardell stressed the vital importance of there being in place a competent management staff at mines:

"It is of the first importance that deputies should thoroughly appreciate the *responsibility* which attaches to their office. I think it would tend to the greater efficiency of this staff if a higher rate of remuneration were as a rule given them, by which the standard of such an important body would be raised. In very many instances a working collier will make higher wages than a deputy, and therefore no inducement is held out in order to obtain the best men for the position. A deputy, or as the night man is sometimes called, the 'fire trier', has to make a thorough and minute examination of the pit assigned to him before the men and boys descend, and to this examination the latter are bound to trust implicitly."[89]

It seems then that in the 1870s, in many instances little respect was either shown or given to deputies by colliers, many of whom were capable of earning more than their superiors. A somewhat ambivalent attitude towards deputies appeared to exist in the mind of Frank Wardell, however,

which perhaps reflected the rather uncertain position they held within the underground hierarchy. Whilst, in 1871 Wardell had expressed his concerns about illiteracy amongst the deputies' ranks, in 1883 he felt bound to write the following:

"Objections have been raised by some people to the employment of any deputy who cannot read or write: it is quite true that there are many such, but I should be very sorry for the most part to debar them. They are generally speaking otherwise better qualified for their position than many who can do both, being practical men of great and varied experience in all duties incumbent upon their office ... As education spreads, however, this class of deputy will die out, the proportion even now being nothing like so large as formerly."[90]

Under the generally non-mechanised system of coal working which prevailed in the district throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, there appeared to be little potential for conflict between the deputy and the face-worker, which perhaps partly explains the ambivalent position between the deputy and his supposed inferior the hewer. As John Goldthorpe explains: "The principal function of the deputy was to inspect his district to guard against the hazards of of explosions and falls. Those of his duties which brought him into more direct contact with the colliers were indeed limited."[91] According to Goldthorpe: "[I]t was the collier, the man who actually won the coal, who was the key figure in the mine: his was the most difficult, dangerous and yet most vital function. All other

grades, including his formal superior, the deputy, performed what were essentially ancillary roles."⁹²

Since, evidently, the hewer's role was crucial in the production of coal, particular attention is to be paid to his work and the demands this job made not just upon him but also upon his fellow underground workers. In his impressionistic account of life in a number of colliery villages neighbouring Barnsley, Clancy Sigal paints a vivid picture of the work undertaken and skills required by a hewer. As Sigal points out in his account written in 1960 most of the hewer's work was done by hand. The essential tasks of the hewer in 1960 differed little from his nineteenth century counterpart. Sigal's account makes clear particularly the intelligence and skill required of the efficient hewer:

"... the more I watch the more I see that to be a *competent* collier requires a substantial degree of both intelligence and skill. For one thing, the collier, unlike most industrial workers actually plans his own work: it is he and he alone who is the ultimate judge of how a particular wall or shelf should be attacked. At the face, he is designer, organiser and executor in a task which must involve all the imperatives of the production schedule, personal idiosyncrasies and mood, the ever-changing grain of the face itself and nuances of safety for himself and his comrades ...[He needs] to know how to handle his pick in such a way as to reduce a wall of coal ... the structure and consistency of whose mass can change from hour to hour, to a pile of coal rubble of the required chunk sizes ... in such a way as not to endanger the safety of himself and his mates, nor impede the production total...[T]his requires a

fine and well-paced paying out of sheer brain power unmatched by almost any industrial operation I know."[93]

According to John Normansell, leader of the South Yorkshire Miners' Association, a good hewer could be made of a raw agricultural recruit in "two and a half years or something like that."[94] A *de facto* apprenticeship had to be undertaken by aspiring hewers which enabled the position of hewers to be strengthened by giving them both some degree of control over the future supply of their colleagues and also a significant influence in their training. As Normansell explained to the 1873 Select Committee on the Scarcity and Dearness of Coal, "The new-drawn men are generally taken to do the work of those that have been at work in the pit two or three years, and those that have been at work in the pit two or three years go to the coal face."[95] A similar pattern of 'apprenticeship' was still in operation at the time of a Ministry of Labour 'Inquiry into Apprenticeship and Training', the findings of which were published in 1926. According to the Inquiry:

"In the North and Midlands [boys] commence work at the age of 14 or 15 years on the surface at the picking belts and tables or underground as door boys or incline boys ... As they get older they are given more responsible work such as braking or controlling self-acting inclines, attending engine landings or shaft sidings, driving pit ponies. At about 17 or 19 years they become drawers or putters bringing loaded tubs from the coal face ... Working thus constantly in and about the coal face, they have opportunities for observing the hewers at work and sometimes may actually be permitted to hew as part of their

duties while assisting the hewers in various phases of coal face work. About the age of 21 years putters are set to hew permanently if they have been working at least two years at the face."[96]

An examination of the extant signing-on books of Mitchell Main colliery reveals that few hewers were engaged aged under 21 years. Indeed, of a sample of 164 hewers who signed on at the colliery during 1881, only one was aged below 21 years. Most of the hewers employed at the colliery were aged over 25. Whilst 35 per cent of the hewers in the sample were aged between 21 and 30 years, only five per cent of the sample were aged below 25.[97] Few hewers therefore were engaged without considerable experience of underground working life.

According to the observations made by a reporter of the Manchester Guardian, who visited the South Yorkshire mining district in 1873, most of the 'apprentice' hewers were recruited from the families of miners. The journalist noted that: "Their apprenticeship occupies a good deal of time ... As the men learn their new trade at the cost of the master - and for him it is a somewhat expensive matter - it need not be wondered at that the number of colliers is not very largely increased from outside sources."[98]

The relationship between the hewer and those who worked under him seems to have differed both from one colliery to another and over time. The case of Lundhill colliery is instructive. Following the 1857 disaster at the mine, the list of fatalities made it clear that a familistic approach

to recruitment was employed. According to the published list of fatalities, 62 of the 189 men who died were members of just 28 families. By 1877, however, it seems that the familial link which bound so many hewers and their assistants together was being discouraged at Lundhill. Mr Beacher, the colliery's manager stated in an article in the Barnsley Chronicle that: "I engage the trammer and the miner as a rule has no choice of his trammer."[99]

The policy adopted by Beacher at Lundhill did not appear to be pursued at several other collieries in the Wombwell and Darfield district. A more familistic approach to recruitment appears to have been encouraged at Mitchell Main colliery, for instance. From the company's surviving signing-on books the extent of familial employment can be discerned. In establishing whether or not co-employees were related strict criteria were applied: only individuals who signed on consecutively with the same surname were assumed to have been related. On this assumption, of some 4888 signatories between 1881 and 1887 in the Mitchell Main records, 540 had signed-on alongside at least one other family member.[100] Clearly, this calculation underestimates the level of familial employment within the colliery since it takes no account of kinship links concealed by differences in surnames.

An examination of census enumerators' returns for the years 1871, 1881 and 1891 in districts where large numbers of mining employees lived has yielded interesting

information regarding the extent of familial working in the area's collieries. The census enumerators' books of three districts were analysed. The Lundhill district evidently accommodated a large proportion of the employees of the eponymous colliery; Low Valley was the area in which many mining workers lived who were employed at Mitchell Main and Darfield Main; and Wombwell Main was a district in which many of Wombwell Main Colliery Company's employees were accommodated.

The figures displayed in column 5 of Table 4.3 express in numerical form the tendencies in each settlement of co-resident family members to be employed in the mining industry. In making the calculations in each case a weighting is given to the proportions of households headed by mining employees in each settlement which accommodate other mining workers and the average number of sons who work alongside their fathers in the mining industry.

The resulting figures reveal that: firstly, the employees of Wombwell Main appear most likely to work alongside kinsfolk in the eponymous colliery; secondly, despite the declaration of Lundhill's manager, it seems that employees of the colliery were more likely than the staff of Darfield Main and Mitchell Main to work with relatives; and finally, it seems that in each of the settlements studied the incidence of familial employment was steadily rising over time.

Table 4.3

The Incidence of Familial Employment at a Number of

Collieries Discerned from a Number of Census

Enumerators' Books, 1871 - 1891.[101]

	1. No.of h'hlds headed by coalmining employees	2. No.of these h'hlds accom- modating other male wkers	3. No.of these h'hlds accom sons wking in c'mining	4. No.of sons wking in c'mining	5. Total Familial Index (*)
1871					
Lundhill	46	26	18	25	0.755
Low Valley	91	43	13	18	0.274
Womb.Main	76	36	33	46	0.844
1881					
Lundhill	55	25	11	16	0.423
Low Valley	96	44	17	27	0.447
Womb.Main	84	58	48	79	1.548
1891					
Lundhill	50	22	17	30	1.059
Low Valley	156	86	51	87	0.951
Womb.Main	90	56	45	83	1.701

* The 'Total Familial Index' has been calculated by forming
the product of the figures in the following columns:

$$\frac{2}{1} \qquad \frac{4}{3} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{4}{2}$$

The circumstances of family employment discerned from the
Mitchell Main Colliery Company's underground workers'
signing-on book suggest that the most common arrangement
was for a youngster to be employed as a trammer alongside
an elder relative, usually the father, who worked as a
hewer.

Of the family groups examined in the signing-on book
between 1881 and 1886, some 75 per cent of family groups
comprised hewers and trammers.[102] When this evidence is
considered together with the census information conveyed in
Table 4.3, a somewhat surprising finding is revealed:
during the later years of the nineteenth century, at a time
when generally it has been assumed that large workplaces
were increasingly the site of depersonalising and
routinising work processes, in the collieries of the
Darfield and Wombwell district at least it seems that, if
anything, the dependence upon personal relations in the
workplace was increasing.

The Mitchell Main colliery signing-on books show the
crucial part played by the hewer in initiating the young
worker into the methods and practices of the coalmine. An
analysis of the family groups which occur in the signing-on
books of Mitchell Main reveal the mechanics which underlie
the process of career progression underground. Several of
the hewers who appear in the signing-on book next to other
members of their family had signed on more than once during
the period 1881 - 1887. Many signed on with the same family
member on more than one occasion. However, some hewers'
names appear consecutively alongside several different
relatives' names.

In 1881, for example, Charles Allsopp, a hewer aged 26
signed on with a kinsman, possibly his brother, William
Allsopp, aged 21, who was recorded as a trammer. Three

-159-

years later, the same Charles Allsopp signed on as a hewer, but this time accompanied by a different trammer, Harry Allsopp, aged eighteen. Rather more typically, a number of older hewers appeared to use a series of their sons as trammers. Between 1881 and 1887, for example, William Hodgson, aged 52 in 1881, had two kinsmen, probably sons, tramming for him. In 1881, the signature of John Hodgson, aged nineteen, was written immediately below that of William. By 1887, John's name had been replaced by that of twenty year old Walter Hodgson. A transitional stage appeared to have occurred: in 1882 the names of both John and Walter had been signed beneath that of William, which suggests perhaps that, at least in the case of the Hodgsons, the skills of the trammer were to be acquired gradually.

A transient role through which a number of underground workers at Mitchell Main colliery passed was that of 'butty'. The term is a somewhat mysterious one in this sense since it is clearly not used to describe underground sub-contactors, which is its usual meaning when related to mining. Many of the butties who appear in Mitchell Main's signing-on books were youngsters. The average age of the butties contained within the sample used in this study was 25.3 years. On average, colliers were aged 34.6 years and trammers were, on average, 24.6 years old. From an examination of signatories who were residents of Mitchell Terrace, a small number of job changers were identified,

some of whom were either moving from or into the post of 'butty'. On four occasions, Mitchell Terrace underground workers moved from the post of butty to that of trammer. This suggests, perhaps, that butties were inexperienced youngsters beginning their working lives underground. However, the fact that butties' average ages were above those of trammers rather militates against this conclusion. On four occasions, indeed, Mitchell Terrace residents who were trammers became butties. In addition, twice butties were recorded as moving immediately into the position of hewers. From this somewhat limited evidence, it seems that perhaps the term 'butty', at Mitchell Main colliery at least, was used to describe a worker learning a new job. The transitional nature of the butty is emphasised by the fact that, of eighteen underground job changers identified as residents of Mitchell Terrace from the Mitchell Main colliery signing-on books, no less than twelve of these employees either moved from or into the position of butty.[103]

The clearest example of career progression in the Mitchell Main signing-on book related to the Dunn family. Between 1881 and 1885 the hewer David Dunn, aged 39 in 1881, had as his trammer John Dunn, who was eighteen years old in 1881. In 1886, John's job had been taken over by William Dunn, aged twenty. The vacancy of trammer to David Dunn had arisen as a consequence of John Dunn's promotion to the position of hewer himself at the age of 21. John in turn

had recruited the sixteen year old Samuel Dunn as his trammer. At Mitchell Main Colliery evidently the practice of familial recruitment by hewers was relatively common.

The relationship between hewers and the supporting underground workers was, however, by no means always harmonious. Where co-resident household members worked alongside each other the cumulative wage total was of most significance and so the differences in the means of payment of hewers and other underground workers was of limited importance. However, in instances where the wages of members of a coal winning team were going into separate households the differences in individuals' means and rates of payment were matters of intense interest. It was the hewer, in his capacity as leader of a work team, who determined the work pace. Consequently, the wages of the rest of the team depended almost wholly upon the hewer. The different systems of payment in operation amongst mineworkers created divisions within the workforce. As was reported during a period of short-time working in the Colliery Guardian of November 4 1892:

"The miners have commenced the five days a week system and day labourers are by no means pleased at having to play without pay one day out of six ... because miners are doing so, but who are able by working hard to earn almost as much in the shorter period as they have done in the larger one."

Whilst attention in this section has been drawn principally to the relations between hewers and other underground workers, it is also necessary to highlight the

fact that subtle differences in status could be discerned between hewers themselves. Wombwell Main, for example, by the end of the nineteenth century, had in operation both the pillar-and-stall and longwall methods of working in different seams. Where this situation did occur, clearly the most sought after hewing work was to be found in the pillar-and-stall system, where more autonomy could be enjoyed by the faceworker. Undoubtedly, therefore, the hewer who worked in the more desirable working system was considered by his peers, to occupy a rather higher status position than faceworkers toiling in longwall workings.

Just as one type of colliery working was preferred to another, so the hewer favoured working in thick coal seams, where working conditions were more congenial than in thin seams and, as significantly, job security was rather more assured: thin seams, which were opened out speedily in times of high levels of demand were often as quickly closed during periods of depression. Thus, in a mine where several coal seams were worked, subtle variations in status between employees working in the different seams prevailed. In mines where several different seams were worked the distinctions between the workers in each seam need to be emphasised. A colliery's price lists were drawn up invariably not for all of its workers but only for those working in a specific seam: in 1897, for example, a price list was drawn up for the Parkgate seam of the Wombwell Main Colliery; and in 1901 the 'Parkgate List of Prices'

was printed by the Mitchell Main Colliery Company Limited.[104] To a great extent, therefore, the workforces of different seams within the same colliery were quite discrete groups of employees, often negotiating their rates of pay separately and, on occasion, being hired or fired separately.[105]

b. Work relations above ground. The distinctions between the groups of workers employed in the different seams below ground were, however, by no means as great as those which marked the underground workers from the surface employees. Surface workers for much of the second half of the nineteenth century were excluded from the miners' unions. Only in 1889 for instance did the Darfield Main topmen join the Yorkshire Miners' Association.[106] Indeed by 1905, as Eric Hobsbawm has revealed, "the Gasmakers' Union was strongly rooted in the Barnsley district recruiting many pit-top men to its ranks."[107]

To an extent, it seems that the differences between the surface workers and the underground employees were exaggerated in newspaper columns in an attempt to emasculate the corporate power of the miners at times of conflict. This appears to have been the case in 1858, when restricted work was being undertaken by underground employees in the Barnsley district in an attempt to prompt colliery owners to raise wage levels. This action induced 'A Coal Owner' to inform the readers of the Barnsley Times that:

"I believe I do not overstate when I say that any good able-bodied collier can earn 6s. per day. I do not say it is too much but certainly it cannot be called a low rate of wages ... As greater objects of sympathy than the colliers who are only a small portion of the men employed at and in a coal mine I would introduce [to the reader's] notice a large class of banksmen, screeners and other day labourers who have families as large and as needy as any collier and who receive for their labour only some 2s.8d. or 3s. per day, have their time broken and their wages considerably diminished by the reckless way the colliers often refuse to send coals to the bank when vessels and trucks are waiting for them."[108]

Pay negotiations generally were conducted separately between the employers, topmen and underground workers throughout the period of the study. However, the bad feeling to which the Barnsley Times correspondent alludes in the letter quoted above did not necessarily typify relations between the two groups of mining employees. During times of economic prosperity, when surface workers threatened strike action in support of their wage claims, underground employees often were supportive. In such situations, as James Evison has noted, surface workers "could enjoy the strong moral support of their underground workmates who had nothing at stake and nothing to lose in giving it."[109] This situation prevailed for instance in January 1890, when demand for coal was at unprecedented levels and underground workers in South Yorkshire's collieries had recently won an advance of 30 per cent. Surface workers sought an advance of twenty per cent which

was granted swiftly by some colliery companies such as Darfield Main and Houghton Main. Where the wage increase was not forthcoming, as the <u>Mexborough and Swinton Times</u> reported, "Men everywhere were in favour of letting notices take effect where the full demand was not conceded, and it seemed that as a general rule colliers promised to support men who were compelled to come out."[110]

However, in the main, apart from occasional, and somewhat passive, expressions of solidarity between surface workers and underground employees, much appeared to separate the experiences of the two sets of workers. The divide between the surface and underground workers is seen perhaps at its most striking through an examination of census enumerators' schedules. For the census years 1871, 1881 and 1891, households headed by a colliery employee and containing at least one other coal worker have been identified. An attempt was made to discern whether the workers were employed either on the surface or underground. The results contained within Tables 4.4 and 4.5 make clear the divide between the two sets of workers: almost no households headed by an underground worker contained colliery surface workers.

Table 4.4

The Propensity of Households Headed by Underground Colliery

Employees to Contain Surface Colliery Workers, Discerned

from Census Enumerators' Books[111]

Settlement	No.of h'hlds headed by u'gnd wker with co-res colly employees	No.of h'hlds headed by u'gnd wker with co-res u'gnd workers	No.of h'hlds headed by u'gnd wker with co-res surface workers
1871			
Darfield*	55	55 (102 wkers)	0 (0 wkers)
Lundhill	45	43 (73)	2 (2)
Wombwell Main	42	42 (57)	0 (0)
1881			
Darfield	150	146 (237)	7 (7)
Wombwell Main	55	53 (98)	3 (3)
1891			
Darfield	213	204 (364)	10 (14)
Lundhill	52	52 (86)	0 (0)
Wombwell Main	45	45 (80)	0 (0)

* Darfield includes Low Valley, Snape Hill, encompassing the households accommodating Darfield Main, and later, Mitchell Main employees.

As the figures in Table 4.4 suggest, colliery surface workers were conspicuous by their absence in households headed by an underground colliery worker. In contrast, in households headed by an underground mining employee with

co-resident colliery workers, it seems that in many instances two or more underground workers were accommodated. This undoubtedly was a consequence of influential underground workers such as hewers being involved in decision-making processes relating to the recruitment of their under-workers. An examination of the consistently small number of households headed by surface workers with co-resident colliery employees makes it clear that much less influence was enjoyed by established surface workers in recruitment decisions.

Table 4.5.
The Propensity of Households Headed by Colliery Surface Workers to Contain Other Colliery Surface Workers, Discerned from Census Enumerators' Books[112]

Settlement	No.of h'hlds headed by s'face wker with co-res colly employees	No.of h'hlds headed by s'face wker with co-res u'gnd workers	No.of h'hlds headed by s'face wker with co-res surface wkers
1881			
Darfield*	11	5 (6 wkers)	8 (19 wkers)
1891			
Darfield	17	9 (13)	10 (14)
Lundhill	15	7 (8)	11 (15)

* Darfield includes Low Valley, Snape Hill encompassing the households accommodating the employees of Darfield Main and, later, Mitchell Main.

The small number of households headed by surface workers with co-resident colliery workers has made the comprehensive tabulation of the relevant census data rather meaningless. Consequently, only where ten or more households were headed by a surface worker accommodating other coal employees, have the data been recorded in Table 4.5.

The fact that so few surface workers headed households accommodating other colliery workers is testimony to the low economic status of many of their number. As Tables 4.4 and 4.5 reveal, in the case of Darfield in both 1881 and 1891 more than ten times as many underground workers as surface employees headed households containing other mining workmen. Just as underground workers were more likely to accommodate other below ground workmen than surface employees, so surface workers tended, where they did accommodate other mining workers, to house their fellow surface workers. In 1881, for example, in the eleven households headed by colliery surface workers and containing other mining employees, nineteen fellow surface workers and only six below ground employees were accommodated. Comparison of Tables 4.4 and 4.5 makes clear that although both surface workers and underground men tended to accommodate their own kind, surface workers were considerably more likely to house underground workers than below ground workers were to accommodate surface men.

Sharp distinctions between colliery surface workmen and underground employees can also be discerned by examining the occupational patterns revealed in marriage registers. An analysis of a 25 per cent sample of the marriages registered at Darfield and Wombwell parish churches for the periods 1850 - 1885 and 1864 - 1888 respectively has illustrated a tendency for underground colliery workers to remain aloof from surface employees.

As is shown in Table 4.6a, of bridegrooms who were employed underground, 47.5 per cent of their fathers were similarly employed whilst only 2.6 per cent of their fathers worked as colliery surface workers. The figures in Table 4.6b, make manifest the occupational links between fathers and sons below ground: where the father of the groom was an underground worker in more than nine times out of ten his son also worked below ground.

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Table 4.6

Occupational links involving underground colliery workers, discerned from the marriage registers of Darfield and Wombwell parish churches, 1850 - 1885[113]

</div>

a) Breakdown of occupations of fathers and father-in-laws of bridegrooms who were themselves underground workers.

Occupation	Father	Father-in-law
Surface workers	2.6%	3.1%
Underground workers	47.5%	38.7%
Other	49.9%	57.9%
	100.0%	100.0%

b) Breakdown of occupations of bridegrooms whose fathers were underground workers.

Occupation	Son
Surface workers	1.6%
Underground workers	92.7%
Other	5.7%
	100.0%

An analysis of the same marriage records relating to men occupied in colliery surface work reveals a somewhat different picture. In instances where grooms were surface workers only 21.9 per cent of their fathers also worked at the pit bank. It seems that almost three-quarters of the fathers of grooms working as surface workers might have pursued occupations unrelated to mining. Whilst the figures in Table 4.6b showed clearly the tendency for sons to work underground like their fathers, the data in Table 4.7b show sons of colliery surface workers to be slightly more likely to work below ground than at the pit bank. It seems that only 5.7 per cent of grooms whose fathers worked underground did not work in the mining industry, whereas 35.8 per cent of grooms whose fathers worked at the pit head apparently were occupied elsewhere.

The distinctions between underground and surface workers revealed in both the census data and marriage records examined above is rather surprising: orthodox opinion has suggested that surface work has been traditionally the

haven of ailing and elderly former underground workers.
Undoubtedly to an extent this was true, but if this were
common practice then the links within both households and
immediate family groups between surface and underground
workers would surely have been more extensive than has been
found in this study.

Table 4.7

Occupational links involving surface colliery workers

discerned from the marriage registers of Darfield and

Wombwell parish churches, 1850 - 1885[114]

a) Breakdown of occupations of fathers and father-in-laws
of bridegrooms who were themselves surface workers.

Occupation	Father	Father-in-law
Surface workers	21.9%	9.6%
Underground workers	6.8%	21.9%
Other	71.3%	68.5%
	100.0%	100.0%

b) Breakdown of occupations of bridegrooms whose fathers
were surface workers.

Occupation	Son
Surface workers	30.2%
Underground workers	34.0%
Other	35.8%
	100.0%

Through an examination of the records of one colliery
company, Mitchell Main, in which job descriptions are more
detailed, and thus subject to less ambiguity than in the
census enumerators' books and marriage records, attempts
will be made to examine the experiences of working at the
pit bank. Using the extant signing-on book listing surface

workers at Mitchell Main possible career progressions will
be charted for above-ground workers. These suggest that
working life at the pit head was not necessarily confined
to the very young, the old and the ailing, as has often
been claimed.

Table 4.8
Age Distribution of Surface Workers, as Revealed in
Mitchell Main Colliery Records of Employees Signing-On
During 1888[115]

Age (yrs)	Number	Percentage
20 or under	57	32.2%
21 - 40	79	44.9%
41 or over	40	22.7%
	176	99.9%

The figures in Table 4.8 reveal that, far from there
being a disproportionate number of young and elderly
workers occupied at the pit bank, the reverse was true:
most pit bank workers fell into the middle age category. In
1888, the average age of pit bank workers, discerned from
Mitchell Main's Signing-On Book for surface workers, was
30.04 years.

Many workers appeared to spend a considerable part of
their working lives occupied at the pit bank. A number of
boys whose names appeared in the Mitchell Main signing-on
book of surface workers aged under sixteen remained among
the list of signatories in the equivalent adult book some
years later: William Clarke of Wombwell, listed in the

boys' signing-on book in 1877, aged sixteen was amongst the signatories of surface workers in 1888, when he was listed as a 26 year old engineman still living in Wombwell: and Theophilus Twigg, recorded as aged fifteen and a resident of Wombwell in the boys' signing-on book in 1878 was amongst the surface workers who signed on to work for Mitchell Main Colliery Company in 1888, when he was listed as a 26 year old grinder from Wombwell.[116]

From an examination of all the 1888 signatories in the surface workers signing-on book of the Mitchell Main Colliery Company a few indications emerge of the possible promotional opportunities on offer to those employed above ground at coalmines. The number of job changers during 1888 is low, but, clearly, if a rather longer time-span were studied, the pattern of occupational movement amongst surface workers would be more clear. From the limited data surveyed, it seems that the young surface worker would begin his career, as in many other industries, by familiarising himself with his workplace through effectively acting as an errand boy: the youngest employees at Mitchell Main pit bank were employed as pick carriers. Following their initiation into the world of pit bank work, it seems many youngsters became screeners, where the coal was sorted by size and quality. Graduation from pick carrying duties to screen work was the fate of Richard Slater, a thirteen year old surface employee in 1888.[117] The age structure of colliery screensmen *did* reflect the

traditionally perceived elderly and youthful mixture of colliery bank employees: whilst the majority of the screensmen were aged eighteen or under, more than one in four were aged above 40.[118]

Following work at the coal screens, it seems that the young surface worker could be employed in a number of different areas: Thomas Cook, for example, graduated from screen work to shunting duties; and Harry Stenton moved from his work as a screener to become a grinder, a responsible job involving the control of machinery.[119] Having spent time as a grinder it seems that promotion to engineman could be envisaged by successful surface workers: the 1888 signing-on book entries reveal this path was taken by Tom Thorpe and E. Stenton, aged eighteen and nineteen respectively, both of whom were registered as grinders in February but, by November, were recorded as enginemen.[120]

The diversity of waged occupations which constituted colliery surface work is revealed in the Mitchell Main signing-on book. In Table 4.9 are listed the jobs of the men who signed on to work at the colliery in 1888.

The disparate nature of surface work meant that, in many of the tasks, work was undertaken in relative isolation. The largest working groups of men at the pit bank were employed at the coal screens and at the coke ovens. From Mitchell Main's signing-on book entries for 1888, it is noticeable that these two locations were the areas in which most familial labour occurred. As has been revealed

already, in comparison with underground work the extent of familial labour at the pit bank in general was relatively low. However, of the twelve families identified from the 1888 records where more than one family member was working at the pit bank in the same category of work, four kinship groups were occupied 'at the coke ovens and two worked at the coal screens.[121]

Table 4.9

Surface Workers at Mitchell Main Colliery,who Signed-On

in 1888.[122]

Winding	Screening	Coking	Smithing
weighman - 1	screeners- 34	cokeworkers-26	black-
enginemen - 7	grinders - 10		smiths- 5
catchlifter-1			strikers - 9
banksmen - 21			
30	44	26	14

Equip. maintaining	Transport working	Miscellaneous
lampmen - 10	wagon builders- 10	labourers - 23
pick sharpener- 1	shunters- 6	others - 15
pick carriers - 3	carters- 2	
corf mender - 1		
15	18	38

Total no. of surface workers: 185

The kinship links of the colliery's cokeman clearly helped enhance the solidarity of this group of workers: it seems that at least one-third of the coke workers were related to one or more colleagues.[123] As a cohesive group of workers, cokemen were often prominent in disputes involving surface workers. A more powerful sense of unity pervaded the coke workers than the screeners, who also tended to work in kinship groups, not least because of their differences in age structures. Whilst the screeners tended to comprise youngsters and the elderly, 86 per cent of the cokemen whose ages could be established from the colliery records were between twenty and 40 years old.[124] Cokemen used their collective strength to advance their status at collieries. In 1889, for example, in an attempt to gain a similar wage rise to underground men, "Cokeburners employed at Mitchell's Main tended 14 days' notice for a 10 per cent advance ... and men employed at the coke ovens at Wombwell Main gave notice yesterday."[125] This demand of the cokemen at Mitchell Main was met in part by their employers when a five per cent pay award was granted in July 1889.[126] Further industrial action was taken the following year at the colliery by the cokemen, with a compromise ultimately reached in October 1890 after a dispute lasting four months.[127]

Another group of surface workers, colliery enginemen, attempted to enhance their position within the workplace but proved unable to gain significant ground. In 1881 the

Colliery Guardian reported a meeting at Barnsley of the National Federation of Enginemen, most of whom, according to the newspaper account, "were connected with mines". Amongst the resolutions agreed by the representatives at this meeting was one demanding that: "a compulsory examination of all men employed at steam engines is necessary for public safety." The Barnsley correspondent of the Colliery Guardian poured scorn upon this resolution. He explained that the action of the enginemen was merely a ploy both to control the numbers of men entering the trade and to increase wages. The correspondent wrote with conviction that: "few will agree that an engineman should be a person to decide upon boiler plates or how long a boiler should last. Colliery owners are pressed enough at present and require no more legislation that will increase the cost of production."[128] Without having a significant presence at individual collieries, it seems that the enginemen were unable to organise as effectively as the coke workers in order to secure their demands.

The more prominent part played by colliery surface workers in the field of industrial relations during the 1880s and 1890s, albeit not always successfully, was a direct consequence of the increasing significance of surface work in the mining industry. The value added at the pit bank to coal through washing and coking processes enhanced considerably the value of the coal products sold as the demands of the market became more sophisticated. The coking

process was adopted widely in the South Yorkshire district during the slump years of the 1870s, when it became clear that a steady demand for this product was present locally from the large iron and steel manufacturers. By 1882, Mitchell Main had 52 coke ovens operating.[129] According to a report in the Colliery Guardian by 1897 Wombwell Main had a large bank of 50 ovens manufacturing coke.[130] For limited periods indeed the profits from coke making exceeded those gained from the sale of coal.[131]

As the technology employed at the pit bank became more advanced so the nature of surface work became less labour intensive. The Mexborough and Swinton Times, for example, reported in 1890 that, at Mitchell Main, "owing to improved mechanical contrivances ... the number of men employed on cokeburners is to be reduced from 25 to 15 men."[132] As a result of this move to increased capital intensity at the pit bank, the status of the surface workers who operated the expensive machinery was inevitably enhanced, not least because of their strengthened economic bargaining position. Employers understandably were reluctant to leave expensive machinery idle. Darfield Main and Mitchell Main collieries both had 'extensive improvements' made to their surface plant during 1905[133]; and the refitting of Cortonwood's surface machinery, including 50 new coke ovens, in 1909, involved the installation of a new coal washing plant which alone cost £18,628.[134]

Between 1889 and 1905 the proportion of surface workers employed by collieries in South Yorkshire had risen only from 18.0 per cent of the total mining workforce to 20.2 per cent.[135] Through the increasing use of processes such as coking and coal washing, however, the part played by surface labourers in adding value to the raw extracted mineral had increased significantly. Workers at coke ovens, for instance ought not to be regarded as on-cost workers, for the process for which they were responsible added considerably to the value of the product. An examination of balance sheets relating to the Mitchell Main Colliery Company during the period 1890 - 1899 suggests that, on average, the value of the raw material - coal - when converted into coke increased by more than 70 per cent.[136]

However, although the role of surface workers undoubtedly increased in importance during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, nevertheless the distinction between surface and underground colliery working persisted. The continued contrast between working below ground and at the colliery bank is seen perhaps to best effect through examining average wage levels. In 1905, 240 of Mitchell Main's employees worked at the surface, whilst 878 were employed below ground.[137] Therefore, 21.5 per cent of the workforce were employed above ground. Only four years later, during which time there seems little reason to believe that the structure of the company's workforce had

altered significantly, only 11.6 per cent of the company's wage bill was paid to surface employees.[138] These figures suggest that the 'average' surface worker at Mitchell Main was receiving just under one-half of the income of his underground counterpart.[139] However, the distinctiveness of different sections of the colliery workforce was perhaps most cogently expressed in a 1901 report of the <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u>. Under the headline, "Houghton Main Workers' 'Annual'", the newspaper reported that: "The workmen employed at Houghton Main colliery had their annual excursion on Saturday last. The place chosen for their day's outing by the underground men was Blackpool, Glasgow Exhibition being the selection of the surfacemen and office staff, while the underground officials had arranged to pay a visit to Chatsworth House."[140]

5. Communal perceptions at the mining workplace: fission and fusion.

A plethora of contradictory factors had significance in the construction of mineworkers' communal perceptions of their workplaces. Undoubtedly, at the quotidian level, the relations between different types of workers in the same workplace, which have formed one of the main themes of this chapter, are of primary importance in any attempt to build up an impression of an employee's notion of community at the workplace. However, just as the idea of a community in the broader sense needs to be informed by the notion of a wider society and the inevitable influence this brings to

bear within the smaller social entity, so in the case of an individual workplace does the notion of a worker's communal perception need to take into account the influence of the whole industry as well. In a similar way to which a villager, in addition to being a member of a small community, is also an inhabitant of a nation, so an individual mineworker is an employee not just of one colliery company but also of an industry. Any exploration of communal perception needs to encompass this wider domain. Consequently, in this final section of the chapter, attention is paid particularly to relations between different companies and their workforces in the mining industry.

Relations between the employers and employees of different colliery companies were inevitably paradoxical. At times employers acted in unison, often through the auspices of colliery employer associations. Similarly colliery workers occasionally took action in solidarity with employees from other coal companies. At bottom, however, the relationship between each colliery company, whether neighbouring or distant, had to be of a competitive nature.

At the local level, a number of small disputes involving colliery companies appeared to characterise relations between them. In 1886, for example, Darfield Main resorted unsuccessfully to court action in order to prevent Mitchell Main working coal in the immediate proximity of Darfield Main's shaft.[141] Eleven years later, a dispute between

Wombwell Main Company Limited and Cortonwood Collieries Company Limited occupied legal minds. The Cortonwood Collieries Company contended that Wombwell Main Company was, as the buyer of Lundhill Colliery, obliged to pump water that was seeping into the workings of Cortonwood Colliery. Such cases did little to enhance feelings of solidarity either between the owners or the employees of the rival companies.[142]

Apart from geologically-related disagreements between adjacent collieries, the market for coal itself also placed strains upon neighbouring mining companies. The misfortunes of one colliery company often materially helped the fate of its local rivals. This evidently was the case in 1879 when several collieries in the Barnsley district were subject to strike action whilst others were not. As the Barnsley correspondent of the Colliery Guardian noted: "The few collieries standing ... makes it better for those that are going on so that the men at the latter, in most cases, have been able to make nearly six days a week."[143] This full-time working was to be seen against a recent general background of three- or four-day working in the coal industry.[144] Similarly, setbacks in differing colliery districts often had a beneficial effect upon trade in rival districts. The misfortunes of the Lancashire coal trade were clearly responsible for the improvement in trade in the South Yorkshire coal district during 1881, as the Barnsley Chronicle noted: "The coal trade in South

Yorkshire, owing to a great extent to the strike in Lancashire is in a much brisker state than it has been for a long period, and generally full-time ... is being made."[145]

The differences between co-workers and fellow employers at rival collieries appear to have been most manifest during periods of economic slump. However, particularly during boom periods, economic factors also led to moments of co-operation characterising relations between co-workers and fellow employees at rival colliery companies. Collective action amongst colliery employees from different companies was especially marked through union activity during periods of intense demand for coal. At such moments the common interest of mining employees was particularly apparent.

The relationship between the strength of unionism and the economic health of the coal industry can be discerned from the fluctuating membership figures of a number of lodges of the South Yorkshire Miners' Association during the 1870s. Table 4.10 reveals the changes in union lodge membership figures for two contrasting years of fortune for the coal industry, 1874 and 1878. The year 1874 was marked by particularly high coal prices; by 1878, however, the coal market was in a deep recession.

The figures expressed in Table 4.10 reveal how precarious the state of union membership could be: Lundhill's union membership figures in 1878, for instance, were less than one quarter of the lodge's membership total four years

earlier. In 1873, John Normansell, leader of the South
Yorkshire Miners' Association, proudly proclaimed to the
Parliamentary Select Committee on the Scarcity and Dearness
of Coal that 20,000 of the district's 23,000 colliers were
members of his union.[146] Four years later, however, it was
necessary for the union's officials to go out amongst the
mining population and preach the benefits of union
membership.[147]

Table 4.10

Membership Figures of a Number of South Yorkshire Miners'
Association Lodges for the Years 1874 and 1878.[148]

Colliery	No. employed at colliery, (1874)	S.Y.M.A. membership	
		1874	1878
Wombwell Main	720	400	222
Lundhill	550	350	80
Darfield Main	400	200	100

At times when coal was being supplied to a rising market
and the bargaining position of mining employees
consequently was strongest, combined action amongst the
union lodges of the district exerted significant pressure
upon employers, many of whom conceded ground as a result of
union action. The granting of a ten per cent rise in wages
to Yorkshire miners in 1889, for example, was attributed in

large part to the united action of the men, co-ordinated by the Yorkshire Miners' Association. A resolution passed at a meeting of the 400-strong Cortonwood lodge of the Y.M.A. emphasised the role played by the union in enhancing the men's position: "This meeting of Cortonwood miners," the resolution declared,

"heartily rejoice on the great improvement in both trade and wages during the last fifteen months and is of the opinion that the best thanks of this meeting should be given the Yorkshire Miners' Association for the interest they have taken to secure us a fair share of profits in our wages."[149]

For every occasion on which union action ended in triumph there was another where the result was failure. In 1881, for example, a strike organised by the South Yorkshire Miners' Association demanding a ten per cent advance ended unsuccessfully. Mass meetings were held, including one at Wombwell, on February 16, 1881 which reputedly attracted 4,000 miners from five collieries in the district, calling men to action.[150] One month later, the Barnsley Chronicle reported that: "Most of the men who were on strike in the district have returned to their work at the old rate of wages."[151] A damaging defeat was inflicted upon the Yorkshire Miners' Association in 1885 when, after a lock-out of more than six weeks, the Association's council capitulated to the coal owners and resolved "that the men at present standing out should go to work on the masters' terms."[152]

The failures of the mining union movement need to be stressed, not least to offer a corrective to the somewhat hagiographical accounts of the unions' 'official' historians.[153] Nevertheless, the organised activities of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, and before it the South Yorkshire Miners' Association, whether ending ultimately in success or failure, made clear the commitment of large numbers of mining workers, albeit only at specific moments, to the notion of membership of a community larger than that of the individual colliery workforce.

During moments of union-organised industrial action, the non-unionist employees who continued to work at collieries were subject to significant amounts of intimidation. The 'blacklegs' were regarded by their co-employees as undermining the strength not only of strike action at individual collieries, but also of the mineworkers' cause more generally. During the brief and unsuccessful district-wide miners' strike of 1881, employees who continued to work at Darfield Main and Mitchell Main collieries were subject to considerable harassment from strikers. According to a report in the Barnsley Chronicle:

"Shouts, hoots and the music of tin cans and accordions etc. still greet some men who work at Mitchell Main and Darfield Main. On Saturday last, police attended in some force to protect a man, named Matthew Littlewood, who worked at Mitchell Main and he was brought home in a bus at which stones etc. were thrown."[154]

In 1890, action was threatened by unionists at Darfield Main who did not wish to associate with non-unionists at the same colliery. As a consequence, the union members at the colliery decided not to descend the shaft in the company of non-unionists.[155] The actions of the Darfield Main union members were endorsed by the Yorkshire Miners' Association president, Edward Cowey. At a meeting, Cowey explained that the Darfield Main union members had:

"made up their minds that they were going to protect themselves against unprincipled workmen as well as colliery owners or capitalists. They had made up their minds that they had more to fear from their own side than from the opposite side, and they had made up their minds that those men who would not stand up with their fellow men in this matter were not very honest in wanting something for nothing. They were not going to have dealings with these men who were not in the association, and they simply advised the miners in the union to keep away from them..."[156]

The actions of Darfield Main's union members in this case can be interpreted as an attempt not only to strengthen their own position within the colliery, but also to advance the cause of unionism within the industry as a whole. Clearly, this was how Edward Cowey perceived the Darfield Main protest.

Membership of a wider community of coalmining employees was made manifest also at times of calamity at individual collieries. Following the Lundhill colliery explosion in 1857, significant co-operation took place between

individuals from a large number of mines, in an attempt both to render the mine safe and also to alleviate the distress of those who had suffered. A moving tribute was paid to these helpers by the South Yorkshire mine inspector, Charles Morton. In his report, Morton wrote that:

"I heartily bear testimony to the unflinching courage, unwearied industry , exemplary patience, willing obedience and noble self-sacrifice displayed by the miners and labourers employed in the painful, unhealthy, arduous and dangerous duty of reopening and repairing the dilapidated works, and searching for the burnt, disfigured and putrescent corpses."[157]

A devastating fire at Cortonwood colliery during December 1904 threw all of that mine's employees out of work for an extended period. Although there was no loss of life, the economic effects upon the employees of the colliery were grave. However, the workers' plight was mollified by the actions of their fellow mineworkers in the immediate neighbourhood. As the Barnsley Chronicle reported:

"On Monday night at the Miners' Arms, Wombwell, Mr W. West presided over a well-attended meeting of representatives of local collieries held for the purpose of receiving reports as to what men at the various collieries were prepared to do in the way of giving support to the Cortonwood out-of-work. After lengthy discussion, it was decided that the underground workers would contribute 6d. per man and 3d. per boy per week for the distress occasioned. With respect to surfacemen ... it was expected that the question would be taken up as heartily as the underground workers. Houghton Main banksmen and screen-men had already decided

to contribute 6d. per week and Wombwell Main surfacemen had also agreed to levy themselves for the same deserving objective."[158]

Even where solidarity was being expressed in a very real sense between fellow workers in the mining industry, it is noticeable how the distinctions between surface and underground workers persisted. The financial support offered by fellow mineworkers to the Cortonwood unemployed continued until the reopening of colliery during October 1905.[159]

It is against this background of powerful occupational solidarity that the rivalries of individual coalmines have to be situated. Employees' affiliations to their individual places of work were of significance but, when it mattered, at moments of crisis effected by events outside the control of fellow employees of other mines, coal workers combined to do what they could for their own kind. Because such crises were relatively rare, what was seen more often was the rivalries between, and expressions of affiliation to, individual collieries. This, to an extent, was a ploy by colliery companies to instil pride, and thereby productive working patterns, into their workforces. Some colliery companies were rather more adept than others in the pursuit of this strategy. Of all the collieries examined in this study situated in the Wombwell and Darfield district, perhaps the most effective paternalistic colliery company was Wombwell Main. Various schemes were adopted by the

company's owners and managers, which will be outlined where appropriate later in the thesis. Suffice to say at this stage that its policy of familial recruitment, its rewarding of long-serving employees and provision of recreational facilities undoubtedly helped it to receive the ringing endorsement of Edward Rymer, a formidable unionist and champion of mineworkers in a number of different coalfields. According to the much-travelled Rymer, Wombwell Main colliery was "the best in which I had worked in Yorkshire." Of William Gray, Wombwell Main's manager during his three year stay at the colliery in the late 1870s, Rymer claimed that "never was confidence more worthy of veneration than the faith I could place in William Gray." The efforts of the colliery's management team, asserted Rymer, "secured for the miner security from strife and confusion."[160]

Perhaps the most obvious means by which individual colliery companies aimed to instil in their workforce an affiliation to their employers was the works' trip. Amongst the destinations of local colliery companies undoubtedly the most popular during the final quarter of the nineteenth century was Blackpool: 800 trippers from Houghton Main colliery made the journey to Blackpool in 1889, and other colliery companies regularly sending their employees to Blackpool included Lundhill, Mitchell Main and Wombwell Main.[161]

Occurrences of paternalism in its strict sense involving the management of mines have been recorded in the Darfield and Wombwell district. Attempts were made to encourage what was variously described as 'good feeling'[162] or 'pleasing relations'[163] between the workforce, management and owners. Significant moments in the life cycle of an individual from one of the prominent families connected with the colliery company were used as reasons to hold celebrations expressing the familial spirit that ostensibly pervaded the various mining concerns. The coming-of-age of sons of colliery managers appeared to be a favoured moment at which to involve the employees in celebrations. At Houghton Main colliery, for example, in 1901, the employees presented the colliery manager's son with a gold watch at a dinner held to mark "the occasion of his attaining his majority".[164] The mood of such familial paternalistic occasions was captured well in a report carried in the <u>Mexborough and Swinton Times</u> relating to the 21st birthday of the eldest son of the manager of Cortonwood Colliery in 1895. Amid a 'large and enjoyable gathering' of the employees of the colliery and their 'womenfolk and children', a presentation on behalf of the men was made to Mr James Gregory and was preceded by a short speech delivered by a representative of the workforce. It was hoped by the men, according to the orator, that Mr James Gregory:

"would continue in his present course - that of being agreeable and just and honourable to the workmen with whom

he came in contact. They had made presentations in this district before this, and consequently, when young Mr Gregory came of age they thought they ought to show him that they respected him very highly indeed."

The speech, however, was also laden with cautionary words gently reminding the colliery management of its reciprocal responsibilities to its workforce. The employees hoped the presentation would show Mr Gregory that:

"it was far better to be on good terms with everybody and enjoy their esteem than it was to be always at variance and have bad character among the men. [It was hoped] that if ever young Mr Gregory should become a colliery manager like his father he would follow in his father's footsteps, and while doing his duty honestly by his employers not to forget his workmen employed under him."

In his turn, it seems that James Gregory was aware of what was expected of him. Having prefaced his reply with the hope that his position 'would always be one of some little power', he explained that: "he did not intend to abuse his position and make himself obnoxious." Young Mr Gregory's speech appeared to be one of some subtlety. Whilst expressing surprise at the generosity of the gift bestowed upon him by his father's employees, James Gregory made it clear that he was aware of the ritual nature of the event, despite his father's protestations that the gift had been a spontaneous gesture. According to Mr Gregory junior, "He was very glad to think that they had made this present to him out of esteem and goodwill and not out of consideration

for his position ... though he was sure they had not given it to him because he had earned it."[165]

The ritualised nature of such occasions, orchestrated as undoubtedly they were by the colliery's management, nevertheless did require the consent of the workforce to take place. As will be shown later in the thesis, for the successful staging of a festive event in Darfield and Wombwell the participation of the mineworkers was as necessary as, if not more so than, that of colliery officials. The fact that events such as coming-of-age festivities took place with the active participation of colliery employees suggests, therefore, that such rituals played a useful role in articulating workers' affiliations to their work place.

The allegiance of men to their mining work place was expressed by themselves, without the necessity of management help, through the iconography of the union lodge. The union banner was the focus of much local pride. Indeed, it seems that the arrival of a new banner was sufficient reason to march through the local streets. According to a report in the Barnsley Chronicle, in 1867, Lundhill lodge's men, "to the number of about 200, met at their lodgeroom ... from which, headed by the Wombwell Main brass band and a handsome new banner fresh from the manufacturer, they walked in procession through Hoyland, Jump and Wombwell."[166]

In 1890, the only mineworkers marching in their capacity as employees at the Darfield Hospital Sunday procession were those who worked at Houghton Main. The report of the event dwelt upon the Houghton Main lodge's banner, which was "a splendid piece of workmanship ... bearing emblems of industry, union etc."[167] It seems likely that lodge pride in a new banner prompted the decision of Houghton Main workers to march at the event, which was principally a gathering of friendly societies.[168]

The more usual forum in which lodge banners were displayed, bearing such legends as 'Brotherly Love'[169], was the mass miners' meeting.[170] At such gatherings, whether arranged as part of an ongoing dispute or merely as a demonstration of union pride, the banners adroitly expressed a somewhat paradoxical statement. Each lodge's banner was constructed consciously within the confines of the genre, using the same iconographical vocabulary. When displayed together, the homogeneity both of the banners, and concomitantly, the men they were representing, was clear. However, taken individually, the banners, like the union lodges themselves, were deliberately distinct. The message evinced by the imagery, as a result, was of a somewhat contradictory nature: unity is strength in diversity.

A complex web of relations was, then, constructed around the colliery work place. Although many individual threads

appeared to be disconnected from the web, an underlying, loose, superstructure wove the disparate parts together. At times of crisis, as in the case of mining disasters, colliery employees were able to work together uncritically. Coherent district-wide action was possible amongst colliery workers, particularly during favourable economic circumstances. However, straddling the structural threads of the relational web, was a complex network of strands along which routes employees most frequently travelled. Two distinct sub-networks appeared to characterise the web of relations operating at the colliery, connected only by the thread of the superstructure: in one sub-network travelled the surface worker, interacting with co-users of the system; in the other matrix moved the underground worker. Only very occasionally, it seems were the two networks brought together as one. A large part of the working life of the colliery employee was occupied in only one of these sub-networks, where co-operation between workers and movement between jobs was relatively common. From the evidence examined, however, such as signing-on books, census records and marriage registers, movement between surface and subterranean work was rare.

The notion of colliery employees being members of a community at the work place appears to be somewhat simplistic. The individual colliery worker was a member of at least three work-related communities: that of the

industry as a whole; either the world of surface- or underground-life; and the work-group, if any, in which he worked on a daily basis. It was the relations and prospects of advancement contained in this last 'community' which determined to the greatest extent his experiences of the other two.

Footnotes to Chapter Four

1. H. Braverman's most influential work has been <u>Labour and Monopoly Capital</u>, 1974.

2. P. Hudson, <u>The Industrial Revolution</u>, 1992.

3. A.E. Musson, 'Industrial Motive Power in the U.K.,1800 - 1870', <u>Economic History Review</u>, 29, 1976,p.416. See also R. Samuel, 'Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain', <u>History Workshop Journal</u>, 3, 1977, pp.6 - 72.

4. P.L. Robertson and L.J. Alston, 'Technological Choice and the Organization of Work in Capitalist Firms', <u>Economic History Review</u>, 44, 2, 1992, pp.330 - 349.

5. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.341.

6. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp.336 - 337.

7. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.337.

8. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.338.

9. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.344.

10. P. Joyce, 'Introduction', in P. Joyce, ed., <u>The Historical Meanings of Work</u>, 1987, p.7.

11. P. Joyce, 'Work', in F.M.L. Thompson, ed., <u>The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750 - 1950</u>, 1990, pp.163 - 164.

12. <u>Colliery Guardian.</u>, 19/8/87.

13. Sources for Table 4.1: Lundhill colliery - P[arliamentary] P[apers], 1857/58 [2433] XXXII, I, p.160. Wombwell Main Colliery - <u>C[olliery] G[uardian]</u>, 6/8/97. Darfield Main Colliery - <u>B[arnsley] C[hronicle]</u>, 19/10/72. Cortonwood Colliery - Information received from K. Homer, Barnsley N.U.M. headquarters. Mitchell Main Colliery - <u>T[rans-actions of the] I[nstitute o]f M[ining] E[ngineers]</u>, Vol.XX, 1900 - 01, pp.147 - 148. Houghton Main - <u>C.G.</u>, 22/8/78.

14. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>,1857 - 58, [2433], XXXII,

I, p.160.

15. C.G., 1/5/74.

16. C.G., 27/10/82.

17. N.C.B.608a/24. Darfield Main purchased by Mitchell Main.

18. C.G., 12/11/86.

19. N.C.B. 960/4/11, Indenture, 12/7/72.

20. N.C.B. 961/11/64.

21. N.C.B. 586, Information re. lessors of Mitchell Main Colliery Company.

22. For a further exploration of this, see E.L. Trist and K.W. Bamforth, 'Some Social and Psychological Consequences of the Longwall Method of Coal-Getting', Human Relations, IV, 1951.

23. See Chapter Two on the economic history of the nineteenth century British coal industry, and R. Church, The History of the British Coal Industry, Volume 3, 1986, p.274.

24. Mine Inspector's Report, P.P., 1857 - 58, [2433], XXXII, I, p.183.

25. Ibid., p.177.

26. B.C., 19/10/72.

27. J. Evison, The Opening Up of the 'Central' Region of the South Yorkshire Coalfield and the Development of the Townships as Colliery Communities, 1875 - 1905, M.Phil. thesis, Leeds, 1972, p.137.

28. W.W. Smyth, A Treatise on Coal and Coal Mining, 1867, p.145.

29. Ibid., p.145.

30. Royal Commission on Mines, Vol.IV, 1909, Cd.4667, XXXIV, 52796, p.453.

31. B.C., 29/6/01.

32. W. Washington, 'An Outburst of Gas at Mitchell Main Colliery', T.I.M.E., Vol.IX, 1894 - 95, p.20. Washington also wrote another article relating to Mitchell Main Colliery, of which he was manager, 'Notes on the

Sinking to the Parkgate Seam at Mitchell Main
Colliery', T.I.M.E., Vol.XX, 1900 - 01.

33. C.G., 6/8/97.

34. B.C., 12/3/87.

35. M[exborough] and S[winton] Times, 31/11/90.

36. M.& S.T., 24/10/90.

37. Mine Inspector's Reports, P.P., 1857 - 58, [2433],
    XXXII, I, p.169.

38. Ibid., p.172.

39. B.C., 8/2/68.

40. B.C., 19/6/69.

41. B.C., 26/6/69.

42. Ibid..

43. B.C., 20/8/81.

44. 'Report of the Select Committee on the Scarcity and
    Dear ness of Coal', P.P., 1873, X, 7399, p.292.

45. C.G., 20/10/82.

46. C.G., 25/10/89.

47. 'Report of Select Committee on Scarcity', P.P., 1873,
    X, 7454, p.294.

48. C.G., 6/9/78.

49. C.G., 23/5/84.

50. C.G., 1/2/84.

51. C.G., 31/8/88.

52. M.& S.T., 23/8/89.

53. C.G., 19/7/89.

54. C.G., 23/11/88.

55. Diary of Joseph Knowles, p. 162.

56. B.C., 19/8/93.

57. E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Capitalism',
    Past and Present, 38, 1967.

58. T. Lummis, 'Luck: Longshoremen, Smacksmen and Drifter-
    men', in P. Thompson et al., Living the Fishing, 1983,
    p.197.

59. Mine Inspector's Report, P.P., 1857 - 58, [2433],
    XXXII, I, p.161.

60. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.173.
61. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.172.
62. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.175.
63. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>, 1859, [2551 - I Sess.2], XII, p.441.
64. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>, 1864, [3252, 3352], XXIV, Pt.I, p.363.
65. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>, 1900, [cd 134], XIV, p.633.
66. <u>Ibid.</u>.
67. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>, 1874, [c 1056], XIII, p.567.
68. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>, 1896, [c 8074], XXII, p.406.
69. Mine Inspector's Report, <u>P.P.</u>, 1889, [c 5779], XXIV, p.184.
70. <u>Royal Commission on Mines, Volume IV</u>, 1909, Cd 4667, XXXIV, 52387 - 52391, p.439.
71. See, for example, P. Joyce, 'Introduction', in P. Joyce, ed., <u>The Historical Meanings of Work</u>, 1987.
72. <u>B.C.</u>, 20/7/67.
73. <u>B.C.</u>, 23/2/67.
74. <u>M.& S.T.</u>, 21/2/90.
75. G. Deacon, <u>Popular Song and Social History. A Study of Miners of the North East</u>, Ph.D. thesis, Essex, 1987.
76. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.135.
77. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.135.
78. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.133.
79. <u>The Diary of Joseph Knowles</u>, p.142.
80. A.E. Green, 'Only Kidding: Joking Among Coal-Miners', in A.E. Green and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds, <u>Language, Culture and Tradition</u>, 1981, pp.47 - 48.
81. J. Bullock, <u>Them and Us</u>, 1972, p.42, quoted in A.E. Green, <u>op. cit.</u>, p.57.
82. A.E. Green, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp.57 - 58.
83. <u>Ibid.</u>, p.54.

84. _Ibid._, p.62.

85. _B.C._, 2/5/91.

86. _B.C._, 28/5/87.

87. See for instance the 1860 Mines Act. Under this legislation, colliery managers became responsible for the supervision and control of a colliery. Under the 1872 Coal Mines Regulation Act, coal owners could appoint only certificated managers. See R. Church, _op. cit._, pp.416 - 420.

88. Mine Inspector's Report, _P.P._, 1871, [c 456], XIV, p.880.

89. Mine Inspector's Report, _P.P._, 1872, [c 656], XVI, p.409.

90. Mine Inspector's Report, _P.P._, 1883, [c 3621], XIX, p.649.

91. J. Goldthorpe, 'Technical Organization as a Factor in Supervisor - Worker Conflict: Some Preliminary Observations on a Study Made in the Mining Industry', _The British Journal of Sociology_, X, 1959, p.214.

92. _Ibid._, p.216.

93. C. Sigal, _Weekend in Dinlock_, 1960, p.172.

94. 'Report of the Select Committee on Scarcity', _P.P._, 1873, X, 7371, p.291.

95. _Ibid._, 7372, p.291.

96. Ministry of Labour Report, 1925 - 26, _Inquiry into Apprenticeship and Training, III, Mining and Quarrying_, p.5.

97. _N.C.B. 524_. Of signatories recorded in the first 100 pages of the Mitchell Main Colliery underground signing-on book, who signed on during 1881, 164 were hewers.

98. Reprinted in _B.C._, 7/6/73.

99. _B.C._, 8/12/77.

100. _N.C.B. 524_.

101. The following Census Enumerators' Returns were consulted:

1871: Lundhill, Darfield e[numeration] d[istrict] 4;
Low Valley, Darfield e.d.s 1 & 5; Wombwell Main,
Darfield e.d.5.

1881: Lundhill, Darfield e.d.7; Low Valley, Darfield
e.d.2; Wombwell Main, Darfield e.d.6.

1891: Lundhill, Darfield e.d.10; Low Valley, Darfield
e.d.3; Wombwell Main, Darfield e.d.9.

102. N.C.B. 524. Of 229 family groups - identified as such
by the fact that the individuals concerned shared the
same surname and signed on consecutively in the sign-
ing on book - 173 groups comprised hewers and
trammers.

103. N.C.B. 524, These job changers were identified from
data collected relating only to residents of Mitchell
Terrace. The sample comprised all Mitchell Terrace
residents whose names appeared in the first 150 pages
of the signing-on book.

104. N.C.B. 1779, 1897 Wombwell Main Parkgate Seam Price
List; N.C.B. 1773, 1901 Mitchell Main Parkgate Seam
Price List.

105. M.& S.T., 21/6/95. At a dispute at Lundhill colliery,
only underground employees who worked in the Swallow
Wood seam were involved in the industrial action.

106. M.& S.T., 15/11/89.

107. E. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men, 1964, p.188.

108. B[arnsley] T[imes], 16/10/58.

109. J. Evison, op. cit., p.223.

110. M.& S.T., 3/1/90.

111. The following Census Enumerators' Returns were con-
sidered:

1871: Darfield, Darfield e.d.1; Lundhill, Darfield
e.d.4; Wombwell Main, Darfield e.d.5.

1881: Darfield, Darfield e.d.s 1,2 & 5; Wombwell
Main, Darfield e.d.6.

1891: Darfield, Darfield e.d.s 2,3 & 8; Lundhill,
Darfield e.d.10; Wombwell Main, part of Darfield

e.d.9.

112. Census data examined as above.

113. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 are compiled from figures based
    upon a 25 per cent sample of marriage records from
    Darfield parish church, 1850 -1885 and a 50 per cent
    sample of Wombwell parish church marriage returns,
    1864 - 1888. To give an equal weighting to both
    parishes, one-half of the original Wombwell sample
    was used, making a total of 665 marriages considered.
    Throughout the analysis, individuals designated
    simply as 'labourers' have not been considered as
    colliery workers, although it is likely that a
    number of them would have been employed in the coal-
    mining industry. 52 grooms in the Darfield marriage
    sample and 11 grooms in the Wombwell sub-sample were
    recorded as 'labourers' only.

    The figures from which Table 4.6 was constructed are
    as follows:

    Number of grooms who were employed below ground: 306.5
    -of whose fathers employed as: a) surface workers, 8
                                   b) u'ground wkers, 145.5
    -of whose father-in-laws employed as:
                                   a) surf.wkers,9.5
                                   b) u'grnd wkers, 118.5

    Number of grooms' fathers who worked underground: 157
    - of whose sons worked as: a) surface workers, 2.5
                               b) u'ground workers,145.5

114. The figures from which Table 4.7 were constructed are
    as follows:
    Number of grooms who were employed as surf.wkers, 36.5
    - of whose fathers worked as: a) surface wkers, 8
                                  b) u'grnd wkers, 2.5
    - of whose father-in-laws wked as: a) surf.wkers, 3.5
                                       b) u'grnd wkers, 8

Number of grooms' fathers who worked above ground: 26.5
- of whose sons worked as: a) surface workers, 8
b) u'ground wkers, 9

115. See <u>N.C.B. 525</u>.

116. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. Nine of the 176 signatories in the Mitchell Main Colliery surface workers' signing-on book who signed on during 1888 had appeared at least five years earlier in the colliery's signing-on book for its boy workers, (<u>N.C.B. 602</u>).

117. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. Richard Slater of Blythe Street, Wombwell signed-on as a pick carrier on 10/4/88. On 31/10/88, Slater is recorded as a screener.

118. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. Of 31 screeners who signed on in 1888, seventeen were aged eighteen years or under, and eight were over 40 years old.

119. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. Thomas Cook of Low Valley signed on as a screener on 2/2/88. He was recorded as a shunter on 5/11/88. Harry Stenton of Wombwell was registered as a screener on 2/2/88. On 31/10/88 his occupation was recorded as a grinder.

120. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. During 1888, the signing-on book records two grinders, Tom Thorpe, aged eighteen, (signatory, 2/2/88), and E. Stenton, seventeen years, (signatory, 2/2/88). Both were recorded as enginemen on 1/11/88.

121. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>.

122. <u>Ibid.</u>.

123. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. Twenty-six cokeworkers signed on during 1888. Nine of these workers were related to at least one other employee at the cokeovens. At the beginning of 1890, 25 cokeworkers were employed at Mitchell Main, (<u>M.& S.T.</u>, 3/10/90).

124. <u>N.C.B. 525</u>. Eighteen of 21 cokemen whose ages were identified, were aged between twenty and 40 years.

125. <u>M.& S.T.</u>, 21/6/89.

126. <u>M.& S.T.</u>, 20/7/89.

127. <u>M.& S.T.</u>, 3/10/90.

128. C.G., 3/6/81.

129. Evison, op.cit., p.134.

130. C.G., 6/8/97.

131. N.C.B. 608. Mitchell Main Colliery Co. Ltd, Balance
     Sheets.

Half yearly profits

	Coal A/c	Coke A/c
30/6/85	£864.19s.5d.	£3360.13s.8d.
30/6/87	£1527.14s.6d.	£2014.16s.4d.
30/6/88	£875.0s.3d.	£1859.0s.6d.
31/12/88	£1992.1s.2d.	£2067.11s.5d.

N.C.B. 608. Darfield Main Balance Sheets.

Half yearly profits

	Coal A/c	Coke A/c
30/6/96	£1609.6s.7d.(loss)	£711.3s.8d.
31/12/96	£515.15s.7d.	£1001.19s.5d.
31/12/97	£584.14s.11d.	£720.3s.0d.

132. M.& S.T., 3/10/90.

133. M.& S.T., 29/7/05.

134. N.C.B. 961/13/72.

135. Church, op.cit., pp.212 -213.

136. N.C.B. 608. A 50 per cent sample of six-monthly
     balance sheets was taken, all ending 31 December, for
     the period 1890 - 99. The value of the coal sent
     to the coke ovens was compared to that of the coke
     produced. On average, a 71.3 per cent increase was
     discerned.

137. List of Mines in the United Kingdom of Great Britain,
     Ireland and the Isle of Man, 1905, p.211.

138. N.C.B. 566, Mitchell Main Cost Book. This book con-
     tains details of the weekly wage bill of the company.
     It distinguishes between the wages of surface workers
     and underground employees. The first wage bill of
     every month recorded between 4/3/08 and 3/2/09 inclu-
     sive has been used in this calculation. The average

total weekly wage bill for both underground workers
and surface employees was calculated during this
period. The average wage bill of surface workers was
£153.01, constituting 11.6 per cent of the total wage
bill. The average wage bill of underground workers was
£1166.33, which made up 88.4 per cent of the total
weekly wage bill.

139. The following calculation is based upon the assumption
that, in the period 1908 - 09, the ratio of under-
ground to surface workers at Mitchell Main Colliery
remained the same as in 1905.

If 240 surface workers received 11.6 per cent of
total weekly wage bill,[See fn.138], then 1 surface
worker received:

$$11.6 \times \frac{1}{240} = 0.0483 = S$$

If 878 underground workers received 88.4 per cent of
total weekly wage bill, then 1 underground worker
received:

$$88.4 \times \frac{1}{878} = 0.101 = U$$

If $U = 100\%$, then $S = \frac{0.0483}{0.101} \times 100 = 47.8\%$

Thus, the 'average' surface worker received 47.8 per
cent of the wage of the 'average' underground worker.

140. B.C., 17/8/01.

141. C.G., 12/11/86.

142. N.C.B. 961/12/67, Cortonwood Collieries Co. Ltd and
Wombwell Main Co. Ltd, Case for the Opinion of Coun-
sel, 12/11/97.

143. C.G., 5/12/79.

144. C.G., 1/8/79.

145. B.C., 29/1/81.

146. 'Report of Select Committee on Scarcity', P.P., 1873, X, 7443 - 7444, p.294.

147. See for example B.C., 9/6/77. Under the headline 'A Demonstration of Miners at Wombwell', an account followed of a meeting held "for the purpose of [showing] the benefits to be gained from unionism."

148. Evison, op.cit., pp.13, 40 and 271.

149. M.& S.T., 6/12/89.

150. B.C., 19/2/81.

151. B.C., 19/3/81.

152. B.C., 30/5/85.

153. See for example F. Machin, The Yorkshire Miners, 1958, and C. Baylies, The History of the Yorkshire Miners, 1993, especially p.94 and footnote 116. Baylies states that the Yorkshire Miners' Association, by 1889, represented "the great majority of all underground workers in the county." The source of her figures, though, P.Spaven, Accommodating the Miners, (Warwick University, Ph.D., 1978, p.129), reveals the precarious levels of union membership at that time.

Whilst in 1889, 60.8 per cent of Yorkshire miners were members of the Y.M.A., a year earlier, in 1888, the proportion of members was only 18.1 per cent.

154. B.C., 26/2/81.

155. M.& S.T., 24/10/90.

156. B.C., 1/11/90.

157. Mine Inspector's Report, P.P., 1857 - 58, [2433], XXXII, I, p.168.

158. B.C., 14/1/05.

159. M.& S.T., 21/10/05.

160. E. Rymer, 'The Martyrdom of the Mine', 1898, reprinted in History Workshop Journal, 2, 1976, p.23.

161. See, for instance, M.& S.T., 19/7/89, (Houghton Main); M.& S.T., 6/9/95, (Lundhill); M.& S.T., 30/8/89, (Mitchell Main); and M.& S.T., 6/9/95, (Wombwell

Main).

162. <u>B.C.</u>, 7/12/67, (Darfield Main).

163. <u>B.C.</u>, 8/10/87. (Wombwell Main).

164. <u>B.C.</u>, 15/6/01.

165. <u>M.& S.T.</u>, 31/5/95.

166. <u>B.C.</u>, 13/7/67.

167. <u>M.& S.T.</u>, 18/7/90.

168. <u>Ibid.</u>.

169. <u>B.C.</u>, 9/6/77. These words featured on the banner of the Lundhill Colliery's union lodge.

170. J. Gorman, <u>Banner Bright: An Illustrated History of Trade Union Banners, (Second Edition)</u>, 1986, p.43.

Chapter Five

Women in the Nineteenth Century South Yorkshire

Coalmining Settlements of the Darfield and Wombwell

District

The current chapter begins by examining the nature of women's presence in mining settlements prior to the 1842 Mines Act, which appeared to restrict severely women's opportunities of finding paid employment in mining settlements. This survey is based upon evidence gathered from the First Report of the Children's Commission, which investigated the conditions of children and women working in mines in 1842. The gender-orientated analysis of this Royal Commission's findings by Jane Mark-Lawson and Anne Witz is also examined and used to form the back-bone of the first part of the chapter. The second aspect of the chapter dwells particularly upon the importance attached to women's positions in the families of coalminers, with reference especially to their roles as 'reproducers' of labour.

Having examined the evidence suggesting the important position of women within the homes of miners, the third part of the chapter seeks to assess critically the existing historiography relating to women in mining settlements. Particular attention is paid to the severe problems the historian of women in such areas encounters with the extant

source material before an attempt is made to discern how typical was the 'model miner's wife' in the settlements here under study.

The fourth section of the chapter considers the 'public' life of the women in the mining settlements, though due regard is paid to the valid assertion of one women's historian that the artificial divide made by the social observer between the public and the private sphere has little meaning to the individual for whom incidents occurring in the one domain may well affect behaviour in the other.[1] Despite the fact that the actors themselves were unlikely to perceive any differences between the public and private spheres, for the observer these divisions are useful for they allow an understanding to be attempted of how these actors were regarded by other members of their contemporary society. Specifically in this section, an attempt is made to investigate how the women of the mining settlements examined interacted amongst themselves and their menfolk outside the immediate home, and on what occasions, and how, the wives of miners were perceived as such by other members of society.

1. Women and the Mines Act, 1842.

Although no collieries of any significance were located in the settlements of Darfield and Wombwell by 1842, when the Royal Commission on Children's Employment compiled its

findings relating to women's employment in the mining industry, nevertheless a study of the Report is essential in any attempt to assess contemporary perceptions of women's presence in the mining settlements of the second half of the nineteenth century. It must be borne in mind that the later population of the mining settlements at places such as Snape Hill, Low Valley, Lundhill and Wombwell Main was characterised by large-scale in-migration, much of this movement of people emanating from coalfield areas, such as other parts of the West Riding and the Black Country, where coal extraction had a long history and women's employment in the industry was considered up until the 1842 Report as normal. Thus, many of the later migrants into the Wombwell and Darfield areas of the South Yorkshire coalfield, if they had not themselves known what it was like to have worked as a female in a pit, knew female contemporaries who had worked underground, or at least might have been familiar with the experiences of older female relatives who had been employed in collieries. An examination of evidence from the 1842 Report and a survey of the historiographical literature relating to its findings, it is hoped, will help reveal how the presence of women in the later nineteenth century coalmining settlements was considered and what was expected of them.

According to Angela John, in her work <u>By the Sweat of</u> <u>their Brow</u>, "1842 appears to have been something of a watershed for [mining work] for Yorkshire females resulting in a virtual taboo on all their colliery employment. By 1890, only two females were recorded as working at Yorkshire pits."[2] In 1842, the Children's Employment Commissioner for the southern part of the West Riding reported that: "In many of the collieries in this district, so far as relates to the underground employment, there is no distinction of sex, but the labour is distributed indifferently among both sexes, excepting that it is relatively rare for the women to hew..."[3]

In most instances, where female employment did occur underground, it was generally confined to haulage duties. J.C.Symons, in his report on the Yorkshire mines, related cases of "oppressively hard work performed by young females ... near Barnsley."[4] He cited the evidence of three young women, Elizabeth Day and two sisters, Ann and Elizabeth Eggley, aged 18 and 16 respectively: "The work of Elizabeth Day was rendered more severe by her having to hurry part of the way up hill with loaded corves ... The Eggleys, however, were doing the ordinary work of hurriers in their colliery."[5] The "ordinary work" of the Eggleys, Ann's own testimony revealed, consisted of working regularly from 4.30 a.m. until 4 p.m.: "The work is far too hard for me: the sweat runs off me all over sometimes. I am very tired

at night. Sometimes, when we go home ... we fall asleep in the chair ... I began to hurry when I was seven and I have been hurrying ever since."[6] Not everywhere, however, Symons revealed, was colliery work for women so demanding: "In the Silkstone pits belonging to Mr Clarke, where great numbers of girls regularly work, the work is less arduous."[7]

The remarks of Symons relating to the pace of female work in the collieries touched upon the structure of employment underground. Again referring to the Silkstone pits of the Clarke family, the largest employers of females in the South Yorkshire coalfield, Symons stated that the females' "degree of toil will materially depend on the disposition of their individual masters."[8] Female workers in the collieries were not, in the main, employed directly by the colliery owners, but by the hewers themselves, who received from the owners a lump sum for the coal their individual teams won. The individual hewer enjoyed sufficient autonomy at the coal face to hire and supervise his labouring team as he saw fit.

Under such a system of working, the family labour force invariably prevailed, for then the whole of the lump sum paid to the hewer was guaranteed to remain in his household. Jane Mark-Lawson and Anne Witz identify a second reason why the hewer tended to adopt the family system of labour:

"his already given position of authority in the household mutually reinforced his position of authority in the workplace. As one witness explained to the sub-commissioner: 'I think the main reason why girls are employed is because the colliers like to have the children more under their command and bring their own girls in preference to other people's boys.'"[9]

Indeed, the control exerted by the father in the workplace was such that in some instances, even if a daughter were employed elsewhere in the pit outside his own immediate supervision, remuneration for her work would flow directly to him rather than the labourer herself. Such was the case, for instance, of a Barnsley seventeen year old, Elizabeth Day, who told the commissioner: "I am not paid wages myself; the man who employs me pays my father, but I don't know how much it is."[10]

Under this system of working in the collieries, the hewer not only had control over decisions such as who was to work under him and how wages were to be distributed amongst his 'team', but also he was able to dictate the rhythm of work undertaken. Consequently, the worship of St. Monday and even St. Tuesday was a regular occurrence with work-rates increasing as pay-day approached. These work-patterns were identified in the commissioners' reports:

"The Monday after the pay is always a holiday ... and I am informed by proprietors that many of them will not settle steadily to work before the middle of the week following the pay. In this manner, the drawers are kept half employed for two or three days at the beginning of the reckoning and

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towards the end of it they are worked past their strength to make up for lost time."[11]

As J.C.Symons complained of the Yorkshire area:

"Colliers will ... frequently work longer hours at the end of the week, or end of fortnight, where wages are paid fortnightly (as is very common) to make up for lost time at the beginning of the week or fortnight. This irregularity of labour seriously affects the welfare of all who participate in it."[12]

Mark-Lawson and Witz claim that "The family system of labour created a workforce managed on the basis of patriarchal control and endowed the principal male worker with certain benefits. It gave him the status of an independent contractor and allowed men *direct* control over women and children's labour within the labour process..."[13] Whilst the evidence examined certainly suggests that males did enjoy control within the workplace over womenfolk, the claim of Mark-Lawson and Witz that this position of authority was based upon a system of patriarchy must not go unchallenged. Neither, too, must go unremarked their contention that "male hewers did *not* support attempts either by individual employers at local level or by the state at national level, to remove female labour from the mines."[14]

The conclusions of Mark-Lawson and Witz seem to be based upon a most selective reading of the Report of the Children's Employment Commission. Many instances can be

reported from the findings of the commissioners that reflect coalminers' unease with the continued working of females in mines. Returning to the evidence of the Eggley family in Yorkshire, where the accounts of two sisters of their experiences as hurriers has already been mentioned, the commissioner, J.C.Symons, explicitly referred also to their father's evidence, "in which he expresses his dislike to such employment for his daughters, but that 10s. a week was his inducement."[15] Employers themselves appeared aware of the financial constraints of their workforce which prompted men to employ their wives and daughters. John Clarkson Sutcliffe, general agent for Gawber colliery, stated that, "As regards the working of girls in pits, of whom we have eleven, I should wish to see it abandoned altogether, but I am aware that some parents would suffer severely."[16] Similarly, R.C.Clarke, the Silkstone coal master, commented that, "I don't think it is suitable for girls to work in pits, but I don't know how parents can support them without."[17]

The reservations about the employment of girls and women in the collieries held by miners themselves were based principally upon concerns relating to the females' morals. John Cawthra, a 48 year old collier from Silkstone confessed to J.C.Symons that he thought it was "not a good system bringing girls into pits: they get bold. It tends to make girls have bastards very much in some pits." To

support his contention Cawthra noted, perhaps spitefully, of a neighbouring settlement: " I know for instance at Flockton it leads to immoral conduct."[18]   Perhaps the most conclusive piece of evidence, however, countering the suggestion of Mark-Lawson and Witz that hewers did not wish to remove female labour from the mines is the report of the Yorkshire commissioner, Symons, who wrote that:

"At a meeting of above 350 working colliers from the surrounding district held in the Court House, Barnsley, 25th March 1841, before the Sub-Commissioner, it was resolved:...That the employment of girls in pits is highly injurious to their morals, that it is not proper work for females and that it is a scandalous practice. (Carried with five dissentients only)."[19]

From the evidence contained within the 1842 Royal Commission on Children's Employment, clearly the employment of females in mines was not prompted by the patriarchal control of their husbands and fathers but mainly by the need for additional income into the household.

Whilst many male employees at collieries were opposed to sharing their workplaces with females, undoubtedly their feelings were little considered in the decision-making process which resulted in the 1842 mines legislation. It was, in part, the sensibilities of 'respectable' Victorian society that determined the need for legislation prohibiting the underground employment of women and children. As Ivy Pinchbeck explained:

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"Almost more than by their heavy labour, Victorian England was shocked by accounts of the naked state of some workers, although the prejudicial influence of this was probably far less - among people accustomed to housing conditions in which any degree of privacy was almost unknown - than the Commissioners and their readers imagined. But even so...enough had been proved to show the necessity for legislative interference."[20]

It was the evidence submitted to the Royal Commission by individuals such as 'A respectable inhabitant of Silkstone, a female aged 60 years', that prompted a national outcry:

"I have been a resident of Silkstone for a number of years. I consider it a scandal for girls to work in pits. Till they are 12 or 14 years old they may work there very well but after that it is an abomination. I am credibly informed that in some pits scenes pass which are as bad as in any house of ill-fame."[21]

The 'unnaturalness' of women's work underground was alluded to in the accounts of two South Yorkshire surgeons. Dr. Edwin Ellis of Silkstone stated that women:

"will work in some occasions up to the period of confinement. One woman I know of has had three or four children within an hour of her leaving her work in the pit; and there are many instances of their working up to seven or eight months of pregnancy."[22]

Dr. Michael Sadler of Barnsley spoke vehemently against the continued employment of women in mines: "I strongly disapprove of females being in the pits; the female character is totally destroyed by it; their habits and

feelings are altogether different; they can neither discharge the duties of women nor mothers."[23]

The potentially highly influential role of women in the home upon the male colliery labour force was also emphasised by Dr. Sadler, who noted that: "I see the greatest differences in the homes of those colliers whose wives do not go into the pits in cleanliness and good management."[24] It was the prospect of producing a more stable, regular workforce through the replacement of the family system of labour with one in which males worked in the pits for a 'family wage' which undoubtedly encouraged the most influential grouping to support the demand for legislation to prevent women from working underground: the coal owners. The difficulties of producing a colliery work force well versed in the rhythms of industrial time were not lost on the coal owners and their representatives. As one witness told the Royal Commission on Children's Employment: "It would be a capital thing to make men regular in their hours of work; but if we were to take a man and hang him every now and then it would not make them regular."[25]

The need for a more disciplined colliery work force rose as the industry became increasingly capitalised: pits became deeper as pumping technology improved and the working areas of pits consequently were increased, leading to greater emphasis being placed upon underground haulage,

a task in which large numbers of females were employed. As Mark-Lawson and Witz have commented, "Together with much higher capital investment, these changes also brought a sub-division of the labour force and increasingly hierarchical structures of management." Quoting from the work of Campbell and Reid, they conclude that the need was no longer for "an independent come-and-go-as-you-please contractor but for a wage hand."[26] It seems. then, that the considerable support given to the campaign for the removal of women underground workers from the collieries by coal owners was not principally based upon the moral outrage felt by many 'respectable' Victorians outside the mining industry but upon the desire to develop a disciplined work force.

Although the Mines Act of 1842 only prohibited women from working underground, in Yorkshire and many other mining areas, with the notable exception of Lancashire, effectively women's employment at the pit bank also ceased at this date.[27] The reasons for this at first do not seem obvious since few complaints appear in the report of the Royal Commission by mine workers relating to women's surface work. Indeed, the commissioner in South Staffordshire, James Mitchell, spoke warmly of the female surface workers and their jobs:

"Many girls are employed under the designation of bankswomen. They stand on the bank near the mouth of the shaft, and when a skip comes up ... they unhook it and push

it forward and then empty out the coals ... There are some persons who object to girls being employed in outdoor and what is supposed to be laborious employment ... [but] they possess a physical vigour far surpassing that of the young women brought up in the close air of great towns. The girls are generally singing at their work and always appear smiling and cheerful."[28]

The reason for the widespread withdrawal of women workers from all aspects of the mining industry following the 1842 legislation reflected the changed employment structure within the industry. 'Family labour' had been replaced by the 'family wage'. In order to recompense mining families for the reduction in employment opportunities for some family members, coal owners paid the price for their enhanced control in the work place by increasing the wages of their work force, prompted in part by the rapid spread of unionisation.[29]

It seems that the exclusion of women from the mining industry soon became an accepted fact. The actions of the Lund Hill Relief Fund, which was set up to assist the families of the 189 men killed in a disaster at the colliery in 1857, demonstrated the attitudes 'respectable' society held relating to women's economic status. At no time, it seems, was any pressure placed upon the widows to accept work, but within six weeks of the explosion the Lund Hill Relief Fund resolved to allow "£5 to each widow on her marrying again respectably".[30]   In 1870, at a meeting of the Lund Hill Relief Fund, at which its imminent closure

was discussed, one member declared that the remaining widows dependent upon the organisation's funds "must be looking out for husbands."[31] Manifestly, since the disaster, this had been the tacit strategy of the middle class dominated Relief Fund.

However, that miners' wives should be confined to the home appeared to be a belief that was widely held among the miners themselves by the closing decade of the nineteenth century. In November 1891, an official of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, Mr Parrott, addressed a meeting of miners and their families, held at Wombwell Main, stating that: "He should like to impress upon wives to keep their homes nice and clean." He urged them to "Make their homes so that their husbands will feel pleasure in coming home to them when they had done their day's work."[32]

It seems then that the passing of the 1842 Mines Act represented a significant water-shed in the relations between the miners and the women of the mining settlements. Prior to the implementation of the Act, male workers reluctantly, contrary to the conclusions of the recent work of Mark-Lawson and Witz, allowed female members of their family to work under their authority in the mine. From the Mining Commissioners' reports it seems that most of these female mineworkers were young and unmarried, though the testimony of Dr Edwin Ellis of Silkstone somewhat contradicts such findings. He commented that: "I have had

24 or 25 years professional experience among colliers ...
The women work in the pit after marriage not unfrequently
.."[33]   Once the 1842 Act became enforced, the control of
the male hewer over his female family members in the work
place was removed. Within the domestic sphere, however, it
has been argued, male control over the female persisted.
By showing that the miners subsequently successfully both
excluded women from their work place and also pursued the
payment of a family wage, Mark-Lawson and Witz implicitly
suggest that an intensification of what they described as
'patriarchal control' *did* occur in the domestic sphere.[34]
The next section of the chapter seeks to challenge this
assertion.

2. Women's reproduction of labour in the home.

"The colliery produced coal as much by the pounding of the
pit wife's 'poss' as by the nicking of the pitman's
pick,"[35] claims Robert Colls in his study of nineteenth
century life on the North East coalfield. This appears to
be true in most coalmining areas, particularly of women who
had not only husbands but sons still at home working in the
coal industry. The presence of such individuals in the
household, in addition to the traditionally large number of
offspring produced by mining families, inevitably made the
work of the principal woman in mining homes extremely
demanding. The tendency of mining families to be larger
than most is explored initially in this section, with the

use of census enumerators' books for the Darfield and Wombwell districts, before attention is turned to the incidence of working miners accommodated within the homes headed by men employed in the mining industry.

Much has been written about the large size of coalmining families. Referring to miners in the nineteenth century, Arthur Radford described them as a "notoriously prolific section of the population"[36]. In his recent study, which seeks to explain the high rate of fertility in nineteenth century mining families, Michael Haines concludes that:

"coalmining involved a particular combination of income/earnings life cycle, related female labour force participation and child costs which favoured higher fertility and earlier and more extensive marriage...higher morbidity and debility among [miners'] children also favoured earlier marriage and more births, both to insure target family size and to help provide for old age and infirmity among the parents."[37]

The fertility rates of mining families in the nineteenth century South Yorkshire coalfield, it seems, were little different in character from the rates found among mining folk elsewhere. In a contemporary account of South Yorkshire's mining districts, written for the Manchester Guardian in 1873, it was noted that: "As a rule, colliers, like curates, have large families."[38] An examination of the enumerators' census records for the Wombwell and

Darfield area of the South Yorkshire coalfield for the years 1861, 1871 and 1881 supports this contemporary view.

Problems exist with the use of census data in the study of family sizes, since, clearly, enumerators were only able to record offspring who lived in the same household as their parents. A study of completed family size using the census enumerators' books evidently is impracticable: for each household surveyed it is impossible to ascertain whether the resident couple were to have more children, or whether some of their offspring had already left the home, or had been born and died between two census enumerations. Although an examination of the census is unable to reveal the completed size of families, nevertheless, its information relating to the number of children co-resident with their parents at one point in time does offer an indicator of the work required to maintain a family. By breaking down the average number of children present both in the homes of those occupied in the coalmining industry and those who were not engaged in mining by age group, attempts can also be made to assess the mechanics of family construction. The findings extrapolated from 1673 households examined in census records for Wombwell and Darfield in the census years 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891 are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

The Average Number of Children in the Households of Mining and Non-Mining Families, Categorised by the Age of the Mother, 1861 - 1891[39]

Age of Mother

	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
1861						
Mining	1.81	2.69	3.86	4.23	4.35	4.38
Non - Mining	1.33	2.28	3.86	3.39	3.45	2.90
1871						
Mining	1.72	2.69	3.75	4.50	4.04	3.08
Non - Mining	1.20	2.12	3.57	3.72	3.74	3.52
1881						
Mining	1.63	3.03	3.55	4.71	4.58	4.13
Non - Mining	1.77	2.71	3.26	4.50	4.14	3.08
1891						
Mining	1.47	2.67	3.71	4.55	4.06	3.91
Non - Mining	1.43	2.10	3.75	4.35	3.92	3.00

As can be seen from the Table 5.1, in almost every mother's age group, the number of children born to women whose husbands were engaged in the coalmining industry exceeded the number born to those whose husbands were not coalmining employees. It seems that not only did wives of miners tend to have more children than those of women married to men engaged in other industries, but they had

them at a younger age. Between 1861 and 1891, though, a slight decline in family size can be discerned. In 1891, for example, mothers aged between twenty and 24 years, whose partners were engaged in the mining industry, had nineteen per cent fewer children than their equivalents 30 years earlier.

Once child-rearing began, however, as the figures displayed in Table 5.1 make clear, the wives of those men employed in the coalmining industry had much to occupy them outside the formal economic sphere. Raising children and maintaining the household's labour force was an arduous job.

By examining how many coalmining employees the wives of miners had to reproduce for the labour force daily and the obstacles placed in the way of these women, an attempt will now be made to assess the nature of female labour within the households of mining settlements.

From a study of the census records for the coalmining settlements of Wombwell Main, Low Valley and Snape Hill the extent to which co-resident male kin worked in the mining industry can be gleaned.

Although, as can be seen from the figures, the percentage of households with co-resident occupied kinsmen at no stage much exceeds 40 per cent of homes headed by a mining employee, it is clear that the proportion of such households rose steadily. Throughout the period, as the

absolute figures demonstrate, the majority of these kinsmen were, like the household heads, occupied in the mining industry. The increasing likelihood of miners accommodating within their homes occupied male relatives was a consequence of the changing life-cycle stages of the district's residents. Many of the households in 1861 comprised young families, in which the children were not yet of working age. By 1881, especially in the settlement of Wombwell Main, the population had matured and, thus , a larger percentage of homes accommodated working sons.

Table 5.2

Households with heads and other co-resident kinsmen

occupied in the coal industry in Low Valley, Snape Hill

and Wombwell Main

Date	H'hlds headed by miners	Miners' h'hlds with co-res occu kinsmen	No.co-res occu kinsmen	No co-res kinsmen in mining
1861	124	21 (16.9%)	41	41
1871	194	53 (27.3%)	75	72
1881	250	84 (33.6%)	142	113
1891	438	178 (40.6%)	320	296

By 1881, 84 households in the settlements surveyed included a total of 113 men occupied in the coal industry *in addition* to the household head; 32 of these households contained three or more kinsmen working in the coal

industry. The task of servicing the requirements of these men upon their return from work was an arduous one, since no pit-head baths were constructed until the early years of the twentieth century at any of the immediately surrounding collieries.

Sanitary conditions in many mining families' homes were often poor, making more difficult still the reproduction of labour that was expected of the females through the provision of meals, clean clothes, baths and, generally, a comfortable home. As occurred in many mining settlements, those at Low Valley, Snape Hill, and Wombwell were marked by rapid housing development far outstripping the capacity of the available water supply and sewage amenities.

In 1877, for instance, a letter was sent by a prominent resident of Darfield, Joseph Robinson, to the President of the Local Government Board urging him to award Darfield local government district status, which, Robinson believed, would enable Darfield and its burgeoning neighbouring settlements, Low Valley and Snape Hill to provide itself with a more adequate local infrastructure. He wrote that:

"The present population of Darfield is estimated at upwards of 2000 and increasing rapidly. At the present time there are in the course of erection and preparation nearly 100 houses, for a great proportion of which both water and sewerage will have to be provided ... a local authority, knowing the wants of the district will be able to supply

the inhabitants with water which they have at command in the township at considerable cost."[40]

The application was rejected. Four months later, the Medical Officer of Health for the district, Dr. Sadler, according to a newspaper report, "voiced his concern at the quality of the water in Low Valley and Snape Hill ... Darfield village had a slight problem with the supply of water, but he felt problems at Low Valley and Snape Hill were more severe."[41]

Conditions appeared to be little better in the township of Wombwell, whence a sequence of letters written by the prominent campaigning miner Edward Rymer were sent to, and published by, the Barnsley Chronicle supporting the implementation of a water scheme. Rymer wrote that:

"Already in some parts of the locality the people are entirely depending on a water supply so inadequate that at any moment an epidemic might break out ... It is everywhere admitted that miners above all classes require an abundant supply of water on account of the nature of their work, while common sense tells us that water needed for all domestic purposes ought to be of the purest description."[42]

In a subsequent letter, written in June 1881, Rymer stated that the water situation in Wombwell was so bad that many families were "forced to run up and down at night to steal or beg water in order that men and boys may be able to go to their work, some of the pumps and wells having been dry for months."[43] Evidently, the fetchers and carriers of this water were, in the main, women and girls. By 13 August

1881, the Barnsley Chronicle reported that, in Wombwell: "water had to be drawn from ditches and gutters, or drawn from the canal and filtered ... Some children were kept off school to collect water."[44] Indeed, such was the paucity of water in the district as a whole that, in at least one instance, legal action was taken when a Darfield man, John Tongue, was charged with assaulting a married woman, Annie Brown, after she had refused him permission to fetch water from a well on her premises.[45]

The provision of water to houses in the Wombwell and Darfield area did improve with the implementation of the Dearne Valley Water Scheme, although even by 1895 the inhabitants of Darfield, Low Valley and Snape Hill identified as "principal requirements ... better sanitary arrangements, the provision of a pure water supply and of a sewage system."[46] Clearly, then, the woman's job of washing and cleaning the returning miner and his clothes in readiness for another shift was made more arduous still by the problems associated with the supply of water.

Domestic difficulties relating to the attainment of acceptable standards of household and personal cleanliness were also caused by inadequate means of sewage and waste disposal in many mining districts. An open cesspool received the drainage of a large population at Low Valley, it was reported in 1868, and three years later an outbreak of typhoid fever in the settlement was accounted for "by

the drainage in the locality. In dry weather the smell was sickening and the inhabitants complained of it."[47] In a report to the Government's Medical Officer in 1886, the Wombwell inspector, Dr. Parsons noted that many "house drains were defective and frequently [were] in direct untrapped communication with the interior of houses. An improved form of ash closet is in large use; but offensive midden privies of the old type remain."[48]

Women's domestic work thus was made difficult by the district's poor infrastructure and also by the bad planning and maintenance of homes.

Domestic work was made still more onerous in coalmining areas by the emissions which resulted from industrial processes, such as coking that were often undertaken near to the mine itself. Coking plants were constructed on a large scale at mines in the Wombwell and Darfield district from the 1870s. In the 1881 census, sixteen men were enumerated either as cokemakers or cokeburners at Low Valley, most of whom worked at Darfield Main colliery.[49] By the early 1880s, almost one-quarter of the volume of all coal sold from neighbouring Mitchell Main colliery was being supplied to the company's own on-site coke ovens.[50] In 1897, it was reported that 90 coke ovens were in operation at Wombwell Main colliery.[51] The damaging effects caused upon the immediate environment by the operation of such plants was recognised as early as 1879 in a report for

the Government's Medical Officer, partly written by Dr. Ballard, who had visited Darfield Main, amongst other collieries, before submitting his findings. Dr. Ballard wrote that:

"'Coking', as commonly carried out, is a very great nuisance on account of the large volumes of black smoke which is, according to the character of the coal used, more or less charged with sulphuric acid. Issuing at a low level, the fume sweeps along with the wind close to the surface of the earth and produces a sooty and acid condition of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, which is distressing and suffocative to strangers, and the unwholesomeness of which, to persons habitually exposed to it, it would be an insult to common sense to question ... the obscuration of sunlight must be injurious; but, in addition, an habitual disregard of wholesome ablution is sure to grow up out of the despair generated by unsuccessful efforts to maintain even an approach to personal or domestic cleanliness under such circumstances."[52]

Similar problems to those associated with coke ovens were caused by the burning of spoil banks, created by the tipping of hot cinders or furnace ashes. Having visited "a row of fourteen cottages standing about forty yards from a heap on fire at Darfield Main Colliery", Dr. Ballard described how: "The smoke and fumes proceeding from a burning spoil bank are copious, very disagreeable, sulphurous and suffocating; and when the heap is near houses the nuisance is sometimes such as to render the houses quite uninhabitable, if the wind brings the smoke in that direction."[53]

These contemporary descriptions make it clear that the battle to keep a household and its inhabitants clean, or at least relatively so, was unceasing. Little documentary evidence is available to examine precisely how the management of the household was undertaken in such colliery districts as the South Yorkshire coalfield in the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly however, throughout the period of this study, the organisation of the household remained above all the task of women.[54] This appeared to remain the case even when the wife of a male household head was ill. In such cases, it was usual for daughters, or sisters to assume the mantle of *mater familias* for as long as was necessary. Joseph Knowles, a Hemingfield miner, recorded in his diary for January 7, 1886 one instance when his wife, with whom, it seems, he lived alone, had been confined to bed for several days: "Mrs's sister, Harriet, who has kindly been doing the work for us for nothing during the last five days went home tonight. I am sure that I am very much obligated to her." The assistance of Mr Knowles's sister-in-law was not, however, given at a time of intense working, for the following day's entry in his diary complained that, owing to lack of trade, the eight days of 1886 had been marked by three 'play days' and a Sunday.[55] Evidently, Joseph Knowles expected the home to be managed by a woman irrespective of his own domestic

capabilities and notwithstanding his opportunity to employ them.

It has been contended that the absence of male help in the home restricted the introduction of domestic technology into working class households: "Husbands did not appreciate the amount of work [their wives] actually performed: since men considered it natural for women to do housework, they did not see the need to replace their wives' physical efforts with machine power."[56] Although this statement was written of the households of nineteenth century Pittsburgh, nonetheless its claims are relevant to the present study. Pittsburgh's women, like those it seems of the nineteenth century South Yorkshire coalfield:

"lived in the nonindustrial world of the home while their husbands ... had industrial occupations and moved to an industrial rhythm ... For the wives ... home was a workplace whose activities revolved around the comings and goings of men ... Shiftwork determined all household activities ... Each man expected a hot dinner when he returned home."[57]

S.J.Kleinberg, in her study of Pittsburgh working class families in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, painted an evocative picture of women's domestic lives, heavily structured by a sequence of weekly tasks. The weekly rhythm identified by Kleinberg in the lives of Pittsburgh's nineteenth century working class women appeared to bear remarkable similarities to the domestic lives of those women sharing the homes of South Yorkshire

miners: Monday would be predominantly spent washing; Tuesday ironing; Wednesday cleaning the home; Thursday repairing the family's clothes; Friday baking; and Saturday shopping. Kleinberg offered a particularly vivid description of the task of working class women on wash day:

"They brought water in from the pump, heated it on ...the stove, emptied it into the washtub and scrubbed clothes as they bent over the 'back-breaking' washboard. They carried the soapy water outside , brought clean water in, heated it again and rinsed the clothes...Wash day completely disrupted the household routine. It took all day, since work clothes, flannels, whites and cotton prints all had to be laundered separately. Each had to be put through two sudsings and rinses, the whites blued and flannels accorded special care to keep them from shrinking and getting as hard as a board."[58]

The intensive nature of the miner's wife's work, particularly in households where a number of co-resident unmarried sons were also employed in the industry, often, it has been claimed, led to older daughters remaining in the home working alongside the mother undertaking the house work.[59] Indeed, an examination of the census enumerators' books for the Darfield and Wombwell districts for 1871 and 1881 appear to support this claim: in both censuses, it seems that over three-quarters of households headed by miners, which included an unmarried daughter over the age of thirteen, contained young women who were without employment, apart from domestic duties inside their own home.[60] An examination of marriage records for Darfield and

Wombwell suggests that it was usual for unmarried daughters of coalminers to remain at home and assist their mothers in household duties: over 80 per cent of brides married at Darfield parish church between 1852 and 1885, whose fathers were employed in the coal industry, had no recorded occupation at the time of their marriage; at Wombwell parish church, between 1867 and 1888, 97 per cent of brides in the same category had no recorded employment.[61]

This evidence, therefore, tends to support the theories of women's historians who advance a patriarchal explanation of social organisation in nineteenth century coalmining settlements. The immensity of domestic work was caused by a number of factors: the environmental conditions in which many of these mining settlements were developed; the inadequate sanitary infrastructure provided in such settlements; and the nature of the men's work itself. The existence of such conditions appeared to necessitate women working full-time within the home. Even as domestic technology improved, it has been argued, little effect was felt in the homes of the working classes since the menfolk saw little need to invest in new appliances, principally for two reasons: they had little idea of the onerous nature of women's domestic work, as Kleinberg has suggested; and they wished to keep their wives under their own control in the home, thus, as Mark-Lawson and Witz have explained, not threatening the job security or wages of men in the work

place.[62] The census data so far examined appears also to suggest that a rigorously patriarchal society existed within nineteenth century mining settlements. By encouraging older daughters to remain at home and assist their mothers in domestic work, the inter-generational transmission of gender roles in the mining settlements was effected. Thus, it seems, as Church has observed, that: "The miner's wife was virtually confined to the domestic arena."[63]

However, a more careful examination of the extant records of Darfield and Wombwell bring into question some of the accepted findings relating to women in nineteenth century coalmining settlements, particularly with regard to their employment and marital status.

3. Model Miners' Wives?

a. Women's employment

The marriage records examined in both Darfield and Wombwell parishes, at a first inspection, appeared to confirm the belief that women rarely found employment in South Yorkshire mining settlements after 1842. Only 31 of 558 brides married at Wombwell St. Mary's Church between 1864 and 1888, less than six per cent, had a recorded occupation.[64] At neighbouring Darfield All Saints Church, the marriage records again reveal few brides occupied before marriage: between 1850 and 1885, only twelve per cent were recorded as occupied.[65] Despite the low incidence

of occupied brides recorded at both churches, the discrepancy between the two rates, 5.6 per cent at Wombwell and 11.7 per cent at Darfield, is instructive. A comprehensive examination of Darfield's marriage records reveals that a large cluster of bridal occupations was recorded between December 1874 and August 1880, when 97 of 247 brides, 39 per cent, according to the marriage register, had jobs. This cluster coincides with the tendency of the vicar of Darfield, Frederick Sleape, to officiate at weddings in the parish, rather than the rector, H.B.Cooke, until 1879 and thereafter his son, H.P.Cooke, or curates, as Table 5.3 illustrates.

Table 5.3

Darfield Marriages,21.12.74 - 16.8.80

Clerical official	Marriages recorded	Brides occupied
Cooke,H.B./H.P.	43	0 (0%)
Sleape,F.	154	80 (52%)
Others	50	17 (34%)

It seems unlikely that the period in which Sleape tended to officiate at weddings coincided with a large number of occupied brides. A feasible explanation for the relatively high propensity of occupied brides married by Sleape was the possibility that he made a more detailed marriage entry in the register than did his colleagues.[66] It seems, then,

that the incidence of female employment in the South Yorkshire colliery districts may have been higher than a cursory examination of the extant records suggests. As Catriona Kelly has remarked recently, "Reading historical material for information about women automatically means reading against the grain."[67] Whilst the marriage entries of Frederick Sleape revealed a higher economic profile for women within the settlements here under study than that previously assumed, paradoxically this discovery also only serves to illustrate the subservient position expected of women by those in a position of authority. Whether the Cookes *et al*. made a conscious decision or otherwise to omit recording women's occupations in the marriage records is not the point: the fact is they did so.

Of the 80 brides recorded by Sleape between 1874 and 1880 as having an occupation at the date of their marriage, the vast majority were occupied in what could loosely be described as 'domestic' occupations. Dressmakers totalled thirteen; milliners, linen weavers and tailoresses made up a further four of those occupied. Only three textile workers explicitly worked outside the home and brought in a wage. These were described as 'mill workers'. By far the largest group of employed women recorded by Sleape was that constituted by those occupied in domestic service, by which means 59 women earned an income. It is most likely that the women recorded as servants worked outside their parental

home: those who were fully employed, without a wage, within their own home servicing its own members, it is reasonable to assume, were included amongst the 'unoccupied' 74 brides, 48 per cent, of the 154 recorded by Sleape between 1874 and 1880.

Clearly, the young women who worked outside the parental home before their marriage could contribute a valuable income to the family, and yet also they would become equipped with skills which, later, they could use to good effect as wives, running their own households. The esteem in which such domestic service jobs was held was made clear in the 1842 Royal Commission Report into Children's Employment. A Silkstone collier's wife, Mrs Fern, spoke regretfully of her young daughter-in-law's job at a colliery: "there was nothing else for her to do; I could not get her into service."[68] John Cawthra, a 48 year old collier, also from Silkstone, disapproved of female colliery work, stating that: "I think they had better go to service."[69] The image of domestic service such mining folk fostered was, no doubt, little different from the somewhat idyllic picture painted in The Times over 40 years later by a Hampstead 'Man Who Works', who wrote that:

"Domestic service affords many advantages over the precarious and ill paid work in too many factories. A healthy and regular occupation, a home shielded from the many contaminating influences of a working girl's lodging; wholesome, abundant and regular meals; good and constant wages all year round; a kindly care for their morals ... ;

a considerate allowance for their failings and weaknesses, together with the refining influences of a well-ordered household make for daily life in thousands of English houses a healthy, bright and womanly occupation for the working woman."[70]

Whilst Sleape's marriage entries suggest the importance of domestic service to young women in mining settlements as a means of employment, a more extensive source needs to be examined to assess the veracity of this extrapolated proposition. Unfortunately, the only comprehensive contemporary source from which employment information of this type could be found is the census. Clearly, this is of limited use in any study which seeks to discover the occupation of an unmarried daughter *outside* the family's home settlement. The nearest objective that can be achieved using census records is to assess the amount of movement from a given settlement between census years, by young women, from which can be discerned trends relating to migration. Even such an approach, however, can not definitively explain an individual's motivation for leaving a settlement. Nevertheless, the use of such a method may at least suggest whether or not young women might have moved from a settlement in pursuit of work.

The evidence portrayed in Table 5.4, relating to young people's population trends, clearly reveals a marked discrepancy between the sexes. The difference is most pronounced in Low Valley, where, by 1881, the female age

cohort 10-19 years contained 48 per cent fewer than it did ten years before, whilst the equivalent male cohort declined by only six per cent. Both these decreases occurred at a time when the settlement's population as a whole had risen by 22 per cent. Indeed, in all three settlements, the period 1871 - 1881 was marked by a rise in total population levels, yet in every case, the number of females in the 1881 age cohort 10-19 years fell between one quarter and one half throughout the decade. Since it is most unlikely that the death rate amongst young females under the age of twenty was considerably higher than that amongst their male peers such a decline in this population group's numbers can only be explained by a significant amount of out-migration occurring amongst its members.

An examination of individual household schedules in the mining settlements of Low Valley, Snape Hill and Wombwell Main confirm the conclusions made from the population totals: of households headed by a mining employee in 1881, those containing unmarried sons over the age of thirteen exceeded the households accommodating unmarried daughters over the age of thirteen by almost two to one.[71] It seems, therefore, that the adolescent daughters of mining families were likely to move from the home, probably in search of work in domestic service. Only in a minority of cases, it appears, did daughters remain at home, upon leaving school, exclusively to assist their mothers in domestic duties.

According to the census enumerators' returns for the Darfield and Wombwell area, where women were employed, they tended to be unmarried. The cumulative totals of the census enumeration districts examined reveal that over three-quarters of women recorded as being in employment were unmarried in 1861, 1871 and 1881.[72]

Table 5.4

Population Changes Amongst Young People in a Number

of Coalmining Settlements, 1871-1881

	1871		1881		1871-1881
Settlement	Pop. 0-9 years		Pop. 10-19 years		Total pop.
	m	f	m	f	change[a]
Snape Hill	48	47	48 (0%)	35 (-26%)	+103%
Low Valley	108	100	102 (-6%)	52 (-48%)	+22%
Wombwell Main	100	84	111 (+11%)	62 (-26%)	+9%

(a.Total settlement populations: Snape Hill- 1871,294; 1881, 596. Low Valley- 1871,661; 1881,808. Wombwell Main- 1871,561; 1881,614.)

As a proportion of the total female population over the age of thirteen, as Table 5.5 illustrates, those who were recorded as working by the census enumerators constituted a small number. The consistently higher figures of female

employment returned for Darfield village itself can be explained by the large number of domestic staff employed at several large houses within the settlement. By 1881, for example, Francis Taylor of Middlewood Hall employed ten female live-in servants, whose counties of birth included Berkshire, Suffolk, Hampshire and Cumberland. The female employment figures for Darfield village also differed from those of the other settlements considered since the village at no time included a large number of colliery employees amongst its inhabitants.

Table 5.5

The Proportion of Females Over the Age of Thirteen

Occupied in a Number of Settlements[73]

Settlement	1861	1871	1881	1891
Darfield Village	32.3%	24.6%	20.6%	18.9%
Low Valley/Snape Hill	15.6%	11.2%	12.0%	12.4%
Wombwell Main	9.2%	10.3%	26.8%	14.9%

From an examination of the census enumerators' returns for the above settlements, it does seem that employment amongst women, therefore, was minimal, though, as has already been mentioned, the possibility of a significant number of

unmarried daughters gaining employment outside the settlements as domestic servants does need to be borne in mind. Whilst the findings relating to the unmarried elder daughters in the mining settlements here under study undermine the assumption that many of them were engaged only in domestic chores, the small number of married women in such communities enumerated as being in work suggests that, for them at least, familial domestic duties took up the most part of the working day.[74]

A breakdown by age groups of employment rates amongst women over time in the same geographical area, comprising Darfield village, Snape Hill and Low Valley, reveals clearly how the incidence of recorded employment for women depended upon their life-cycle stage.

Table 5.6

The Proportion of Women Working in a Number of Age Categories, 1861-1891[75]

Year	Age Categories				
	14-19yrs	20-29yrs	30-39yrs	40-49yrs	50+yrs
1861	76.9%	26.7%	10.9%	10.3%	16.0%
1871	45.6%	17.8%	6.5%	10.3%	8.7%
1881	48.6%	11.1%	6.8%	8.7%	5.0%
1891	42.4%	16.3%	4.7%	5.3%	7.9%

The most dramatic reduction in employment rates for women occurred between the first two age groups. This reflected the tendency for women upon childbirth to give up jobs that were recorded by the census enumerator. The further decline in the apparent incidence of employment between the second and third age categories can also be ascribed to marriages and the presence in the home of dependent children. The figures in the later age categories are a little more difficult to explain: where women had children relatively late in marriage, they could still be restricted to domestic work late into their forties. However, an increase in the incidence of women's employment registered in the 40-49 year old category, often occurred as a consequence of the onset of widowhood: in 1871, 50 per cent of those women over 40 who were employed were widows whilst the figure for 1881 was 46.7 per cent.[76]

The overall decline in women's recorded employment revealed by these statistics over the period 1861 - 1891 can be explained, in part, by the increasing numerical significance of mining families in the enumeration districts surveyed. Only eleven per cent of households in Darfield enumeration district 1 were headed by a mining employee in 1861, whilst by 1881 the figure in the equivalent enumeration district had risen to 44 per cent. The tendency of mining households to contain a disproportionately low number of working women was

abundantly clear in the same 1881 enumeration district: whilst 23.4 per cent of households *not* headed by a mining employee contained women recorded by the enumerator as employed, the proportion of mining households accommodating women listed as working was only 6.3 per cent, barely a quarter of the incidence found in other households in the district.[77]

The census enumerators' returns, however, should only be considered as indicators of some of the types of work undertaken by women. Many jobs in which women were occupied tended either to be casual, or seasonal, and thus often escaped the attention of the census enumerators. Since the decennial censuses were conducted in the early spring, the tendency of women to work during harvest time, for example, was completely overlooked. Other women's jobs simply appear not to have been recorded. In 1881, for instance, the census enumerator for Darfield enumeration district 1 recorded Stephen Seal as a resident of the village and 'stone quarry proprietor and scythe-stone maker, employing 35 men, 9 women and 5 boys'. In enumeration district 1, the enumerator recorded 23 male stone workers, but not one woman. Indeed, an examination of three surrounding enumeration districts yielded only one woman recorded as employed at a quarry, as a 'stonerubber'.[78] Either the females employed in the quarry lived in a different area from the male employees, which seems unlikely, or the

enumerator omitted to record their occupations, which appears the more probable explanation for their absence.

One area in which women's employment was under-recorded in the census enumerators' returns can be relatively easily amended. In households containing lodgers, often the most senior female in the household, either the head or wife of the household head, was effectively occupied satisfying their domestic needs. Rarely were such women enumerated in the census records as having an occupation, yet accommodating lodgers could be a useful means of raising a household's income. As a consequence of the informal nature of lodging arrangements, few official records survive regarding homes in which only a small number of lodgers were accommodated.[79] From an examination of the evidence that has survived, Leonore Davidoff notes that:

"the basic services provided in lodgings seem to have been 'attendance, light and firing'. 'Attendance' included services such as cleaning, carrying water and coal, emptying slops such as waste water and chamber pots, making fires and running errands...Most often, lodgers ate at the same table with the family..."[80]

The accommodation of lodgers was a relatively common phenomenon in the settlements under study throughout the period. The proportion of homes containing lodgers recorded in the census years 1861, 1871 and 1881 remained consistently between nineteen and twenty per cent of households examined.[81] The women who were most likely to

take in lodgers, significantly, were those whose partners were engaged in the mining industry: by 1881, over 80 per cent of the households containing lodgers in the census enumeration districts examined , where the occupations of the household heads were known, were headed by men occupied in the mining industry.[82] Thus, although the wives of miners, according to the census records, were less likely to be in employment than other married women, it does seem that their economic contribution to the household, and hence their relative power *vis-a-vis* their menfolk in the home, has previously been underplayed as a consequence of overlooking the income earning potential of mining women within their homes.

In an attempt to assess the economic importance of the landlady's contribution to households in which lodgers were accommodated, a relatively simple calculation was undertaken, using information contained within the enumerators' returns. Before explaining the method employed, at the outset the cursory nature of the exercise needs to be emphasised. The most basic problem with the calculation is the fact that equal weight is attached to all incomes entering the household, clearly an unrealistic assumption when, for instance a 14 year old pit lad might have been living in the same house as his father, a hewer at the coal face.

For each household accommodating lodgers, the following calculation was made:

No.in hsehld- (no.of lodgers + other waged hsehld members)
No. in household - no. of lodgers

Using this calculation, the level of economic dependency of each household accommodating lodgers can be expressed. For those households which contain lodgers, but from an economic point of view have little need to do so, their calculated value will be near to 0. For instance, if a family of four, three of whom were working, accommodated one lodger, the household's calculated value would be as follows:

$$\frac{5 - (1+3)}{5 - 1} = \frac{1}{4} = 0.25$$

In contrast, if a household were almost completely dependent upon the income received from lodgers, the value would be near to one. For instance, if a family of five, only one of whom was working, accommodated four lodgers, the household's calculated value would be thus:

$$\frac{9 - (4+1)}{9 - 4} = \frac{4}{5} = 0.8$$

Employing this calculation, the dependency index, households accommodating lodgers were broken down into four different categories, according to their calculated values. Households with an index value of 0.25 or less were likely to be reasonably comfortably off without lodgers, so probably accommodated them for reasons other than financial ones. An example of such a household was one in which there lived in total five members, including a single lodger, and three others who worked. The second category contained households with an index value of above 0.25, but less than or equal to 0.5. This group, again was likely to contain a family who were reasonably independent of the lodgers' rents, but financial considerations had probably played a part in the decision to accommodate lodgers. This category included such households as that in which lived six members, of whom three were lodgers and another two worked. Households with a dependency index of greater than 0.5, but less than or equal to 0.75 formed the third category, which contained families or individuals for whom the rent received from lodgers formed an important part of their income. An example of such a household was one in which seven people lived, of whom two were lodgers and a further two worked. The final category contained households with an index value of more than 0.75, constituting a group of households vitally dependent upon

lodgers' rents for survival. This group included one household with ten members in which five were lodgers and only one other of its members worked.

Table 5.7

Distribution of Households with Lodgers According to

Dependency Index[83]

Dependency Index	Year		
Value	1861	1871	1881
0.0000 - 0.2500	4.2%	4.6%	9.0%
0.2501 - 0.5000	24.2%	33.6%	27.1%
0.5001 - 0.7500	45.3%	42.7%	36.1%
0.7501 - 1.0000	26.3%	19.1%	27.7%
	100.0%	100.0%	99.9%

Note: 1.0000 = household totally dependent upon lodgers' incomes.

As Table 5.7 demonstrates, discernible patterns can be identified from examining the distribution of households containing lodgers within these four broad groupings of dependency types. In all three census years considered, as was to be expected, the smallest proportion of households

with lodgers was found amongst the dependency grouping that needed least the financial help obtained by the receipt of lodgers' rents. Where households, therefore, did not need to accommodate lodgers on financial grounds, most chose not to house them. Lodging in the main, it seems then, was motivated by financial factors. The role of the landlady, thus was of crucial importance in the majority of homes in which lodgers were accommodated.

Initially, it seems strange that in each of the census years examined, the majority of lodgers were found not in households in the most financial need, but in those occupying the grouping immediately above this ultimate category of dependence. Upon consideration, however, the reason for this is evident. Households in considerable poverty could not afford sufficient space to sub-let sleeping room. As Davidoff has made clear: "the ability to take in lodgers on a regular basis and to provide even basic services for them could only be managed at a certain level of income and organisation."[84]

Having established the importance of the landlady in the family economy of many working class households, and their particular significance amongst the homes of mining families, an attempt will be made to discover a little more about the landladies themselves, with the use initially of the census records.

Whilst, as has been shown, among older landladies widows predominated, an analysis of census enumerators' books reveal that, throughout the period, a large majority of landladies were married. In each census year examined from 1861 to 1881, the proportion of married landladies exceeded 80 per cent of the total figure. Only in 1871 did the number of widowed landladies constitute greater than fifteen per cent of the total. Unmarried landladies were virtually unknown: of 405 landladies examined of known marital status, only four were unmarried.[85] Much has been made in the literature relating to nineteenth century landladies of the increased tendency of women to accommodate lodgers as they grew older. Leonore Davidoff has written that:

"If many lodgers were young and single, then it should follow that landlords and landladies would be married or widowed middle-aged people, and this does seem to have been the case...For couples in late middle-age, lodgers would...fill the beds and supply income *in lieu* of grown-up children who had left home."[86]

Similarly, Modell and Hareven, in their study of nineteenth century American households, have discovered that: "the largest proportion of boarders, regardless of age, lived with heads of households in the 40 to 50 age group."[87] However, in the present study, the correlation between the age of the households' principal women and their propensity to accommodate lodgers does not seem to be marked. In the

Table 5.8 the proportion of landladies in a number of age categories is compared to the proportion of households'

Incidence of Landladies Categorised by Age Group, 1861-81[88]

	1	2	
	% of landladies	% of principal	
Age group	in age group	h'hld women in age	Ratio 1 : 2
		group	

1861

< 30 yrs	33.3%	30.4%	1.095
30 - 49 yrs	52.7%	50.5%	1.044
50 + yrs	14.0%	19.0%	0.737

1871

< 30 yrs	31.2%	28.6%	1.091
30 - 49 yrs	47.2%	52.3%	0.902
50 + yrs	21.6%	19.0%	1.137

1881

< 30 yrs	26.6%	26.3%	1.011
30 - 49 yrs	53.9%	55.8%	0.966
50 + yrs	19.5%	17.9%	1.089

principal women in each category, and the ratio between the two resulting figures has been calculated. Where this final

figure has a value of one, unity has been achieved, meaning that the same proportion of landladies occupied a given age group as did households' principal women. Where the value of the ratio is much above one, then the number of landladies occupying this age category was disproportionately high in relation to the number of households' principal women who occupied this age group. The ratios in Table 5.8 offer no conclusive evidence pointing to a higher propensity of older women accommodating lodgers. However, the figures for 1871 and 1881 do reveal that a slightly disproportionate number of women of 50 years and older housed lodgers, whilst landladies in the 30 to 49 years age group accommodated disproportionately slightly fewer lodgers. The fact that the ratios in all cases for 1871 and 1881 were so close to unity make it clear that these tendencies were only slight.

The uncertain findings from an examination of the incidence of landladies broken down by age group contrasts with the more conclusive evidence obtained from the figures examined relating to dependency upon the landladies' income. This suggests, then, that financial need rather than age specifically determined whether or not women took in lodgers.

Two contemporary newspaper reports support the claim that landladies' financial contributions to the household income were often vital. In 1889, the <u>Mexborough and Swinton Times</u>

reported that a Jump widow, Jane Roebuck, who lived with three grown-up sons, had been charged with keeping an unregistered lodging house. At Barnsley Police Court, the Wombwell Local Board Clerk, John Robinson, related how he went to Roebuck's home with a police officer and "found upstairs 32 people in all. Men, women and children, but not many of the last named. It was a usual thing for the defendant to have a score of lodgers."[89]

A Barnsley Chronicle report of 1867 also described a household in Darfield parish containing several lodgers. The situation that prompted the newspaper's interest was, to an extent, connected to the ambiguous relationship that occasionally developed when an unrelated male lived under the same roof as a woman to whom he paid money. Under the headline 'Alleged Rape at Low Valley', the newspaper reported that: "James Clegg, a labourer, residing at Low Valley ... was charged with attempting to commit a rape on Ann Oldham, a married woman ... The Complainant stated that her husband's name was Joseph Oldham and that he worked at Kilnhurst, returning to his home at Low Valley every Saturday night. She had been married 14 years, but had no children. The Prisoner had lodged with her for about five months."[90]

The tone of the newspaper report did not appear all that sympathetic to the woman's case: the lengthy absences of her husband and their lack of children arguably were irrelevant facts but nevertheless were related with

some relish, and their effect was undoubtedly enhanced by the remarks regarding the lodger's length of tenure immediately after the information relating to the husband's absence. Reference was made later in the report to the fact that the complainant, Ann Oldham, stated that, on the night of the incident, she had returned from a public house, where: "she had a glass of gin for which she paid 2d, but she was not the worse for liquor."[91] The apparently unorthodox relationship between the landlady and her husband, in addition to the allusion to alcohol, included in the report, appeared to suggest an implicit criticism of the complainant by the newspaper. Significantly, when sentence was passed on James Clegg at the assizes, where he received eighteen months imprisonment and hard labour, the case received little attention in the Barnsley Chronicle.

The independence of Ann Oldham within her marriage, caused by her husband's absence and her evident need to earn money herself, clearly caused some discomfort to the employees of the local newspaper, who undoubtedly were imbued with middle class attitudes towards marriage, which centred upon the primacy of the male within the relationship. The unfortunate case of Ann Oldham makes clear the weaknesses of official records such as the census in reconstructing people's lives: a household census schedule identified who lived within the household but gave no indication of how its *de facto* power relations operated. The fleeting glimpses

of relationships between men and women within the home, whether formalised in marriage or not, caught through an examination of extant impressionistic evidence for the Darfield and Wombwell areas, in addition to marriage and baptism records for the parishes, will now be considered.

3 b. Women's marital status

Impressionistic evidence of cohabitation outside marriage amongst mining folk was particularly conspicuous following the Lundhill pit disaster in 1857. The resulting Disaster Fund, set up to aid the dependents of the 189 men and boys who perished, was administered by a number of respectable local figures, including members of the clergy, who were insistent that the resources at their disposal should only be awarded to those deserving relief.[92] By April 1859, it was recorded that of the original 84 women receiving relief, a number no longer were eligible: "five have been discontinued for impropriety of conduct; [and] nine, who were described as widows, have been found to be unmarried..."[93] Thus, of the perceived widows resulting from the disaster, no less than eleven per cent had, in fact, been common-law wives. That this was not immediately apparent to those distributing the relief funds makes clear such relationships could be subject to similar degrees of permanency as marriage.

An examination of the church records of Wombwell St. Mary's tends to reinforce this supposition. More than one-

quarter of mothers with different surnames from their children recorded in the church's baptism register between 1864 and 1888 had two children baptised with the same father, or, where the father's identity was not revealed, bearing the same surname.[94] Jane Davies and Richard Mellor, for instance, had two children baptised in Wombwell parish church between 1864 and 1888: Charles Mellor in December 1868, and Cyril Mellor in May 1870. Despite not being married, it seems that Jane Davies and Richard Mellor were involved in a relationship for not less than two years. Of possibly even longer standing was the relationship of Mary-Ann Bramwell and Edward Lambert. These two were recorded as the parents of Edward Lambert at his baptism in June 1877, and, six years later, at that of his brother, Henry Lambert, in November 1883.

It seems likely, however, that most periods of cohabitation were shorter than that enjoyed by Bramwell and Lambert, and often were followed by marriage. Recounting the life of a Wombwell miner, Isaac Hazelhurst, upon his trial on a charge of uxoricide, the <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u> reported that "After living with [Mary Anne Wraith] for some time he married her."[95] Although, happily, the ending of the Hazelhursts' marriage was rare, their transition from *de facto* husband and wife to the status of a formally married couple was common. Many couples appeared to formalise their relationships just before, or soon after,

the birth of their first child. From the limited number of couples who could be identified in both the marriage records and, as parents, in the baptism registers of Wombwell St. Mary's between 1864 and 1888, one-quarter had children baptised within one year of their marriage. More significantly, eleven per cent of these couples had children baptised less than nine months after their wedding.[96]

A cursory measure of the propensity of married couples to have children before marriage was attempted with the use of census enumerators' books for 1871 and 1881 in conjunction with marriage records for both Darfield and Wombwell. It was assumed that, in 1871 and 1881, the eldest child of a woman aged 32 would, in all probability, have still been co-resident with parents. The same assumption could not have been made for women much above this age, since, as has already been shown, many adolescents, particularly girls, were working away from home by the age of fourteen. The age at which women under 33 years had given birth to their eldest surviving child, was calculated using the information contained within the 1871 and 1881 censuses. These findings were then compared with the average age at which women first married. In an attempt to take account of changes in marriage ages over time, the 1871 census figures were compared with marriage records for the period 1861 to

1871; and the 1881 census figures were used in conjunction with marriage records for the period 1871 to 1881.

Table 5.9 reveals clearly that,in both 1871 and 1881, the woman's average age at conception of the eldest surviving child was lower than her average age at marriage. It must be stressed that the table does not compare like with like: the women married in Wombwell and Darfield parish churches were not necessarily the same as those who bore the children enumerated in the census records examined. Nevertheless, the figures are instructive and support the view that marriage tended to take place immediately before, or, more often it appears, soon after, the birth of the couple's first child.

Table 5.9

Women's Age at Marriage and Conception of First

Surviving Child[97]

	Average Age at marriage		Average Age at conception of
Year	Darfield	Wombwell	eldest surviving child
1871	22.56	22.03	21.00
1881	22.17	21.00	20.31

The figures in Table 5.10, relating exclusively to women whose partners were engaged in the mining industry, reveal

similar patterns to the more general data expressed in Table 5.9. Again, it seems, the age at conception of the eldest child appeared to precede the date at which marriage occurred. As has often been discovered by social commentators, comparison between Tables 5.9 and 5.10 reveal that miners in the main tended to marry and begin families earlier than other groups.

Table 5.10

Women's Age at Marriage and Conception of First 'Surviving' Child, Where Their Partners were Engaged in the Mining Industry[98]

	Average Age at Marriage		Average Age at Conception of
Year	Darfield	Wombwell	eldest surviving child
1871	22.25	22.00	20.54
1881	20.89	20.46	20.02

Table 5.10 shows that a significant fall in the age at marriage took place between the ten year periods examined amongst those engaged in the coalmining industry. This, to an extent, was a consequence of the buoyancy of the industry for much of the decade 1871 - 1881. The expansion which took place in the coalmining industry between these

dates in the Wombwell and Darfield district resulted in the opening of several large pits and gave security of employment and relatively high wages to those engaged in mining. Undoubtedly, this economic situation prompted employees in the industry to marry earlier than had previously been the case. This fact was noted by the Manchester Guardian's 'Roving Correspondent', who, having visited the South Yorkshire coalfield in 1873, commented that: "Another luxury in which the young are indulging on a very large scale is marriage. In church and in chapel the number has increased; but the most marked advance is shown in the register offices, which I am told are growing in favour among the industrial classes ... I should think I might state that the young men and women who annually join in wedlock have been three times more numerous during the last two years than they were during the ten years preceding. We cannot question that this indicates an improved state of morality, and that it is a good sign of the general prosperity."[99]

The healthy economic situation appeared to encourage couples to marry before the arrival of offspring. The cursory figures used in Table 5.10 show that, in 1871, the age at marriage, in Darfield parish, of women, who had married in the previous decade, took place, on average, almost twelve months after the birth of the first surviving child. By the subsequent decade, however, comparing the average ages of women at marriage and at the birth of the eldest child, it seems that mothers normally were married approximately one month before the first child was born.

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Despite the crudity of these figures, the data suggest that in times of relative prosperity, marriage tended to take place sooner after the conception of a couple's first child than it occurred otherwise. The sequence of events, however, suggested that cohabitation, or couples 'living tally' as it was known locally, remained common during periods of prosperity, but marriage tended to occur sooner in such circumstances.[100]

Somewhat paradoxical attitudes appeared to prevail in the district amongst coalmining folk towards marriage during the second half of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the decision to marry appeared to be a weighty one that was not rushed into by a couple, and marriage was often a state into which two people entered only after offspring were produced. Yet marriages, evidence from the second half of the nineteenth century suggests, were not regarded as being indisssoluble. Marriages that were terminated in a *de facto* manner accounted for a number of bigamy cases reported in the district, since often those who had so ended their marriages chose to remarry, but did so officially. Mary Ann Hazelhurst, for instance, before marrying the man who was to be responsible for her death, had been married to another, until, as the <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u> reported, it transpired that he was already married.[101] Some individuals apparently agreed to marriage despite knowing that their intended partners already had

living spouses from whom they had not been officially divorced. Such an incident was reported in the <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u> under the headline 'Another Case of Bigamy':

"John Hirst of Worsbro', a collier was brought up on remand charged with inter-marrying with Frances Hunt, his first wife being then alive ... Frances Hunt said I am the widow of Samuel Hunt who was killed at the Lund Hill Colliery in 1857. I have known the prisoner about a year ... [He] came to lodge with me and after he had been with me about six months he represented himself as being single. He said he had a wife living but he considered he was single as he and his wife had shook hands and parted. He continued to pay attention to me until we were married at Worsbro' church..."[102]

Whilst formalised divorce during the second half of the nineteenth century on the South Yorkshire coalfield, as elsewhere in society, was extremely rare, clearly a consensual decision to end a marriage was regarded, both by the partners themselves and others, as equivalent to a *de jure* termination of the relationship.

Marriage, thus, was not necessarily seen by many embarking upon it as an irrevocable step. This fact inevitably had an effect upon determining what was considered acceptable behaviour within marriage. The breakdown of marital relations was clearly not a taboo among working people in the district under study. Thus, when the situation within marriage became intolerable for one partner, movement out of the marital home was a realistic option. Such a possibility clearly acted as an

effective means of controlling particularly the power of the husband over his wife: where his demands upon her became unbearable it was possible for her to leave the home and, as has been suggested, opportunities were available for a single woman to become financially independent. Following the breakdown of a marriage, the local newspaper reports of bigamous husbands suggest men were inclined to 'marry' again. However, little evidence appears to remain relating to the existence of bigamous wives. One can only speculate about their absence from the records. The most likely explanation of the lack of reported bigamous wives is probably the fact that, upon taking the surname of their new 'husband', such women were difficult to trace by the authorities.

By the closing decade of the nineteenth century, however, the informal means of ending marriages, by a handshake[103], appeared to be replaced by the more formalised procedures associated with a bureaucratically-orientated society, which made the termination of marriage more difficult. This was made clear in a <u>Barnsley Chronicle</u> report entitled 'An Apology for a Husband', in which:

"John Moore, a miner, was charged with aggravated assault upon his wife, Anne Moore, and a separation order was asked for ... the parties were married for 19 years, and these were years of torture for the complainant. On June 27 [1891], he came home drunk and...made an abominable charge against his wife and eldest son, aged 17 years, in consequence of which they left the house...Upon returning,

the defendant met her and struck her four violent blows to the chest...On one occasion, she left him for 18 months owing to his ill-treatment; whilst on another occasion - six years ago - she and her children went to the workhouse, owing to the defendant's bad conduct. The defendant could earn £2 per week at Cortonwood Colliery...Police-Sergeant Johnson said the woman had complained to him many times of ill-treatment...The Bench granted a separation order and the defendant would have to pay 12s. a week towards the maintenance of his wife and family."[104]

Through the apparent removal of a consensual means of ending marriages, and its replacement by the granting of an official separation order, the position of the married working class woman, by the end of the nineteenth century, appeared to have been weakened, notwithstanding the implementation of pieces of legislation such as the Married Women's Property Acts, laws which had significance to those with financial means, but that had little importance to the majority of women living in working class settlements.[105]

Whilst the extent of the physical abuse heaped upon Ann Moore by her husband was undoubtedly unusual, the available evidence suggests that violence by men upon women in the settlements here examined was far from extraordinary. The picture one obtains of society through an examination of local newspaper stories is, though, undoubtedly not an accurate representation of reality. By the very nature of the press, in an attempt to appeal to its readership, much

of the behaviour it reported was relatively unusual. Thus, in isolation, occasional newspaper accounts of violence inflicted upon women by men, both within and outside marriage, need to be interpreted carefully.

However, evidence contained within the diary of the respectable miner, Joseph Knowles, adds substance to the impression gained from a reading of contemporary newspaper reports that the settlements here examined were the scenes of quite common physically abusive relations between the sexes. Knowles was a well regarded figure locally, who, besides being a miner, was a music teacher, active in local politics, and a member of an ambulance class. Despite his respectability, however, Knowles admitted in his diary to one instance of assaulting his wife. On Sunday May 2nd, 1886, Knowles wrote that: "We had a mackeral for our breakfasts this morning which Mrs K. somewhat spoilt with cooking and because I grumbled she said that which caused me to shove her and her chair over. I was very sorry after, but she drew my temper."[106]

The reaction recorded in Wombwell by the local newspapers following the killing of Mary Ann Hazelhurst by her husband, is also instructive of the attitudes felt towards violence within marriage. In March 1887, at New Wombwell, Isaac Hazelhurst, a 50 year old miner killed his wife by pushing her down the stairs of their home, following a Sunday drinking session with some of his friends, during

which he found his wife in bed with another man. The Barnsley Chronicle reported that the local feeling on the matter was:

"generally of strong sympathy with the accused in his misery ... and few are to be found who do not make some kind of excuse for, or try to palliate, the crime ... Mr John Meays opened a subscription list for the defence of the prisoner."[107]

Even local representatives of the religious denominations appeared to avoid explicit condemnation of the actions of the husband. Instead, the Rev. George Hadfield chose, in his sermon, to draw:

"a sad picture of a miserable tragedy - gambling, drunkenness and impurity in its shocking features. One would think that those young men who spent their Sunday in such a sinful fashion would hardly dare to show their faces in the daylight ... They have disgraced themselves, their families and inflicted a stain on the district which years will not wipe out."[108]

Countering the criticisms of the judge at Hazelhurst's trial, who had declared that attempts should have been made to prevent the argument between Hazelhurst and his wife, Mr Blackburn, at a meeting of Wombwell Local Board, claimed that men of the district "knew the proverb saying 'Don't interfere between man and wife' because if they did it was possible that both might turn round on them and thrash them for interfering." Blackburn went on to say that: "it was unfortunate that thing happened as it did. If it had

occurred 15 yards further eastward, it would have then occurred in another parish."[109] From the reports of the case examined, it seems that respectable local opinion was shocked not so much by the murder of the wife by the husband, but enraged both by the actions of the young Sabbath-drinking men and the consequent scandalous name their behaviour had placed upon the district.[110]

Having examined, as far as was possible, the relationships of women with their menfolk within the home, in the following final section of the chapter the relationships experienced between women themselves in the settlements in the Wombwell and Darfield district outside the home, and more generally, the representation by the press of such women in public will be considered.

4. The public life of women and its representation.

The communal nature of life in the district for mining families was dictated, to an extent, by the designs of residential property. Shared yards, privies and water points made inevitable social interaction between households. Strong bonds were made particularly by women who shared the problems of child care and domestic management in the absence of adult males. A consequence of the development of such relationships was what Robert

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Roberts, in his autobiography, The Classic Slum, described as 'neighbouring':

"For weeks together one would notice the members of two households constantly in and out of each other's home, often bearing small gifts. This intimacy, watching cynics knew, was far too fervid to last. And sure enough, one Saturday night shrieks, screams, scuffles and breaking glass would herald the end of another lovely friendship. Confidences foolishly bestowed were now for bruiting loud on the common air, much to the neighbourhood's pleasure."[111]

The recollections of Roberts had sprung from his experiences of life in Edwardian Salford, but 'neighbouring' clearly was a phenomenon that existed between families, notably women, in the nineteenth century South Yorkshire mining districts. In 1869, for instance, the Barnsley Chronicle reported a court case in which:

"George Burrows, a miner, was charged with assaulting Mary Jane Heaton at Wombwell...There had been some differences [between them] previously with respect to 'scandalizing'. The defendant said that there had been too much borrowing and lending between the complainant and his wife and had discharged the former from coming into his house."[112]

In the week prior to the assault, Burrows claimed that the complainant continually abused his wife. Similar cases were reported in 1881 from the West Riding Court House involving women neighbours resorting to violent conduct following arguments regarding betrayed confidences relating to households in Wombwell Main and Darfield Bridge.[113]

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Similarly intense relationships were also, it seems, often experienced between kinsfolk where they were resident in the locality. This was particularly the case amongst women, whose experiences of the family were more involved than that of men. This has has been illustrated in the work of R.B.Steiner who has shown that men and women have "two different, (but overlapping), families: men's families are more nucleated; women's more extended, given the way in which work relations separate and reconnect households in the division of labour by gender."[114]

Despite occasional, but intense, breakdowns in relations amongst women in the settlements here under study, actions uniting the majority of womenfolk in one particular community also occurred. Some of these united actions, undoubtedly were motivated, to some extent, by a moral factor. 'Rough music' was used, for example, by a group of women to celebrate the removal of an unpopular neighbour. According to the Barnsley Chronicle, a woman who had been a 'troublesome neighbour' was given a 'parting salute' from Wombwell by Alice Ward and 'several other women':

"For this purpose, the whole of the available frying pans, shovels etc. were collected. [Ward], according to her own admission, turned out with a frying pan and a short poker which she began to beat as the obnoxious neighbour left the district."[115]

The organisation of such activities suggested that, far from being "confined to the domestic arena"[116], women in

mining settlements did take part in the public life of the settlement by participating in public rituals such as rough musicking and thereby involved themselves in the construction and enforcement of communal laws.[117]

Although, as the evidence here examined has suggested, the women of mining settlements had individual identities of their own and did not form an amorphous mass, which could be neatly categorised as 'miners' wives', nevertheless, when their menfolk were involved in industrial struggles, these women offered support. In February 1881, for example, an industrial dispute was keeping from work a large number of Mitchell Main colliery workers. As the Barnsley Chronicle reported at the time, men who continued to work at the colliery were subject to:

"shouts and hoots, and the music of tin cans and accordians ... On Saturday last, police attended in some force to protect a man, named Matthew Littlewood, who worked at Mitchell Main and he was brought home in a bus at which stones etc. were thrown."[118]

Upon his arrival home, Littlewood was confronted by a crowd of some 200 to 300 strong.[119] As a consequence of the intimidation meted out upon Littlewood, sixteen individuals appeared in court, nine of whom were women. The sexual composition of the group accused prompted comment by the presiding magistrate, Kaye, who, according to the Barnsley Chronicle report, declared that:

"None of the defendants would like to be interfered with in honestly earning their bread, and they had no right to interfere with others. In these cases, the women unfortunately got drawn in and they appeared to be more violent than the men. It was a disgrace to them; they disgraced their sex, which men liked to call the softer sex, by doing so ... If they went on with this kind of thing, they would get worse than Ireland and he thought he could not apply a more disgraceful epithet to them than to say they were worse than a lot of Irishmen."[120]

From these comments, it is clear that the magistrate was more disturbed by the involvement of women in these acts of intimidation than by the actions themselves. Kaye's dismay at these women's behaviour, evidently, was rooted in his, undoubtedly middle class, perceptions of what constituted the female ideal. The way in which the public actions of women from mining households contrasted with the behaviour expected of the 'softer sex' by members of the middle class can also be discerned from a number of reports in the Barnsley Chronicle.

The sub-editing of stories involving women as perpetrators of acts of violence appeared to result in two types of headline. Firstly, the bald generalisation, such as 'Women at Wombwell Main'[121], or 'Women at Darfield'[122], suggested that the incidents reported, in each of these stories involving women from only two households, were typical of behaviour in the settlement named. Having examined the story beneath the headline in each of these

cases, the reader would have been left in no doubt of the rebuke intended by the newspaper, aimed at the women of the settlement concerned as a consequence of their divergence from the accepted feminine norm. A second type of headline employed by the newspaper counterpoised concepts and events familiar to respectable members of female society with their antithesis, acts of public confrontation involving women, thus producing stories displaying a mild contempt for the female subjects of the article. Examples of this second type of headline in stories run by the Barnsley Chronicle relating to women in largely mining settlements included: 'Social Life at Snape Hill'[123]; 'A Departing Salute at Wombwell'[124]; and 'Neighbourly Love. Another Episode of Washing Day'[125]. The evidence examined, therefore, suggests that middle class opinion found difficulty reconciling the occasional public actions of working class women, whether undertaken individually or in concert with others, with its own bourgeois feminine ideal.

The evidence examined in this chapter has shown that women's domestic duties were undoubtedly onerous in the homes of miners. Mining families tended to be large and, by the time boys were of working age many of them, still co-resident with their parents, also worked in the pit, creating more work for the mother, whose work was made

still more difficult by poor sanitation and an unhealthy, dirty, environment.

Nevertheless, a careful examination of the available evidence for the largely mining settlements within the parishes of Darfield and Wombwell, in the second half of the nineteenth century, has suggested that the image of the miner's wife "confined to the domestic sphere"[126] was not entirely accurate.

Census enumerators' books and marriage records for the district, when carefully considered, revealed much about the continuing economic importance of women's work after the 1842 Mines Acts. Marriage records consistently under-represented the extent of women's employment: often, as a matter of course, incumbents did not record women's employment. However, where a conscientious vicar was given the task of recording marriages, it appeared that the incidence of employment amongst women at marriage could have been higher than 50 per cent. Such a figure brings into question the claims that many adolescent girls remained in the home assisting their mothers in domestic duties.

An examination of census records also suggested that adolescent girls were economically active, often away from home, since, compared to their male peers, they were conspicuous by their absence in the sampled census enumerators' books. Evidence for the under-representation

of women's employment in the district here studied has clearly ben found. Perhaps the most readily available information relating to overlooked women's employment is the census itself, in which lodgers in households were enumerated, but the occupation of 'landlady' was not. An examination of the census schedules for the Darfield and Wombwell district has revealed that a disproportionate number of mining households accommodated lodgers. Many such households, it has been calculated, only took in lodgers at times of economic hardship. In such instances, therefore, the miner's womenfolk contributed a vital income to the household, and supplemented what clearly was not a 'family wage' brought in by mining employees.[127]

One aspect of the stereotypical miner's wife was, however, at least by the close of the nineteenth century, an accurate reflection of reality. By this date, it seems that most miners were actually officially married to their partners. In the settlements examined, during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, references appear relatively commonplace to couples 'living tally', or in bigamous marriages. Marriages were occasionally informally terminated and, it seems, that many of those who had so ended their marriages chose to marry again officially. In the main, however, marriages amongst mining folk occurred either only after conception had taken place, or after the birth of children. By the final quarter of the nineteenth

century, though, these habits were changing: age at marriage was falling, suggesting a tendency among miners and their partners to formalise their relationships, and children were more likely to be born in wedlock. By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, miners and their womenfolk appeared to be acquiring a 'respectability', without which previously many couples had blithely lived together.

Where a union had previously failed, perhaps as a consequence of a man's violent nature or over-dependence upon drink, women had previously been able to break off the relationship and, where necessary, live independently. However, with the onset of more formalised unions between men and women, this course of action could no longer be taken with such impunity. The economically important position women could continue to hold within households in mining settlements after the 1842 Mines Act was, therefore, by the close of the nineteenth century potentially being undermined by the imposed need for formalised relationships by an increasingly bureaucratised state, in which the 'respectable' values of middle class society predominated.

Footnotes to Chapter Five

1. E.Pleck, 'Two Worlds in One', _Journal of Social History_, 10,2, 1976.

2. A.John, _By the Sweat of Their Brow_, 1983, p.73.

3. _Parliamentary Papers. Royal Commission on the Employment of Children in Mines_ (Henceforward referred to as _P.P.Mines, 1842_),XVI,p.24, cited by I.Pinchbeck, _Women Workers in the Industrial Revolution_, 1930, p.248.

4. _P.P. Mines, 1842_, XVI, p.182, Respondent 117.

5. _Ibid._.

6. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI, p.252,182, cited by I.Pinchbeck, _op.cit._, p.251.

7. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI, p.182,119.

8. _Ibid._.

9. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI,p.237, cited by J.Mark-Lawson and A.Witz, "From 'Family Labour' to 'Family Wage'? The Case of Women's Labour in Nineteenth Century Coalmining", _Social History_, 13,2, 1988, p.159.

10. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI,p.244, cited by Pinchbeck, _op.cit._, p.258.

11. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XV, p.124, cited by J.Mark-Lawson and A.Witz, _op.cit._, p.161.

12. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI, p.167.

13 J.Mark-Lawson and A.Witz, _op.cit._, p.161.

14. _Ibid._, p.161.

15. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI, p.182,118.

16. _Ibid._, XVI, p.253,118.

17. _Ibid._, XVI, p.262,140.

18. _Ibid._, XVI, p.264,146.

19. _Ibid._, XVI, p.262,142.

20. I.Pinchbeck, _op.cit._, p.266.

21. _P.P.Mines, 1842_, XVI, p.248,100.

22. _Ibid._, XVI, p.248,99.

23. Ibid., XVI, p.261,139.

24. Ibid..

25. Ibid., XVI, p.168.

26. J.Mark-Lawson and A.Witz, op.cit.,p.167, quoting from A.Campbell and F.Reid, 'The Independent Collier in Scotland', in R.Harrison, ed., The Independent Collier, p.69.

27. A.John, op.cit., p.73. John noted that only two women worked at pits in Yorkshire by 1890.

28. P.P.Mines, 1842, XVI, p.12,103,106,107.

29. F.Machin, The Yorkshire Miners, Volume One, pp.42 and 47. The Miners Association of Great Britain was formed in 1842. By June 1843 the organisation had approximately 50,000 members.

30. Barnsley Times, (Henceforward, B.T.), 28/3/57.

31. J.Wilkinson, Notes and Cuttings, p.10.

32. Barnsley Chronicle, (Henceforward,B.C.), 7/11/91.

33. P.P. Mines, 1842, XVI, p.248, 100.

34. J.Mark-Lawson and A.Witz, op.cit., p.173.

35. R.Colls, Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield, 1987, p.135.

36. A.Radford, Labour Migration in England, 1806 - 1850, 1964, pp.56-7, quoted in M.Haines, 'Fertility, Nuptiality and Occupation: A Study of Coal Mining Populations and Regions in England and Wales in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 2,1977, p.257.

37. M.Haines, op.cit., p.267.

38. 'Roving Correspondent', in Manchester Guardian, quoted in B.C., 17/5/73.

39. Figures derived from following census enumerators' books:1861,Darfield e(numeration) d(istricts),1, 4 & 5
    1871,   "   "   "   "   1, 4 & 5.
    1881,   "   "   "   "   1, 2, 5 &
                                part of 6,(Wombwell Main only).
    1891,Darfield e.d.s 1, 2 and 3.

40. B.C., 13/1/77.
41. B.C., 19/5/77.
42. B.C., 11/6/81.
43. B.C., 18/6/81.
44. B.C., 13/8/81.
45. B.C., 4/6/81.
46. The Dearne Valley water scheme commenced in 1884, supplying 40,000 people with water, according to J.Kell, 'Obituary of Joseph Mitchell', Transactions of the Institute of Mining Engineers, X, 1895-6. In B.C., 5/3/87, a report by Dr Sadler, Medical Officer of Health, was referred to in which Sadler implied that less than half of the homes in Darfield were supplied with Dearne Valley water. A local land-owner, Bushey, claimed that 350 of 'not much more than 500' houses in the locality were thus supplied. Later complaints regarding the water supply at Darfield, Low Valley and Snape Hill were made at a meeting at which the inhabitants of Darfield unsuccessfully applied for urban council status, according to a report in the Mexborough and Swinton Times, 7/6/95.
47. B.C., 21.11.1868 and B.C., 16/9/71.
48. Chief Medical Officer's Report, 1886, in 'Sixteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1886-7, P.P.,1887, [c5171], XXXVI, p.970.
49. Census enumerators' returns, 1881. Darfield e.d.s 1, 2 and 5; 9 employees at coke ovens were enumerated as residents of Darfield Main.
50. 608 a/2, Mitchell Main Colliery Company, Balance Sheets.
    At 31/12/83: coal sold during six months: 88,045 tons.
    "   "   : coal supplied to co.'s coke ovens during six months: 20,749 tons.
    At 31/12/84: coal sold during six months: 92,277 tons.
    "   "   : coal supplied to co.'s coke ovens during six months: 23,322 tons.

At 31/12/85':coal sold during six months:61,802 tons.
"   "   : coal supplied to co.'s coke ovens during
          six months: 15,195 tons.
* Strike affected figures.

51. Colliery Guardian, 6/8/97.
52. Chief Medical Officer's Report, 1878, in 'The Annual
    Report of the Local Government Board', P.P., 1878-9,
    [c2452], XXIX, p.137.
53. Ibid., p.145.
54. In 1871, of 189 household heads who were mining
    employees in Low Valley, Snape Hill and Wombwell Main,
    188 were married.
    In 1881, of 295 household heads who were mining
    employees in Low Valley, Snape Hill, Wombwell Main
     and New Street, 291 were married.
55. The Diary of Joseph Knowles, 1886, p. 62.
56. S.Kleinberg, The Shadow of the Mills, 1989, p.212.
57. Ibid., pp.199 and 209.
58. Ibid., p.215.
59. R.Church, A History of the British Coal Industry,
    Vol.3., 1986, p.632.
60. 1871 census records for Snape Hill, Low Valley,
    Lundhill and Wombwell Main reveal that, of 30 homes
    headed by men employed in the mining industry with
    co-resident unmarried daughters over 13 years old, 23,
    (77 per cent), had no recorded employment.
    1881 census records for New Street, Darfield; Snape
    Hill;
    Low Valley; and Wombwell Main have been interpreted to
    reveal that, of 52 households headed by employees in
    the coal industry with co-resident unmarried daughters
    over thirteen years old, 42,(81 per cent), had no
    employment, apart from domestic duties at home. In the
    survey of daughters' employment at Wombwell Main, an
    abnormally low level of 'unemployed' daughters coin-
    cided with an exceptionally high incidence of girls re-

corded as resident with parents but occupied in domestic service. It has been assumed that these nineteen girls were, in fact, 'employed' by their parents at home.

61. Darfield Parish Registers. 1852-85, 25 per cent sample. 78 of 96 brides, (81 per cent), whose fathers were employed in the coal industry, had no recorded occupation at marriage. Wombwell Parish Registers. 1867 - 88, 50 per cent sample. 106 of 109 brides, (97 per cent), whose fathers were employed in the coal industry, had no recorded occupation at marriage.

62. S.Kleinberg, op.cit., p.212; J.Mark-Lawson and A.Witz, op.cit., p.170.

63. R.Church, op.cit., p.632.

64. Wombwell Parish Registers, 10.10.1864 - 25.12.1888.

65. Darfield Parish Registers, 1850 - 1885,25 per cent sample. 57 of 486 brides were recorded as having occupations.

66. Between 1866 and 1874, Henry Bowen Cooke recorded 216 marriages in Darfield Parish Church. In none of the marriage entries did he list an occupation for the bride.

67. C.Kelly, 'History and Post-Modernism', Past and Present, 133,1991, p.212.

68. P.P.Mines, 1842, XVI, p.263,144.

69. Ibid., XVI,p.264,146.

70. The Times, 28/7/87, p.11.

71. 1881 census enumerators' returns:
Snape Hill, (including New St.) - 25 households contained unmarried sons older than 13 years; 12 households contained unmarried daughters older than 13 years. Low Valley - 51 households contained unmarried sons older than 13 years; 28 households contained unmarried daughters older than 13 years. Wombwell Main - 46 households contained unmarried sons older than 13 years; 29 households contained unmarried

daughters older than 13 years.

   In total, 122 miners' households contained unmarried
sons older than 13 years cf. 69 miners' households
containing unmarried daughters older than 13 years.

72. Census enumerators' returns:
    1861- Darfield e.d.s 1,3,4 and 5: 131 of 166, (78.9 per
    cent), women in employment were unmarried.
    1871- Equivalent figures for Darfield e.d.s 1,4 and 5
        were: 92 of 121,(76.0 per cent).
    1881- Equivalent figures for Darfield e.d.s 1,2,5 and
        part of 6, (Wombwell Main), were: 151 of 187,
        (80.7 per cent).

73. The percentage rates used were calculated from the
    following data:
    Darfield village: 1861 Darf.e.d.1. 62 of 192 females
    over 13 years were recorded as employed.
    1871 Darf.e.d.1. 47 of 191. 1881 Darf.e.d.1. 57 of 277.
    1891 Darf.e.d.1. 46 of 243.
    Low Valley/Snape Hill: 1861 Darf.e.d.1. 5 of 32.
    1871 Darf.e.d.1. 28 of 249.
    1881, (including New St), Darf.e.d.s 1,2 and 5. 84 of
    702.
    1891 Darf e.d.s 2 and 3. 66 of 532.
    Wombwell Main: 1861 Darf.e.d.5. 19 of 207. 1871 Darf.
    e.d.5. 19 of 185. 1881 Darf.e.d.6. 37 of 138. 1891
    Darf. e.d.9. 22 of 148. The high female employment
    figure for Wombwell Main for 1881 may have been the
    result of a relatively zealous census enumerator.

74. Census enumerators' returns:
    1861- Darf.e.d.s 1,3,4 and 5: of 166 women over 13 yrs
        enumerated as employed, only 19, (11.4 per cent),
        were married.
    1871- Darfield e.d.s 1,4 and 5. Equivalent figures
        were:
        16 of 121, (13.2 per cent), were married.
    1881- Darfield e.d.s 1,2,5,and 6. Figures had declined

to 16 married of 187, (8.6 per cent), working
women.

75. Census enumerators' returns. The percentage of working
women in each age category was calculated from the
following information:
    1861- Darf.e.d.1. 14-19yrs: 30 of 39 females occupied;
        20-29yrs: 16 of 60; 30-39yrs: 5 of 46; 40-49yrs:
        3 of 29; 50+yrs: 8 of 50.
    1871- Darf.e.d.1. 14-19yrs: 26 of 57 females occupied;
        20-29yrs: 27 of 152; 30-39yrs: 7 of 108; 40-49
        yrs: 6 of 58; 50+yrs: 6 of 69.
    1881- Darf.e.d.s 1 and 2: 14-19yrs: 35 of 72 females
        occupied; 20-29yrs: 29 of 261; 30-39yrs: 14 of
        206; 40-49yrs: 10 of 115; 50+yrs: 5 of 101.
    1891- Darf.e.d.s 1, 2 and 3: 14-19yrs: 53 of 125
        females occupied; 20-29 yrs: 35 of 203; 30-39
        yrs: 9 of 190; 40-49 yrs: 7 of 131; and 50+ yrs:
        10 of 126.

76. Census enumerators' returns. 1871.Darfield e.d.1: 6 of
12 widowed women over the age of 39 years were em-
ployed. In 1881, Darfield e.d.s 1 and 2, the equiva-
lent figures were: 7 of 15.

77. Census enumerators' returns. 1861 Darfield e.d.1. 18 of
163 households headed by mining employee.; 1881
Darfield e.d.1. 158 of 359 households headed by mining
employee. In 1881,of 201 households in Darfield e.d.1
not headed by male occupied in the coalmining industry,
47 contained women recorded as employed. Only 10 of the
158 mining households contained women recorded as work-
ing.

78. Census enumerators' returns. 1881 Darfield e.d.1. 9
males employed as stonemasons; 5 as scythestone-
makers; and 9 as stone quarrymen. The female quarry
stone rubber was recorded in Low Valley, in Darfield
e.d.5.

79. Legislation was passed from 1851 onwards relating to

larger lodging houses, as a result of concerns about the health and moral welfare of boarders, particularly those resident in London.

80. L.Davidoff, 'The Separation of Home and Work?', in S.Burman, ed., Fit Work for Women, 1979, p.82.

81. Census enumerators' returns.
    1861. Darf.e.d.s 1,4 and 5. Of 495 households, 95 contained lodgers.
    1871. Darf.e.d.s 1,4 and 5. Of 660 households, 131 contained lodgers.
    1881. Darf.e.d.s 1,2,5 and 6. Of 818 households, 166 contained lodgers.

82. From an examination of the same census enumeration districts as footnote 81:
    1861- Of 86 households containing lodgers where the head's occupation was known, 61, (70.9 per cent), were occupied in mining.
    1871- Equivalent figures were 107 households, of which 73, (68.2 per cent), were headed by mining employees.
    1881- Equivalent figures were 136 huseholds, of which 110, (80.9 per cent), were headed by mining employees.

83. Table 5.7 was constructed using the following data:
    1861- Darfield e.d.s 1,4 and 5 (95 h'holds with lodgers)
    1871-   "   "   1,4 and 5 (131 "   "   "   "
              "   )
    1881-   "   "   1,2,5 and 6 (166 "   "   "
              "   )

84. L.Davidoff, op.cit., p.69.

85. Information obtained from census enumeration districts listed in footnote 83. The figures were:
    1861- married l'ladies, 83; unmarried l'ladies, 2; widowed, 9.
    1871- married, 108; unmarried, 1; widowed, 20

-289-

1881-　　"　　136;　　"　　1;　　"　　18.

86 . L.Davidoff, op.cit., pp.83 and 84.

87 . J.Modell and T.Harevan, 'Urbanization and the
Malleable Household', in M.Gordon, ed., The
American Family in Social-Historical Perspec-
tive, 1978, p.57.

88. Data derived from an examination of the census
enumeration districts listed in footnote 83.

89. Mexborough and Swinton Times, 28.6.1889.

90. B.C., 27/7/67.

91. Ibid..

92. The Lundhill Relief Fund had, as committee members,
inter alia, the rector and vicar of Darfield, re-
spectively, H.B.Cooke and B.Charlesworth.

93. B.T., 23/4/59.

94. Wombwell Parish Registers. Baptism Records, 13.3.1864
- 2.12.1888. Of 15 mothers registered with different
surnames from their baptised children, 4 of them each
had baptised 2 children either bearing the same sur-
name, or having the same father registered on each
occasion.

95. B.C., 26/3/87.

96. Wombwell Parish Registers. Marriage and Baptism
Records.
Between 13.3.1864 and 2.12.1888, 44 different couples
were identified as appearing in both the marriage and
baptism records. Eleven of these couples had children
baptised within one year of their marriage. Five of
the eleven had children baptised less than nine months
after the wedding.

97. The average mother's age at conception of eldest
surviving child was calculated for women under the age
of 33 years from the following census schedules: 1871-
Darf. e.d.s 1,4 and 5, (189 mothers <33yrs in total).
1881- Darf. e.d.s 1,2,5 and 6, (241 mothers <33yrs in
total).

Marriage registers examined: 1861-71 Darfield- 165
examined, constituting a 25 per cent sample.
1864-71 Wombwell- 39 examined, constituting a 50 per
cent sample.
1872-81: Darfield- 113 examined, making up a 25 per
cent sample.
        Wombwell- 106 examined, making up a 50 per
cent sample.

98. The average mother's age at conception of eldest
     surviving child was calculated from the following
     census schedules, relating to women under 33 years
     of age, whose partners were occupied in the coal-
     mining industry:
     1871- Darf.e.d.s 1,4 and 5, (120 in total).
     1881- Darf.e.d.s 1,2,5 and 6, (168 recorded).
     Marriage registers examined: 1861-71 Darfield- 79
     examined, constituting a 25 per cent sample. 1864-71
     Wombwell- 25 examined, constituting a 50 per cent
     sample.
     1872-81: Darfield- 52 examined, making up a 25 per
     cent sample.
             Wombwell- 77 examined, making up a 50 per
     cent sample.

99. 'Roving Correspondent', in the Manchester Guardian,
     quoted in B.C., 17/5/73.

100. B.C., 16/3/67.

101. B.C., 26/3/87.

102. B.C., 14/1/60.

103. B.C., 14/1/60.

104. B.C., 11/7/91.

105. Married Women's Property Acts passed in 1870, 1882
     and 1893.

106. The Diary of Joseph Knowles, p.139.

107. B.C., 26/3/87.

108. B.C., 2/4/87.

109. B.C., 14/5/87.

110. <u>B.C.</u>, 14/5/87. Hazelhurst was found guilty of the manslaughter of his wife and was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment.

111. R.Roberts, <u>The Classic Slum</u>, 1971, p.47.

112. <u>B.C.</u>, 24/7/69.

113. <u>B.C.</u> 4/6/81 and <u>B.C.</u> 25/6/81 respectively. At Darfield Bridge, Mary Ann Smith assaulted Emma Wilkinson after accusing her of having 'blasted her character.'

114. R.Steiner, <u>Sexual Domains and the Family in Two Communities in Southeastern France</u>, quoted by R.Rapp, 'Household and Family', in J.Newton <u>et al.</u>, <u>Sex and Class in Women's History</u>, 1983, p.235.

115. <u>B.C.</u>, 17/6/71.

116. R.Church, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.632.

117. Rough music and its connection with communal law is explored in E.P.Thompson, <u>Customs in Common</u>, 1991, Ch.VIII.

118. <u>B.C.</u>, 26/2/81.

119. <u>B.C.</u>, 5/3/81.

120. <u>B.C.</u>, 5/3/81. The sixteen accused 'got off very easily by only having to pay costs [of] 9s.6d. each.'

121. <u>B.C.</u>, 4/6/81.

122. <u>B.C.</u>, 25/6/81.

123. <u>B.C.</u>, 16/3/67. The story involved physical violence between two men and a woman, with whom one of the men was 'living tally'.

124. <u>B.C.</u>, 17/6/71. A 'rough music' incident in which several women marked the departure of another woman from the neighbourhood by the rattling of cans <u>etc.</u>.

125. <u>B.C.</u>, 24/1/91. A dispute between neighbours in Wombwell, which led to a court appearance. Every time the one party put out washing, the other party would beat their carpets. The defendant finally threw water over the persistent carpet beater.

126. R.Church, <u>op.cit.</u>,p.632.

127. P.Hudson and W.Lee, 'Women's Work and the Family
Economy in Historical Perspective', in P.Hudson and
W. Lee, eds, <u>Women's Work and the Family Economy
in Historical Perspective</u>, 1990.